

Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

October 25, 2023

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

Absent: David Cooper (Chair), Scot Addis, John Hodge (BLM)

Harry Thorpe called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

Reports:

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – The minutes of the September 27, 2023, meeting were approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – There was a good profit for the year in September due to ticket sales from the Dinner & Libations for the Station fundraising event. Investments were down.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – Net sales and profits were down from the previous year and last month; Cressant will review gift shop items to see if prices need to be increased.
4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – The restroom for the parking lot is one of Ryan's top priorities this fiscal year. He is working on scheduling a meeting to coordinate work on the tower. There have been a lot of events this fall and more coming up in November and December; see the list in Appendix 4. The next school tour is scheduled for February. Tour numbers have been higher than last year at this time; tours have usually been full.
5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – The meeting to coordinate scheduling for the work on the tower is waiting until David is available. After this meeting, there will be a better idea of how long the work in Components #1-3 will take.
6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – No changes.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – No changes.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – No report. The workgroup is waiting for research on the head keeper's cottage to be completed before moving forward with an RFP.
10. Fresnel Lens Report (Scot Addis) – The UV sheeting over the glass on the lens enclosure has been completed, and structural repair has begun. Scot asked in his report for ideas for funding sources for the final \$18k required to complete the lens enclosure repair. There was discussion

on using a GoFundMe campaign, as well as publicizing the need in local news and asking for public donations.

11. Communications/Social Media Report (Cressant Swarts) – The estimated total profit for the Dinner & Libations for the Station fundraiser on October 7 was \$8,900, compared to \$7,600 from last year's event.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Discussion Items:

1. Date of November/December meeting – The next board meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, December 6 at 6 p.m.
2. John Brass asked if there was any information about installing a new boundary fence. Gary investigated another option but found that it wouldn't work. Ryan talked about the possibility of working with a tribal work crew to install the fence, which would remove obstacles related to possible archaeological discoveries.

Harry Thorpe adjourned the meeting at 6:29 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer) and Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on November 28, 2023.

Appendix 1: Secretary's Report 10/25/23 – Cressant Swarts

Piedras Blancas Light Station Association Minutes

Zoom Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

September 27, 2023

Present: David Cooper (Chair), Sharon Flaherty (Secretary), John Brass, Jim Harris, Gary O'Neill, John Hodge (BLM), Ryan Cooper (BLM), Jodie Nelson (BLM), Tammy Whitley (BLM), Cressant Swarts (Gift Shop Manager)

Absent: Harry Thorpe (Vice-chair/Treasurer), Scot Addis, Veronika Kocen

David Cooper called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

David thanked Harry for standing in as chair for the last three months and welcomed back Ryan from his detail. He also noted that he had emailed the updated proposal from Yeh and Associates to the board a few hours before the meeting.

The agenda was approved by consensus.

Reports:

1. Secretary's Report (Cressant Swarts) – The minutes of the August 23, 2023, meeting were approved by consensus.
2. Financial Status and Treasurer's Report (Harry Thorpe) – Harry will give his report at the next meeting.
3. Gift Shop Report (Cressant Swarts) – Sales in the gift shop were up from the previous August. Dinner & Libations ticket sales are not included in the gift shop net sales. The profit percentage was 33% for August; profits range between 30-40%.
4. BLM Update (Ryan Cooper) – Ryan is working on the restroom project now that the parking lot is complete; there will be one restroom in the parking lot, with plans for another installed in the historic district, though that one will involve more coordination with the BLM archaeologist and engineers.

It is possible there will be a government shutdown next week if a budget is not passed by congress before midnight on September 30. In that case, the light station would be closed with no tours and no events, including the Dinner & Libations fundraiser scheduled for October 7. John Hodge said there was discussion at higher levels of BLM and DOI about what events may be allowed, as there have been differences in how previous shutdowns were handled. BLM staff will be given information at an all-staff meeting on Monday, October 2.

Tour numbers for the federal fiscal year are similar to last year's. There will be a National Public Lands Day free tour day on Saturday, as well as a volunteer brunch the day before. A volunteer outing to Point San Luis Lighthouse on November 10 is being arranged; Ryan encouraged the board to participate. David noted that there is a meeting in Sacramento for

friends groups organized by the National Conservation Lands program; he will try to have the PBLSA represented.

5. Tower Report (Jim Harris) – David noted that there had been no official notice from BLM that final approvals were granted for the work described in Components #1-3 of the MOA, potentially losing a month of work time. He asked what the procedure is for work to begin. John Hodge said that BLM usually has a kickoff meeting with all involved parties to schedule the contractors' work all at once and that the PBLSA should schedule a meeting. David noted that the MOA specifies that BLM will be responsible for scheduling, but that he can help begin the process by setting up a meeting with himself, Jim, and Ryan to discuss how to best ensure that the BLM archaeologist and any other necessary BLM staff are available when the contractors are working. Jim reported that Shoreline, Wellsona, and Yeh have been informed that work can begin soon.

The updated proposal for Component #2 of the MOA, to plan for replacing the top three levels of the lighthouse, was distributed to the board before the meeting. It combines the original Component #2 with the additional geotechnical work that had previously been referred to as Component #5 and should be incorporated into the MOA as a replacement for Appendix D. There was discussion on how this change should be handled. Because the additional work will be seismic tests with no ground-disturbing work involved, Ryan said it can be added to the MOA without beginning the approvals process again. Tammy Whitley, the BLM archaeologist, asked to review the updated proposal to confirm that the scope of the project has not changed. Jim will send the updated proposal to Tammy, along with a formal request that this proposal be substituted for the existing Appendix D in the MOA. John Hodge said that BLM staff will review it to make sure the scope doesn't exceed what has already been approved. David sent a memo to the board regarding the additional costs that will be incurred with this updated proposal; board approval for the budget was granted in the MOA with the understanding that there would be budget adjustments.

6. Underground Utilities Report (Jim Harris) – No changes.
7. Capital Campaign/Grants Report (Jim Harris/Harry Thorpe) – No changes.
8. Membership Committee Report (Harry Thorpe/Sharon Flaherty) – No report.
9. Victorian Keepers Cottages Workgroup Report (David Cooper) – David reported that Amber Long, the architectural historian consulting with the PBLSA, has said that the Head Keeper's Cottage needs more documentation for the whole structure of the restoration to be considered historic. Cressant is doing some research to see if the missing sheets of the plans can be found in the National Archives or other sources. The submission of the RFP to potential architectural firms is waiting on this additional documentation.
10. Fresnel Lens Report (Scot Addis) – David reported that Dan is nearly ready to start transporting materials to Cambria to begin work on enclosure. All the subcontractors have been hired and scheduled. Estimated completion is before the end of the year. David sent a note to the board asking for any additional funds needed for the enclosure repair, which was approved.
11. Communications/Social Media Report (Cressant Swarts) – Cressant reported that ticket sales are continuing for the Dinner & Libations for the Station fundraiser despite the possibility of a government shutdown. In the case of a shutdown, the decision to cancel the event will be

made on Monday after the BLM all-staff meeting. Cressant is discussing the possibility of rescheduling with Harmony Cellars, who partners with PBLSA on planning the event.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Discussion Items: Gary was approached at the volunteer gathering by Susan Fiedler, who is involved in the native plant restoration of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve. She asked if the PBLSA board would lend public support to their efforts, given the native plant restoration completed at the light station. Gary will find out more details, but he believes they are not asking for funds or volunteers but instead a letter of support.

Gary recommended that all board members come out to PBLS once a month on tour days to see how tours are run and talk to visitors. Helping on school tour days would also be valuable to better understand the work that happens at the light station daily. David agreed that it would be helpful to build more relationships with volunteers and that he intends to start visiting the light station as Gary suggests.

Ryan said that the light station will have a scarecrow in a keeper's uniform as part of the annual Cambria Scarecrow Festival that was built by Gail, a volunteer. It will be put in front of the lens enclosure on Monday and can be moved if it conflicts with enclosure repair. Ryan will contact Scot to see if he has any suggestions.

David Cooper adjourned the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Cressant Swarts.

Minutes checked by David Cooper (Chair) and Sharon Flaherty (Secretary) on November 28, 2023.

Appendix 2: Treasurer's Report 10/25/23 – Harry Thorpe

TREASURER'S REPORT for August 2023

1. OPERATIONS INCOME: Last Month: \$14,528.46 YTD: \$60,988.97
PROFIT: Last Month: \$1,075.69*# YTD: \$6.41**

MECHANICS BANK OPERATIONS: \$20,825.21
TOWER RESTORATION FUND BALANCE: \$13,660.03
CONSTRUCTION FUND: \$106,760.59
VICTORIAN/KEEPERS RECONSTRUCTION FUND: \$201,000.00

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

* Excludes restoration/BLM: \$25,963.20

**Excludes restoration/BLM: \$48,616.63

Includes special events: \$3,788.48

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>
Aug 2023	837,025.98	2,338.81	1,682.83	--	25,000	809,004.32
July 2023	776,079.65	8,996.22	1,950.11	50,000	--	837,025.98
June 2023	758,766.54	15,816.59	1,496.52	--	--	776,079.65

3. OTHER:

- Reviewed transactions for July/August.
- Transferred \$25,000 from reserves to operations for lens repair.
- Updated and renewed SAM.GOV.

Harry M. Thorpe, Jr.
Treasurer

TREASURER'S REPORT for September 2023

1. OPERATIONS INCOME:	Last Month: \$8,630.46*	YTD: \$69,731.12**
PROFIT:	Last Month: \$4,049.73 #	YTD: \$4,109.44 ##

MECHANICS BANK OPERATIONS:	\$26,662.72
TOWER RESTORATION FUND BALANCE:	\$13,660.03
CONSTRUCTION FUND:	\$102,951.56
VICTORIAN/KEEPERS RECONSTRUCTION FUND:	\$204,585.27

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

* Special event (D&L): \$3,372.87
** Special event (D&L): \$7,371.35
Excludes restoration/BLM: \$2,092.30
Excludes restoration/BLM: \$50,708.93

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>
Sept 2023	809,004.32	<18,278.01>	5,167.42	--	--	795,893.73
Aug 2023	837,025.98	2,338.81	1,682.83	--	25,000	809,004.32
July 2023	776,079.65	8,996.22	1,950.11	50,000	--	837,025.98

3. OTHER:

- Full audit scheduled for next month.
- Filed/paid 3rd quarter sales tax.
- Extended CD for nine months.
- Sent check for \$25,000 to Lions for lens repair.
- Reviewed tax preparation with CPA.

Harry M. Thorpe, Jr.
Treasurer

Appendix 3: Gift Shop Report 10/25/23 – Cressant Swarts

Dinner & Libations for the Station tickets grossed \$3,681.43 in September, which is not included in the revenue, profit, and net sales calculations below.

September Gift Shop Revenue

On-site sales	\$4,221.85
Website sales	\$16.00
Total	\$8,810.15

September Gift Shop Profit

Cost of Goods Sold*	\$3,030.81
Profit	\$1,208.47
Percentage	29%

**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			

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	

Appendix 4: BLM Update 10/25/23 – Ryan Cooper

Lens

Discuss during the Lens Report

Restrooms

The restroom project has been revitalized. I am in the process of gathering old documents that have been done in the past few years and putting a package together to start the NEPA process. We will start with a restroom in the parking lot area where the old com tower used to be. If you are not aware of where that is it is the concrete slab near where the porta potty sits today.

Tower

We are trying to get everyone together so we can put together a plan of attack.

Victorian Duplex

No changes this month

Special Events:

Oct 27 th	Wildlife Society Workshop
October 28 th	Evening tour at LH
November 4 th	Sunset Photo Tour
Nov 10 th	Vol tour at Point SLO
Nov 11 th	Condor Presentation
Nov 17 th	Starry Night @ the Light Station
Dec 1 st	Full Moon Tour
Dec 9 th	Sunrise Photo Tour
Jan 6 th	Volunteer New Year Festival
Jan 11 th – 15 th	Morro Bay Bird Festival

Tour Numbers

Month	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
October	506	441	535	22	552	421	502*	
November	523	433	334	56	350	439		
December	829	251	518	0	208	411		
January	608	0	715	0	300	196		
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 10/25/23 – Jim Harris

David Cooper is setting up a meeting with Ryan Cooper and Jim Harris to plan for the schedule of the four tasks for the tower. Due to the availability of the participants the meeting is being scheduled for after the PBLSA Board meeting. Results will follow.

As stated before, with the Shoreline final report of October 14, 2021, and the four task 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 submittal of the on-site seismic testing to be proposed for Component #5, or augmented Component #2, will address any risks involved in the modeling studies for the stabilization of the tower by the use of inferred seismic data for simulation. The schedule presented in the MOA which supports the end of the year 2023 for the completion of this phase of the tower stabilization and rehabilitation engineering work should be considered at risk because of the delay in approval by the BLM for the four submitted task proposals.

Appendix 6: Summary of Underground Utilities Project 10/25/23 – 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 10/25/23 – 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: Fresnel Lens Enclosure Report 10/25/23 – Scot Addis

The lens enclosure repair project continues. San Luis Customs completed installation of the UV sheeting over the enclosure glass. Wellsona Iron has finished shop fabrication of parts. Dan will soon start structural repair work on-site. Once the structural work is done, the final element of the project is painting the metal framework. Weather permitting, the intent remains to complete the entire project by the end of the year. Members of the San Luis Obispo County staff and U. S. Coast Guard will receive updates as the project progresses.

Further issue for Board consideration: sources of additional funding to cover the amount pledged by the Board (\$18K) to backstop the remainder of this project. Are there private donors to approach? Should we publicize a direct appeal for additional funds using social media and local radio stations? What other avenues exist to get us over the funding goal line for this project?

Appendix 9: Communications/Social Media Report 10/25/23 – Cressant Swarts

Overall reach (the number of views that posts received) increased for both Facebook and Instagram, though the rate of increase was lower than last month. Similarly, the number of new followers for Facebook and Instagram declined from the previous month, but that still results in an overall larger number of followers than September. The number of posts and the number of people reacting to those posts with likes, comments, and shares both increased from September. Facebook page likes: 1,441, Facebook followers: 1,603, Instagram followers: 1,926. Our numbers are slightly higher than those of comparable nonprofits for Facebook and slightly lower for Instagram.

The Dinner & Libations for the Station fundraiser was held on Saturday, October 7. We are still waiting for an invoice from the food vendor, but estimated profits are \$8,900. Last year's profit was \$7,600 but didn't account for the cost of goods sold for gift shop items or taxes on tickets and silent auction items, which are both factored into this year's profit. The increase in profit is due primarily to the lower quoted cost of this year's food vendor compared to last year's vendor. The gift shop sales, silent auction proceedings, and number of tickets sold were all comparable to last year.

We are making a greater effort to put all events at the light station that are sponsored by BLM or PBLA 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>