



**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**Tuesday, December 14, 2010 – 8:30 am**  
**Tahoe City Public Utility District**

**FINAL MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE:** Alex Mourelatos, Allen Highfield, Jennifer Merchant, Phil GilanFarr, Ron McIntyre, Ron Parson, Deb Dudley, Deanna Gescheider, Kaliope Kopley, Roger Beck, Tom Murphy

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:** Ron Treabess, Andy Chapman, Sally Lyon, Kym Fabel, Kim Lambert

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Steve Kastan, Jan Colyer, Mike Williams, Wally Auerbach

**1.0 CALL TO ORDER – ESTABLISH QUORUM**

1.1 The meeting was called to order at 8:41 am by Chairman Alex Mourelatos and a quorum was established.

**2.0 AGENDA AMENDMENTS AND APPROVAL**

**2.1 M/S/C (Parson/Dudley) (11/0) to approve the revised agenda as presented.**

**3.0 PUBLIC FORUM**

3.1 Jan Colyer reported that winter transit services began on December 11<sup>th</sup>.

**4.0 CONSENT CALENDAR**

4.1 Alex Mourelatos noted that some additional words need to be added to his TAU comment in the Board minutes. Kim Lambert will do this before the final minutes are posted on nltra.org.

4.2 Jennifer asked if approving the Chamber of Commerce Advisory Committee meeting minutes means that a \$10,000 Community Marketing Grant to the North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce is also approved. Ron Treabess and Kym Fabel clarified that approving the minutes does not approve this action. The item is on the agenda for the December 16<sup>th</sup> Chamber of Commerce Advisory Committee meeting. It is not yet before the Board.

**M/S/C (GilanFarr/Parson) (11/0) to approve the consent calendar as presented.**

**5.0 REPORTS & ACTION ITEMS**

5.1 Kym Fabel reported on the Board Election results. Tom Murphy retains the Recreation Seat, Barb Cohen will fill the Small Lodging Seat, and Wally Auerbach will represent the General Seat. Jennifer Merchant asked if there are any demographics on who voted. Kym said that we do not know who voted; the ballots are sent to McClintock

Accountancy. Ninety-five of about four-hundred ballots were received; this is an average return. Deb Dudley suggested that a self-addressed stamped envelope be sent with ballots and that on-line voting be made available. Ron Treabess said this would be done for the next election. Ron also stated that he will meet with new Board members and provide them with pertinent information and documents.

**M/S/C (Parson/GilanFarr) (11/0) to certify the results of the Board of Directors election.**

- 5.2 Ron Treabess gave the Interim Executive Director's report. The Lake Tahoe Basin has received a \$995,000 California Strategic Growth Council Sustainable Community Grant (SGC). The money will be used to fund Basin planning projects that meet the twelve SGC grant program objectives.

Ron is concerned that the passing of Proposition 26 will affect the TOT renewal. The language of this proposition states that fees and taxes must now be approved by a two-thirds majority vote. It is not yet clear if the proposition applies to the TOT renewal vote. Ron will pursue getting legislative analysis from the state. Ron further reported that the TOT Survey Committee has received proposals from three of four survey companies contacted regarding conducting the community survey. The TOT Survey Committee is comprised of Ron McIntyre, representatives of four special districts (North Tahoe, Northstar, Squaw Valley and Tahoe City), and staff. Deb Dudley would like to be involved in crafting the ballot language. Roger Beck suggested that past presidents be involved. Jennifer suggested that lodging properties be represented on both the current survey committee and the future advocacy committee. Roger Beck suggested that someone with a marketing background would be very helpful to the survey committee. Alex reiterated that the TOT Survey Committee should have marketing representatives, lodging representatives, and past presidents on it.

The NLTRA is working with the Tahoe Fund to sell Tahoe license plates. The Tahoe Fund is a new organization that benefits the California Tahoe Conservancy. Proceeds from the license plate will go to projects that emphasize economic sustainability and environmental protection. It will serve as a catalyst to build strong, broad-based support for sustained public and private investment in Lake Tahoe. The Tahoe Fund will funnel dollars into on-the-ground projects such as linking trail networks, that will directly impact Tahoe area resorts.

The first quarter report has been submitted to Placer County. The second quarter report is due February 15<sup>th</sup>. A meeting to discuss the first quarter report and contract compliance will be scheduled with the Executive Committee, Jennifer Merchant and Tom Miller. Deb Dudley commented that quarterly meetings are good for establishing communication.

Ron Treabess is going forward with by-law revision regarding definition of committees. A functional review of the bylaws is needed and a lawyer will eventually be used to craft the language correctly.

Ron Parson asked about the North Lake Tahoe Marketing Cooperative conference equity issue. There is disagreement with Placer County concerning the Incline Village Crystal Bay Visitors and Convention Bureau's operational expense as it relates to conference marketing and conference activity. As of now, Placer County staff and NLTRA staff are planning to meet. Jennifer Merchant reminded the Board that she met with Ron Treabess, Andy Chapman and Mark Giacomini in June. Placer County wants more

information from Bill Hoffman. Ron Parson wants to have methodology accepted by General Managers of the lodging properties involved in the conference program. Deb Dudley thinks that the properties are the best determiners of if the conference program is working. Roger Beck, Ron Parson and Allen Highfield will meet with NLTRA staff before the meeting with Placer County.

At the January Board meeting, the Six Month Strategic Plan and FY 2011/12 Budget Development Plan will be presented and discussed.

The Community Awards Dinner will be held February 16<sup>th</sup> at the Resort at Squaw Creek.

The County will present its legislative platform at a future date.

**Action: The Interim Executive Director will review the by-laws.**

**Action: NLTRA staff, Roger Beck, Ron Parson, and Allen Highfield will meet to discuss the conference marketing equity issue.**

- 5.3 Alex Mourelatos reported on the progress of the Executive Director search. He stated that interviews with four candidates took place on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Two final candidates were picked for more discussion. Subsequently, both candidates backed out. Deb Dudley is opposed to continuing the search, as for the last six months the current staff has run the organization well. Deanna Gescheider reported that the search firm has found two other candidates; interviews could be conducted in January.

Phil GilanFarr thinks the search should continue and feels that we are only 30-40 percent through with the search process. Money has already been spent and to give up now would be a waste. He suggested that the search firm explore candidates that are in other types of organizations than the NLTRA's type. Wally Auerbach commented that this current search process is progressing the same way as the 2002 search process. The time frame needs to be broad. Also, he wants to know what the search parameters are and thinks that the new Board members should be able to participate in the process.

Ron McIntyre clarified that Alex Mourelatos will remain on the Board in an Ex-Oficio capacity. Also, Ron Treabess suggested to the Board that gathering exit information on why the Executive Director candidates backed out may be beneficial to continuing the process.

**M/S/C (GilanFarr/Parson) (9/1, 1 abstention - McIntyre) to continue the Executive Director search.**

**M/S/C (McIntyre/GilanFarr) (10/0, 1 abstention – Mourelatos) to retain Alex Mourelatos on the Search Committee.**

**M/S/C (Kopley/Parson) (11/0) to address items 19 and 20 next due to a schedule conflict.**

- 5.4 Mike Williams from Smith and Jones demonstrated some new features of the gotahoenorth.com website to the Board. Mike also reported the following statistics:
- 590,000 unique visitors January 1, 2010 through December 13, 2010
  - 200,000 click-throughs to lodging properties
  - 56,000 clicks to cool deals

Deb Dudley reported that the Marketing Committee was pleased with the changes. Andy Chapman commented that the event calendar and dining sections have been improved. Tom Murphy asked about driving people to the shoulder season. Mike said that the slider and social media could be used for shoulder season promotion.

Roger Beck asked what the date for changing the season of the default homepage is. Andy said winter is the default beginning around October and summer around April. Andy clarified that that social media is managed by RKPR and website content is managed by Shelly Fallon. They are both paid through the North Lake Tahoe Marketing Cooperative. In regards to Tahoe TV, their feed shows on our website. Andy also noted that there are webcams. Phil GilanFarr noted that you cannot navigate “back” from links on the calendar that leave our site and open a new browser. Phil also suggested that the map should come up first, as many visitors are unfamiliar with the area. He would like to know what our social media protocols are. Mike clarified that social media goes through RKPR for consistency. Tom Murphy suggested that the webcams be made more easily accessible to users. Alex Mourelatos is interested in how much time users spend on different areas of the website. Andy replied that website statistics are on the monthly web reports.

- 5.5 The possible performance review of the North Lake Tahoe Express (NLTE) was discussed. Ron Parson thinks that we should not spend \$10,000 for this performance review. He thinks that staff has the ability and information to do the report in conjunction with TMA. Deb Dudley asked Ron Treabess and Jan Colyer to clarify the reason for the study/report. Ron Treabess stated that the Board has been dissatisfied with the reporting Jan does and feels the independent review is good way to address the Board’s concerns.

Ron Treabess reported that while NLTRA funding for the North Lake Tahoe Express has trailed-off, it has not trailed-off at the rate in the original business plan. Jan Colyer said that the NLTE has all the information that would be covered in LSC Transportation Consultants’ proposal. Wally commented that the proposal covers more than Jan’s reporting. It is an outside audit of the operation. Ron McIntyre clarified that the Joint Committee has never been satisfied with information coming from the North Lake Tahoe Express. The Joint Committee unanimously recommended an outside audit with analysis of the program. Jan commented that the analysis will address how the NLTE can be improved, not just how the NLTRA can spend less money funding it.

Phil GilanFarr commented that the NLTE is not listed on some lodging properties’ websites as a transportation option. Roger Beck believes the study would be helpful in determining how the NLTRA can get out from under the subsidy to the NLTE.

**M/S/NC (Parson/Murphy) (4/4, 2 abstentions – Gescheider, Highfield) to direct staff to do the analysis of the North Lake Tahoe Express. (motion failed)**

**M/S/C (Merchant/GilanFarr) (11/0) to return this item to the Joint Committee for its recommendation as to what parts of the analysis can be done by staff, what parts should be done by a consultant including expansion of the scope to include analysis for potential improvements, program growth, and reduction of the NLTRA subsidy.**

- 5.6 Andy Chapman gave the Marketing Report. Highlights are:
- A drive market campaign will begin after the first of the new year.
  - The San Diego campaign has begun. One can buy two NLT Interchangeable Lift Tickets and then get the third for free. In order to integrate with the ticket offer,

various lodging properties have offered a stay two nights, get a third free promotion.

- The agency RFP will go out in January; results will be announced in March.
- The marketing plan and sponsorship packages for Amgen are being worked on.

Andy additionally reported that the Tahoe Ten Day Countdown to the Tour calendar is being built. Lake Tahoe has been selected for one of four Break Away from Cancer events. North Lake Tahoe will be the featured destination on the Amgen website for the next two weeks. Ron Parson reported that the Marketing Committee recognized staff for their incredible efforts.

Roger Beck asked about the status of group sales. Andy stated that the first six to eight months of this fiscal year is looking better than last year, but that the recovery is proceeding slower than wanted. Andy is confident that we will make our sales goals. Roger wants to know the percentage of conference sales that goes to Incline Village and Crystal Bay versus Placer County. Going forward, this information will be reported to the Board on the Conference Revenue Statistics report. ADR will also be included. Additionally, this conference report will no longer be on the consent calendar; it will be a separate item for discussion.

Alex Mourelatos observed that big properties need to encourage their sales managers to be more aggressive in the Directors of Sales meetings. Roger noted that many Placer County properties expressed concern about bringing in Incline Village and Crystal Bay properties to the conference program. Jennifer pointed out that conference is an opportunity for shoulder season business. Ron Treabess commented that the record numbers on the North Lake Tahoe Express are partially due to conference groups utilizing the service.

***Action: Move the Conference Revenue Statistics report off of the consent calendar and address it as a separate item.***

- 5.7 Ron Treabess reported that the financial auditor commented that the amount of funds held at Bank of the West is over the FDIC insurance limit. Sally Lyon suggested that the Marketing Cooperative account be moved from Bank of the West to another bank. A Board motion is necessary for this action.

**M/S/C (Parson/Beck) (10/0) to authorize the CFO to move the Marketing Cooperative checking account from Bank of the West to another bank.**

- 5.8 Andy Chapman reported that five letters of interest for Lodging Committee seats have been received. The committee will meet in January at a date to be determined. The committee will do outreach to fill open seats.

**M/S/C (Parson/Beck) (10/0) to approve the appointment of the Lodging Committee slate with the addition of Alex Mourelatos and Kay Williams.**

- 5.9 Ron Treabess reported that Board Officers will be elected and committee membership determined at the next Board meeting on January 5, 2011. Although Board members are only required to be on one committee, members are requested to be on two, as we have eleven voting members and six committees. Additionally, two Board members need to be at the committee meetings for there to be a quorum. Ron Treabess pointed out that the Chamber of Commerce Advisory Committee has not had a quorum for its last two

meetings. It was determined that Alex Mourelatos could either be on a committee in a non-voting Ex-Oficio capacity or could apply to be a voting lay member of a committee.

- 5.10 There is a draft 2011 Meeting Calendar in the packet. The Lodging Committee schedule has not yet been set.
- 5.11 The Board/Staff follow-up report has been included for review.

The NLTRA Board adjourned and reconvened as the North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce Board.

## 6.0 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE REPORTS

- 6.1 Andy Chapman participated in a meeting with the steering committee of the Lake Tahoe Basin Prosperity Plan. The plan is posted on [tahoeprosperity.org](http://tahoeprosperity.org) and the North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce website. The steering committee is working to get the information out and implemented. The steering committee is also going through the second round of a grant application process for matching funds with the U.S. Department of Economic Development. Funding will be routed through the Western Nevada Development District and could potentially occur in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of the calendar year. These funds are for implementation, not planning. Also, Placer County, through the NLTRA contributed \$5,000 last year; \$5,000 may be requested again this year. In response to Deb Dudley's comment that the plan did not address how things would be done, Andy replied that there are action steps in the plan.

Jennifer Merchant commented that the NLTRA needs to be aware of components of the plan before we give them any funding. She thinks that another physical entity and staff in the basin are not needed. The Prosperity Center is virtual, not a new bricks and mortar entity. Alex Mourelatos thinks basin-wide coordination is needed.

Roger Beck asked if participation in this endeavor is a good use of Andy's time. Andy said the meetings are about two hours a month. Roger would rather Andy use his time for marketing. Tom Murphy agrees with Roger, he sees some duplication with what the NLTRA is already doing. Tom is also concerned that off-lake area input was not included in the plan. Andy believes the NLTRA needs to be at the table. Ron Parson suggested that another staff member could participate.

***Action: Explore if there is a way to participate in the Lake Tahoe Prosperity Plan without using Andy Chapman's time.***

- 6.2 Kym Fabel gave the Chamber Manager Report:
- There will be a Front-line Employee field trip on Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. Participants will visit and get information on the Gatekeepers Museum, Maritime Museum, Tahoe Environmental Research Center and Mark Twain Cultural Center. It is sold out.
  - There were over fourteen Chamber Ed classes this year; twenty to twenty-three are on track for next year. Our partners include Sierra Human Resources and Sierra Economic Development Corporation.
  - The Chamber of Commerce newsletter was distributed. In place of the economic survey, there is the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter TOT report. It is very positive.

Discussion followed regarding the exclusion of the economic survey. The survey was omitted due to lack of response from area businesses. Roger Beck noted that TOT could be up due to the addition of the Ritz-Carlton revenues; it may not mean that business is

improved everywhere. Andy Chapman said that MTRiP (Mountain Travel Research Project) data may be used in future economic indicators. This is 6-month rolling data from lodging properties and it reflects local economic activity well. Jennifer Merchant thinks that vacation rentals should be in the data.

The North Lake Tahoe Chamber of Commerce Board adjourned and reconvened as the NLTRA Board.

## **7.0 DIRECTORS' COMMENTS**

- 7.1 Roger Beck has chocolate for everyone.
- 7.2 Alex Mourelatos commented that his six years on the Board have been educational. He thanked the Board for its efforts.
- 7.3 The Community Awards Dinner is February 16<sup>th</sup>.
- 7.4 Deb Dudley gave kudos to both the Search Committee for its time and effort and the current NLTRA staff for their work.

## **8.0 MEETING REVIEW AND STAFF DIRECTION**

- 8.1 Explore expanding the TOT Renewal Committee to include marketing, lodging and past president members.
- 8.2 Continue quarterly Executive Committee meetings with the Placer County Chief Executive Officer.
- 8.3 Marketing Conference Equity will be discussed at the end of the January 4<sup>th</sup> Finance Committee meeting. Roger Beck is asked to attend.
- 8.4 Better map location on the website and easier access to the webcams will be looked at.
- 8.5 Staff will analyze what components of the North Lake Tahoe Express performance review can be done by staff, what should be done by a consultant, and bring the conclusion to the Joint Committee.
- 8.6 Break out statistics by counties in future conference revenue statistics reports.
- 8.7 Andy Chapman and Jason Neary will inform the Board as to how conference promotion is done.
- 8.8 The Lodging Committee will decide its schedule.
- 8.8 Determine staff participation in the Lake Tahoe Basin Prosperity Plan.
- 8.9 Review information collection for economic indicators.

## **9.0 ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION**

- 9.1 The Board adjourned to closed session at 12:40 pm.

**10.0 RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION**

10.1 The Board reconvened to open session.

10.2 The Chair reported that the Board discussed personnel matters. No action was taken.

**11.0 ADJOURNMENT**

11.1 The meeting adjourned at 12:55 pm.

Submitted by:  
Kim Lambert  
Accounting and Human Resources Assistant