

## **Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes**

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

January 24, 2024

**Present:** Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer), Sharon Flaherty (Secretary), Scot Addis, John Brass, Gary O'Neill, Jim Harris, Veronika Kocen, Ryan Cooper (BLM), Jodie Nelson (BLM), Cressant Swarts (Gift Shop Manager)

**Absent:** David Cooper (Chair), John Hodge (BLM)

Harry Thorpe called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

### **Reports:**

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – The minutes of the December 6, 2023, meeting were approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – Reports were included for November and December, as well as an overview of the association's insurance costs. The commercial property insurance for the gift shop increased significantly. Harry is looking for a less expensive policy, but property insurance rates have gone up across the state. The investments performed well over the last two months. Scot asked about the negative year-to-date profit for the operations line item and if there is a set budget. Harry explained that there is no set budget but that expenses are consistent, and variations are noted in his reports; the expectation is to come close to breaking even. Restoration funds are tracked separately from operations.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – Total sales for 2023 were \$3,753 less than 2022; most of the difference was in the first part of 2023 and can be partially attributed to cancelled tours last January – March due to weather and road closures. Veronika asked if there are many gift shop sales through the website, and Cressant explained that we receive donations, membership renewals, and brick orders through the website but not many sales from the gift shop.
4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – ACE and AmeriCorps crews did a lot of work around the light station, including painting in the lighthouse, painting the outsides of the gift shop and tank house, laying flooring in Unit B, and some trail work. Jodie has arranged for another group to come out in the spring to help with vegetation control, as the rain will mean more growth than usual. Ryan is planning a meeting with the BLM state grants office to work on a new cooperative agreement. A custom gate is being fabricated and a new operator is on order, so the entrance gate is expected to be repaired in the next month or so. The light station has participated in a lot of events recently, including the Morro Bay Bird Festival, with a booth at the main event and a presentation and bird walk at the light station. January visitation has been higher than usual, probably because of special events. Harry asked about the status of the restrooms; there is nothing new to report.
5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – There is a scheduling meeting on Monday to plan the work for Components #1-3 of the MOA. Dan and Bruce are fleshing out Component #4, replacing the top three floors of the lighthouse, so there will be more progress to report soon.

6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – No changes in status. Jim reminded the board that \$8k has already been given to PG&E toward this project.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – Harry said that once the work for Components #1-3 is begun on the lighthouse, the board will need to start planning how to fund the construction work that will follow. Cressant reported that PBLSA did not receive the grant to assist with school transportation costs.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – Progress is waiting on research to find the missing pages of the blueprints for the Head Keeper's Cottage.
10. Fresnel Lens Report (Scot Addis) – The rusted sections of the lens enclosure are being removed and replaced with hard plastic that will offer more protection than the planned concrete. Some caulking against glass will be removed and the rusted metal underneath replaced as well, which may lead to additional costs not yet determined. Contractor work is estimated to be \$20k more than the funds raised; another \$6k will be needed to pay for Bruce's yearly inspection of the structure over the next 5 years. Social media fundraising appeals in December and early January raised about \$1,000. The board may need to consider approving another \$26k; the board previously agreed to backstop additional funds. Other funding methods were discussed. Cressant will search on Instrumentl for relevant grants and Veronika will give the board a report on what would be required to start a GoFundMe campaign. Work is estimated to be completed in 6-8 weeks depending on weather conditions.
11. Communications/Social Media Report (Cressant Swarts) – The social media accounts continue to slowly add new followers. The most popular posts are usually related to events at the light station.

**Old Business:** None.

**New Business:**

1. Annual Directors Financial Report – Appendix 11 reports significant financial changes over the course of the year. The full report was sent to board members via email. Harry asked that board members review the documents and ask any questions at the next meeting.
2. Capital campaign planning – See Capital Campaign/Grants Report above.

**Discussion Items:**

1. Reporting board hours – Jodie stressed the importance of reporting board hours, as volunteer hours can often be considered as matching funds for grant applications. Jodie will mail volunteer agreements and timesheets to each board member to assist with record-keeping. Board volunteer hours include travel time, phone calls, meetings including the monthly board meeting, and any other business on behalf of the board. Harry noted that the board's volunteer hours shows the commitment of the board. Harry asked if a timesheet specific to the board's needs could be developed; Cressant will create one. Please keep reporting board volunteer

hours to Cressant in response to the monthly agenda email. If hours haven't been previously reported, please send an estimate of hours starting in October 2023.

Harry Thorpe adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer) and Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on February 22, 2024.

## **Appendix 1: Secretary's Report 1/24/24 – Cressant Swarts**

### **Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes**

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

December 6, 2023

**Present:** Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer), Sharon Flaherty (Secretary), Scot Addis, John Brass, Gary O'Neill, Jim Harris, Veronika Kocen, Ryan Cooper (BLM), Cressant Swarts (Gift Shop Manager)

**Absent:** David Cooper (Chair), John Hodge (BLM), Jodie Nelson (BLM)

Harry Thorpe called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

#### **Reports:**

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – The minutes of the October 25, 2023, meeting were approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – October was a good month financially due to the Dinner & Libations for the Station fundraiser on October 7, leading to what Harry believes was the largest monthly profit for the year. The new insurance policy for the gift shop inventory is more expensive than previously, however, which will cut into profits for the year. There was discussion on the insurance policies held by the PBLSA and alternate possibilities. Harry will look for more cost-effective alternatives after the new year. Investment performance has been down recently.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – The recent ACE crew working at the light station painted the outside of the gift shop.
4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – Ryan will be attending a training in early January to learn about changes in grants and agreements that might be possible between BLM and PBLSA. Ryan reported that the problems with the gate operator mechanism and damage to the gate itself will be addressed in the next month or two. Ryan and Gary have discussed working with local tribes to move forward on the boundary fence project. Work on the tower is waiting on scheduling and the completion of the lens enclosure repairs. There have been several evening events in the last two months with more coming in the future. The volunteer holiday party is scheduled for the end of January. The ACE (American Conservation Experience) crew is staying at the light station for two one-week stays and will be working on the trail and the Coast Guard units in addition to painting the gift shop and the tank house.
5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – Work on Components #1-3 is waiting on scheduling. Bruce and Dan would like to add another structural engineer to Component #4, which is the engineering evaluation and preliminary concept plan for replacing the top three floors of the lighthouse. The role and cost impact of the proposed additional engineer should be available by the January board meeting.

There was discussion of the letter David wrote emphasizing the importance of formal agreements between PBLSA and BLM for future projects. Jim proposed the following motion in support of David's letter: "The Piedras Blancas Light Station Association endorses the letter

written by the PBLSA Chair David Cooper to Jocelyn Torres of the Conservation Land Foundation via email around December 5, 2023, regarding the BLM 15-Year Strategic Plan for the National Conservation Lands for the next 15 years (2025-2040) and encourages the support of the brief comments that it contains.” Gary seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – No changes.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – Jodie and Cressant submitted a grant to the National Park Trust’s Every Kid Outdoors Small Grants Program, asking for \$3,000 to pay for the transportation costs for the spring fourth-grade field trips. The results will be announced on December 22. Harry suggested that discussion of a capital campaign should be added as new business to the January agenda.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – No report.
10. Fresnel Lens Report (Scot Addis) – The UV film on the lens enclosure has been completed, and work is now proceeding on removing the rusted portion of the footings around the base. The final work will be painting the enclosure and possibly some repairs to the roof. Scot will contact *The Cambriaca* regarding a fundraising appeal to supplement the remaining cost of the lens enclosure repair, estimated at \$33k. Harry suggested a small event in January or February to celebrate the completion of the repair project.
11. Communications/Social Media Report (Cressant Swarts) – The most popular posts on social media recently were in connection with the events hosted at the light station this fall. Harry commented that social media will be important in a capital campaign.

### **Old Business:**

### **New Business:**

### **Discussion Items:**

Ryan commented that the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the light station is coming up; a decision will need to be made on whether to celebrate when construction started or when the lighthouse was lit. He asked for suggestions on how to celebrate.

Ryan suggested that the board meet in person at the light station once a quarter in order to maintain a connection and see what has been happening recently.

Harry Thorpe adjourned the meeting at 6:48 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer) and Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on January 21, 2024.

## Appendix 2: Treasurer's Report 1/24/24 – Harry Thorpe

### TREASURER'S REPORT for November 2023

**1. OPERATIONS INCOME:** Last Month: \$5,331.38 YTD: \$87,849.34\*\*  
**PROFIT:** Last Month: <\$8,917.72>\* YTD: <\$812.46>

**MECHANICS BANK OPERATIONS:** \$20,188.29  
**TOWER RESTORATION FUND BALANCE:** \$13,660.03  
**CONSTRUCTION FUND:** \$102,951.56  
**VICTORIAN/KEEPERS RECONSTRUCTION FUND:** \$213,541.37

**BLM SUPPORT EXPENSE:** Last Month: none YTD: none  
**BALANCES:** P.P. Bank: \$500.00 ASAP: none

\* Insurance: \$5,814.39, D & L Expense: \$1,748.56

\*\* Excludes restoration/BLM: \$51,446.93

### 2. INVESTMENT BALANCE – FIDELITY INVESTMENTS

<i>Month</i>	<i>Beg Bal</i>	<i>Market Chg</i>	<i>Div/Int</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>W/D</i>	<i>Ending Bal</i>
<b>Nov 2023</b>	788,180.37	30,517.07	1,743.41	--	--	820,440.85
<b>Oct 2023</b>	795,893.73	<10,013.14>	3,299.78	--	--	788,190.37
<b>Sept 2023</b>	809,004.32	<18,278.01>	5,167.42	--	--	795,893.73

### 3. OTHER:

- Reviewed transactions for October/November.
- Submitted 2022 tax returns.
- Paid CPA for tax preparation.
- Obtained new insurance policy for commercial property.

*Harry M. Thorpe, Jr.*  
*Treasurer*

## PBLSA INSURANCE OVERVIEW

TYPE	INSURANCE COMPANY	LIMITS	COST
Workers' Compensation	Employers Preferred Insurance Company	CA Law	\$545.00
General Liability	Nonprofits Insurance Alliance CA	Personal: \$1M Each occur: \$1M Aggregate: \$3M	\$757.00
Directors & Officers	NIAC	Each act: \$1M Aggregate: \$2M	\$1,665.00
Commercial Property	Scottsdale Insurance Company	\$50,000	\$3,392.39

## TREASURER'S REPORT for December 2023

**1. OPERATIONS INCOME:** Last Month: \$7,109.38 YTD: \$95,208.72  
**PROFIT:** Last Month: <\$162.10>\* YTD: <\$733.46>\*\*

**MECHANICS BANK OPERATIONS:** \$21,413.71  
**TOWER RESTORATION FUND BALANCE:** \$13,660.03  
**CONSTRUCTION FUND:** \$103,071.75  
**VICTORIAN/KEEPERS RECONSTRUCTION FUND:** \$213,421.19

**BLM SUPPORT EXPENSE:** Last Month: none YTD: none  
**BALANCES:** P.P. Bank: \$500.00 ASAP: none

\* CPA: \$1,450

\*\* Excludes restoration/BLM: \$51,446.93

## 2. INVESTMENT BALANCE – FIDELITY INVESTMENTS

<i>Month</i>	<i>Beg Bal</i>	<i>Market Chg</i>	<i>Div/Int</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>W/D</i>	<i>Ending Bal</i>
<b>Dec 2023</b>	820,440.85	12,815.69	7,510.07	--	--	840,766.61
<b>Nov 2023</b>	788,180.37	30,517.07	1,743.41	--	--	820,440.85
<b>Oct 2023</b>	795,893.73	<10,013.14>	3,299.78	--	--	788,190.37

## 3. OTHER:

- Reviewed transactions for November/December.
- Prepared Board annual financial report.

*Harry M. Thorpe, Jr.*  
*Treasurer*



### Appendix 3: Gift Shop Report 1/24/24 – Cressant Swarts

Special events (Golden Hour and Break of Dawn Photo Workshops) grossed \$602.15 in November and \$385 in December, which is not included in the revenue, profit, and net sales calculations below.

Year-end inventory was completed, with \$90.50 shortage, which is less than previous years. Total sales for 2023 were \$3,753 less than 2022. Most of the decrease was in the first half of the year and can be partially attributed to cancelled tours last January – March due to weather and road closures.

#### November Gift Shop Revenue

On-site sales	\$3,730.70
Website sales	\$92.53
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,823.23</b>

#### November Gift Shop Profit

Cost of Goods Sold*	\$2,394.59
Profit	\$1,428.64
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>37%</b>

*\*Includes cost, scrap, inventory shortages, taxes, fees, and shipping*

#### December Gift Shop Revenue

On-site sales	\$4,581.90
Website sales	\$99.48
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,681.38</b>

#### December Gift Shop Profit

Cost of Goods Sold*	\$3,010.25
Profit	\$1,671.13
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>36%</b>

*\*Includes cost, scrap, inventory shortages, taxes, fees, and shipping*

### NET SALES COMPARISONS

*Shaded month indicates lower sales than last year. Includes website sales starting 2021. Excludes donations, memberships, engraved bricks, and event sales.*

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2019	1,015	1,605	2,565	3,350	3,641	4,665	6,804	4,722	2,070	3,656	2,717	3,719
2020	2,202	2,764	1,653	215	164	189	524	244	136	56	220	376
2021	108	1,291	2,198	3,723	4,276	5,363	8,469	7,588	4,238	5,383	3,474	2,265
2022	2,636	3,290	4,410	4,404	6,384	7,593	9,236	7,493	5,204	5,329	3,693	3,824
2023	1,705	3,836	3,274	4,605	6,493	5,760	7,875	8,017	3,880	6,380	3,549	4,369

*Government shutdown Dec 2018. COVID-19 closure Mar 2020 - Feb 2021. Weather/road closures Jan – March 2023.*

### Yearly Net Sales Comparisons

	Jan - Jun	TOTAL
2019	\$16,841	\$40,529
2020	\$7,187	\$8,743
2021	\$16,959	\$48,376
2022	\$28,717	\$63,496
2023	\$25,673	\$59,743

## Appendix 4: BLM Update 1/24/24 – Ryan Cooper

### AmeriCorps / ACE Work Crews

Since before Thanksgiving we have had some sort of youth work crew at the light station. They accomplished some amazing work. The following is a list of some of the stuff they did: Painted the gift shop and tank house, invasive weed pulling, trail widening and resurfacing, driftwood border along the trail and a new floor in Unit B.

### Assistance Agreement

I did take my training, but I did not get what I wanted out of it. As a result, I have scheduled a meeting with Thelma to discuss our partnership and how best to approach a new agreement.

### Entrance Gate

The Gate and operator have been ordered and I would hope in the next month or so it will be completely operational.

### Tower

All the principal players are meeting next Monday to set forth a schedule. A lot rides on the work happening at the lens in Cambria.

### Lens

Discuss during the Lens Report

### Victorian Duplex

No changes this month

#### Events This Past Month

Dec 9	Early Morning Photo Tour
Jan 11 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup>	Morro Bay Bird Festival
Jan 12 <sup>th</sup>	Astro Program
Jan 17	Plein Air Painting group

#### Future Events:

Jan 26 <sup>th</sup>	Volunteer New Year Festival
Jan 26 <sup>th</sup>	Cal Naturalist (CCC)
Jan 31 <sup>st</sup>	Morro Bay Montessori
Feb 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Full Moon Hike
Feb 20 <sup>th</sup>	Winfred Pifer Presentation
Feb 21 <sup>st</sup>	Winfred Pifer Field Trip 1
Feb 28 <sup>th</sup>	Winfred Pifer Field Trip 2

### Tour Numbers

Month	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
October	506	441	535	22	552	421	599	
November	523	433	334	56	350	439	378	
December	829	251	518	0	208	411	405	
January	608	0	715	0	300	196	369*	
February	780	318	578	108	407	341		
March	662	784	185	160	471	329		
April	684	790	0	399	524	570		
May	362	555	0	446	452	444		
June	732	698	0	643	661	752		
July	1169	1085	0	972	881	1087		
August	1001	819	0	834	1043	1192		
September	591	374	0	547	487	493		
Total	8447	6548	2865	4166	6336	6675		

\*partial

## **Appendix 5: Summary of Tower Top Project 1/24/24 – Jim Harris**

David Cooper has organized a zoom meeting on Monday, January 29 at 1:00 p.m. for initiating the four MOA tasks for the tower. The meeting will be chaired by Ryan Cooper, and will include David Cooper, Jim Harris, Bruce Elster of Shoreline Engineering, Dan Murphy of Wellsona Iron and Engineering, Judd King of Yeh and Associates, and BLM members. Bruce Elster and Dan Murphy are preparing a document defining the Component #4 schedule. This document will also discuss the addition of a structural engineer that will work with them on the completion of the project. They are currently obligated to the Lens Project as a priority. As stated before, with the Shoreline final report of October 14, 2021, and the four tasks proposals for Components #1, #2, #3, and #4, there will be sufficient documented engineering work to begin the construction rehabilitation phase for restoring the tower. The schedule presented in the MOA which supported the end of the year 2023 for the completion of the engineering work for tower stabilization and rehabilitation is being revised accordingly. It is expected that the scheduling of the first three components will commence independent of the start of Component #4.

## **Appendix 6: Summary of Underground Utilities Project 1/24/24 – Jim Harris**

The status of this project remains the same as last month: the undergrounding of the PG&E electrical supply lines project remains on hold until the BLM and California State Parks come to a formal understanding of the access road to the light station along with other considerations. As stated previously, the PBLSA provided an \$8K deposit with PG&E a number of years ago as a condition for their cost proposal for the estimated work. Connected Energy has prepared a revised version of their white paper and is willing to give a presentation to the Board as soon as the Board is meeting in person again, hopefully in the next few months. Their white paper is a proposed design of a sustainable option to allow electric power for the light station to be provided with or without grid input using a microgrid system with solar and motor generator input and battery storage.

## **Appendix 7: Capital Campaign/Grants Report 1/24/24 – Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe/Cressant Swarts**

The status remains the same as last month: the PBLSA Board is awaiting the progress of the work outlined in the MOA before initiating any plans for a capital campaign.

## **Appendix 8: Victorian Keepers Cottage Workgroup Report 1/24/24 – David Cooper**

We are continuing to conduct archival research to find the missing elevations or extant examples from period photographs for the head keeper's cottage. We are researching several databases at the National Archives (U.S. Coast Guard materials) and the U.S. Lighthouse Society. The Work Group will meet soon to reevaluate our progress and next steps.

## **Appendix 9: Fresnel Lens Enclosure Report 1/24/24 – Scot Addis**

Dan Murphy of Wellsona Iron continues the structural repair work of the lens enclosure. Barriers have been erected inside the enclosure to safeguard the lens and plastic sheeting covers the lower section of the outside of the enclosure to protect the new UV film on the glass. The rusted metal segments at the bottom of the enclosure have been removed and will be replaced with hard plastic sections to minimize future deterioration. Portions of some vertical posts have surface rust that may need to be removed to get down to bare metal for prime and paint. This work was not in the original scope. Dan is considering what additional cost may be involved to perform this work at all posts with rust. To date we have secured funds for the project totaling \$91,000. The contractor work to be done (UV film, structural work and painting) will cost \$111,109 before any additional cost Dan Murphy may identify to address the rust removal on the vertical posts. In addition, there will be engineering oversight and management fees from Shoreline Engineering estimated to cost \$6,000. Before any potential scope change order, we are short of funds needed by \$26,000.

In an attempt to close the funding gap, in late December appeals were posted on local social media platforms Nextdoor and the Facebook pages for Cambria Currents and Cambria Open Forum seeking donations for the enclosure repair project. Further, earlier this month an article appeared in the weekly online newsletter CambriaCA. A link to the article is below:  
[Pinedorado Lions Foundation Soliciting Donations to Extend Lighthouse Lens Service Life – the cambriaca](#). So far, the net result of these efforts has been a donation of \$1,000. As such, suggestions are welcome regarding sources of additional funding to complete the project. Kathe Tanner, local reporter for The Tribune, and Arlyn Danielson of the U. S. Coast have been briefed on the status of the project.

## **Appendix 10: Communications/Social Media Report 1/24/24 – Cressant Swarts**

Overall reach (the number of views that posts received) is down for November – December compared to September – October for Facebook, but reach has increased over the same period for Instagram. Top posts for both Facebook and Instagram were those promoting or sharing photos from events at the light station.

Total Facebook followers: 1,655 (previous 1,639), Instagram followers: 1,989 (previous 1,951).

We are making a greater effort to put all events at the light station that are sponsored by BLM or PBLSA on the website at <https://www.piedrasblancas.org/events> and our Facebook event page. (Direct link to the events page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/PiedrasBlancasLightStation/events/?id=100064822293325&sk=events>)

<https://www.piedrasblancas.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/PiedrasBlancasLightStation>

<https://www.instagram.com/piedrasblancaslightstation>

## **PBLSA 2023 ANNUAL DIRECTORS' REPORT**

### **SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL CHANGES**

#### **Income:**

**2023: \$95,208.72**

2022: \$89,915.04                      Change: \$5,293.68

Key Income Items — Gift Shop: <\$814.06>, Special Events: \$7,120.74

#### **Profit:**

**2023: <\$733.46>**

2022: \$8,054.96                      Change: <\$8,788.42>

Key Expense Items — Payroll: \$11,812.59, CPA/Insurance: \$3,155.75

#### **Restoration/BLM Support Expenses: \$51,446.93**

Fog Signal Building: \$13,423.00, Lens: \$30,725.00, Victorian: \$2,117.50, School Outreach: \$4,172.83, Visitor Services: \$1,008.60

#### **Investment Accounts:**

**2023: \$840,766.61**

2022: \$714,132.60                      Change: \$126,634.01

Key Items — Anonymous Donation: \$105,000

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

2023 PBLSA Detailed Financial Statements

2022 CPA Financial Analysis, IRS Form 990, Cal Form 199

Fidelity Statement dated 12/31/2023

#### **NOTES:**

1. \$105,000 anonymous donation in 2023.
2. All tax forms prepared by CPA based on financial statements supplied by PBLSA.

*Harry M. Thorpe, Jr.*  
*Treasurer*