

Piedras Blancas Light Station Association  
Minutes  
Zoom Meeting  
July 22, 2020

Board Members in attendance: David Cooper (Chair), Harry Thorpe (Treasurer), Sharon Flaherty (Secretary), Jim Harris, John Brass, Gary O'Neill, Zale Schuster, Holly Gant (PBLSA)  
Board Members absent: Ryan Cooper (BLM), Jodie Nelson (BLM)  
Others present: John Hodge (BLM), Jesse Pluim (BLM), Veronika Kocen (BLM intern)

David Cooper called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.

**Announcements:** None

**Approval of agenda:** *Approved with consensus*

**Secretary report-** *M/S/P minutes of June 24, 2020, approved.*

**Treasurer's report-** See report. Even without an income stream we're doing well. David and Harry met with John H. and Jesse and further clarified some issues and are waiting for the final response from the grants management people. There will be some financial impact but it will be minimized and this will be over in the next few weeks. David thought the meeting went well. John H. appreciated meeting with the association to clear the air and communication will be clearer moving forward. Gary asked what the total was that BLM wanted back. Harry said we never had a final total because we haven't reached a conclusion yet, everything identified would've been 28K but there may be some reduction to that based on their parameters but we won't know until it's finalized. 25K was from ACE contract.

**GS report-** See report. Holly expanded our online shop with more merch and Veronika will post it on Facebook/Twitter. Jesse suggested periodically posting individual items to showcase them and entice people to buy. Re: the \$1,000 USLHS grant- Harry cautioned the grant money should be carefully tracked and include an explanation and separate spreadsheet. Jesse and Holly will compile a list of supplies and Holly will draft a thank you letter to USLHS.

**BLM report-** See report. Harry would like everyone to see the lighting proposal before it's approved. Harry asked if moving the flagpole is still happening. Archaeologist is currently reviewing it and Ryan has been in contact with the flagpole company.

**FSB-** No report.

**Tower-** See report.

**Power lines-** See report.

**Capital Campaign-** See report.

**Membership report-** Harry's goal is to focus on membership expansion ideas with Sharon and Holly and get them started soon. Key will be prioritizing and choosing ideas that we can accomplish. Must have an achievable goal and link to the communication plan. There are quite a few things we can start quickly.

**Old Business:**

**Lens Report -** Bruce Elster agreed to look over the lens enclosure in August.

**New Business:**

None

**Discussion Items:**

None

**End:** 6:58 pm

Minutes recorded by Holly Gant.

## Appendix 1: Treasurer's Report 7/22/2020 – Harry Thorpe

### TREASURER'S REPORT for June 2020

**1. OPERATIONS INCOME:** Last Month: \$815.00\* YTD: \$15,881.15  
**PROFIT:** Last Month: <\$1,736.20> \*\* YTD: <\$1,1012.20>\*\*\*

\*Light station closed for June

\*\*Depreciation/Amortization: \$1,033.50, Member Dues (COC): \$355.00

\*\*\*Excludes restoration expense: \$45,424

**TOWER RESTORATION FUND BALANCE:** \$12,662.03

**BLM SUPPORT EXPENSE:** Last Month: \$1,000.00 # YTD: \$672.07

**BALANCES:** PP Bank: \$3,741.18 ## ASAP: \$35,934.12 ##

# Advance repayment to PBLSA

## BLM audit adjustments pending

### 2. INVESTMENT BALANCE – FIDELITY INVESTMENTS

Month	Beg Bal	Market Chg	Div/Int	Deposit	W/D	Ending Bal
June 2020	529,580.78	5,696.25	1,018.25	--	5,000.00	531,295.28
May 2020	516,611.92	12,035.08	933.78	--	--	529,580.78
Apr 2020	526,640.37	28,999.78	971.77	--	40,000.00	516,611.92

### 3. OTHER:

- Reviewed May/June transactions – made adjustments.
- FSB lighting requirements – on hold.
- A comprehensive response to the BLM audit was submitted. It addressed concerns over the conclusions of the audit and made alternative recommendations.
- A meeting was held with local/regional BLM management regarding the alternatives proposed. A final set of actions to be taken is expected from BLM Grant Management.
- The PBLSA advance to BLM support for a minimum balance was reimbursed.

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

## Appendix 2: Gift Shop Report 7/22/2020 – Holly Gant

NET SALES

\*Shaded month indicates lower sales than that same month last year

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
2011	884	1,009	1,354	2,517	1,435	2,216
2012	862	922	1,497	1,812	1,366	2,121
2013	1,848	1,270	1,931	2,849	2,208	3,407
2014	1,853	3,263	3,072	2,447	2,186	2,697
2015	2,873	2,278	2,512	2,604	2,783	3,628
2016	1,798	2,609	2,830	1,988	2,142	2,586
2017	2,196	1,461	2,678	3,909	2,864	3,350
2018	3,077	3,094	3,104	3,316	3,133	3,707
2019	1,015	1,605	2,565	3,350	3,641	4,665
2020	2,202	2,764	1,653	150	58	163

\*Government shutdown effected Dec 2018 and Jan 2019

\*COVID-19 affected 2020 beginning on March 19, 2020

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2011	3,481	2,973	1,733	1,445	1,158	1,837
2012	3,718	3,725	1,951	2,653	1,207	1,344
2013	4,351	4,121	2,314	2,048	1,872	1,965
2014	3,838	4,283	3,045	2,528	1,412	1,635
2015	4,862	4,356	2,609	3,216	2,258	2,157
2016	4,861	3,410	2,716	2,647	1,930	2,103
2017	4,666	3,701	2,218	3,022	2,793	3,491
2018	6,225	4,157	3,383	2,552	1,597	1,730
2019	6,804	4,722	2,070	3,656	2,717	3,719
2020						

	Jan - Jun	TOTAL
2011	\$ 9,415	\$ 22,042
2012	\$ 8,580	\$ 23,178
2013	\$13,513	\$ 30,184
2014	\$15,518	\$ 32,259
2015	\$16,678	\$ 36,136
2016	\$13,953	\$ 31,620
2017	\$16,458	\$36,349
2018	\$19,431	\$39,075
2019	\$16,841	\$40,529
2020	\$6,990	

I added more items to our online gift shop rather than on Etsy.

## **Appendix 3: BLM Report 7/22/2020 – Jesse Pluim**

### **Volunteer Visitation**

Between Wednesday 7/22 and Friday 8/7, Volunteers are invited to visit the Light Station.

Each volunteer is invited to make a reservation to visit for 1 hour between Wednesday 7/22 and Friday 8/7; between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM. For the safety of the BLM staff and interns that continue to work at the station, visitation will be by reservation only and will be limited to individual Piedras Blancas volunteers or small groups (2-3 people) of volunteers who live together. Additionally, masks will be required for all indoor areas.

To make a reservation, email [jpluim@blm.gov](mailto:jpluim@blm.gov) with your name(s), desired date and time and Jesse will confirm your reservation or suggest an alternative time if already reserved. If you would like to visit outside of the times specified above, please let Jesse know and he will do his best to accommodate you.

### **Electrical for FSB**

On Monday 7/20, an electrician from Gowdy Electric visited the FSB to estimate cost for electrical boxes and lighting.

- Electrical boxes will be placed along the South and West walls.
  - Special attention will be taken to blend the boxes and conduit into the look and feel of the room.
- Lighting will be on three switches: south wall lights, north wall lights, track lighting.
  - Special care will be taken to not damage or modify the current woodwork.
- The electrical boxes and conduit do require small screws drilled into the brick. BLM is clearing this through regional BLM archeologist.
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### **New Roof for Coast Guard Units**

The 30-day call for bids began on Monday 7/20. The contract includes roofs for all Coast Guard Units. Will provide further update at next meeting.

### **New Brochure**

BLM staff completed first draft for a new brochure/trail map of the Piedras Blancas Light Station. If the station opens with an open house tour model, these will also act as a self-guided tour to augment interpretive panels and volunteer information points along the trail.

The brochure will be available in print and also formatted for mobile phones.

### **Google Street View-Virtual Walking Tour**

This week, BLM staff is producing a 360-degree walking tour of the trail and buildings. The tour will be uploaded to Google street view and can be embedded in the BLM Piedras Blancas website and PBLSA Website. When complete, Jesse will work with Holly to format and embed.

### **Infrastructure Improvement**

Mike and Veronika completed two concrete walkways at CG units C and D.

They are also pressure washing and painting the CG units, front gate and any other building in need.

### **Seed Collection and Weeding**

Christine is working on an ongoing weeding and seed collection project.

#### **Appendix 4: Tower Report 7/22/2020 – Jim Harris**

Bruce Elster is working on the design of the tower using four vertical channels with an equivalent mass model for the missing top. He has simulated vertical and lateral forces with the model and obtained good results. Calculations for the amount of steel that has to be installed to compensate for the shear forces involved to meet code are being made. It has been determined that the design approach for the tie-downs for the tension rods appears to be satisfactory. The level of forces being applied in the simulation will satisfy the code for a structure that is essential for navigation, called an “ATON” (aid to navigation); so the design process is addressing the most stringent requirements code, requiring a 50% addition to the nominal input forces for the simulation. It is not clear yet whether four channels will be sufficient to meet this code, but the fallback position is to add four more channels (for a total of eight) along the bottom half of the tower. Bruce expresses confidence in the design and the process for the design; one of his concerns is that it is not a sure bet that the solution will be affordable, i.e., beat the estimated cost of the previous BLM design. It is his expectation that at the end of next month the design process will be mature enough to allow he and Dan Murphy to start the work on an estimate of the construction cost for the design. He continues his detailed modeling of the missing top three levels. The design for reinforcing the openings of the tower remains the same – refurbishing the existing ironwork and reinstalling with extended steel around the opening.

#### **Appendix 5: Underground Utilities Report 7/22/2020 – Jim Harris**

The status is the same as in the previous four months due to the public health conditions. The undergrounding of the PG&E electrical supply lines project remains on hold. Maxwell Muscarella and Sean Cassidy of Connected Energy along with Brian French still plan to present their work on the design of a sustainable option to the PBLSA Board when it returns to a face-to-face meeting; the option is 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 6: Capital Campaign/Grants Report 7/22/2020 – Jim Harris/Holly Gant/David Cooper**

Holly Gant submitted a proposal to the U.S. Lighthouse Society Emergency Relief Grants that was awarded to the PBLSA. The funds are to cover interpretive/directional signs and PPE for when the light station reopens. Twenty-four grants were awarded and we received \$1,000. Thanks to Holly!

The planning for the capital campaign is on a pause due to the public health situation and its economic ramifications. In spite of the hold, ideas are being developed to continue planning. A meeting was held to discuss increasing PBLSA membership with one goal to increase communication to the community about the value of the Piedras Blancas Light Station thereby preparing the public for the capital campaign; the meeting summary is presented in the Membership Committee report.

## **Appendix 7: Membership Report 7/22/2020 – Harry Thorpe**

July 16, 2020  
Zoom Meeting

Attending: David Cooper, Harry Thorpe, Sharon Flaherty, Jim Harris, Jesse Pluim, Jodie Nelson, Holly Gant

Agenda:

1. Ways to expand PBLSA membership.
2. Keeping the Capital Campaign coasting during the coronavirus pandemic
3. Expanding PBLSA communications networks

Ways to expand membership-

Some of the ideas were:

1. Local university History Clubs/Groups
  - a. Phi Alpha Theta (History Honors) organizes local history events and lectures.
2. Farmers Market Booth
3. Sister station in another country
4. Orient every 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting to new members
  - a. Ritualize onboarding
  - b. Provide special lapel pins or something exclusive.
5. Themed Historical reenactment days
6. Present and cultivate membership from local tourism boards.
7. Work with Friends of the Elephant Seal
8. Offering a \$25 student membership
9. Each board member get two new members, then in six months encourage each of the 21 total to get two more members => 42 more members.
10. Target wineries for special memberships.
11. Identify key SLO county tourism associations, then provide book, brochure.
12. Organize membership drive with goal, e.g., 200 by 2020.
13. Provide special Cuesta/Cal Poly student memberships with event at light station.

Keeping Capital Campaign coasting during pandemic-

Expanding communications networks-

David suggested there should be a consistent message and no ad hoc announcements. Jesse suggested hiring a part-time social media professional to help keep our media presence consistent.

1. Outreach to SLO county chambers of commerce: over 10, offer presentation, package: Carole's book, tower model, Holly's brochure.
2. Expand scope to county of SLO.
3. Leverage BLM media to our advantage.
4. How do we get our content to the right channels?
3. 300 wineries – contact associations.
4. Presentation to SLO county board of supervisors – value to tourism.
5. Identify tourism associations in county – book, brochure.