

MBCA BOARD MEETING APPROVED MINUTES

THURSDAY, May 8, 2025 / 4:00 – 6:00 PM on Zoom only

Black Bold Italics = Board vote *Blue Italics = action commitment*

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|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Steve Bardwell | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pat Flanagan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Arch McCulloch |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stacy Doolittle | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brian Hammer | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laraine Turk |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Fick | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Janet Johnston | <input type="checkbox"/> Bob Wold (advance notice) |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Kennington | |

Steve called the meeting to order at 4:01 PM

• Introduction of Guests and Board Directors

Guests included Eric Menendez, Jennifer Rendon, Ted Stimpfel

• Agenda approval

Laraine moved to approve the agenda. Pat seconded, and all were in favor. (9-0).

• Minutes from April 9, 2025, BOD meeting

Steve moved to approve the April minutes. Sarah seconded, and all were in favor. (9-0)

• Treasurer’s Report budgeting - BW

Steve read a report from Bob with summaries of recent activity. The one decision that needs to be made by a future online unanimous vote is whether to renew the CD at a slightly lower interest rate. Representing the Finance Committee, *Steve will send out an online motion before the deadline.* Major income and expenses in April were of course related to the Desert-Wise Landscape Tour. The CD is at \$66,513.70 and our checking account at \$11,154.94.

Regional Land Use

1) Lovemore appeal status

We understand the Joshua Tree Neighbors group has been consulting with attorney Baback Naficy and they expect to file the lawsuit by the deadline.

2) Scenic 247 – SK

Nothing New.

3) Of-Land development – SB

A group in 29 Palms is planning a community seminar on this proposed development (a resort development in a residential neighborhood of 29 Palms that would require rezoning) and asked MBCA to cover the facility rental for the 29 Palms Community Center (Freedom Plaza). See next item.

5-31-25 Town Hall ‘A Community Conversation on Development in our Desert Ecosystem’ – SB, JJ

We have agreed to cover the facility rental for this event with an expanded agenda focused on development across the Morongo Basin. Janet said that housing issues would be part of the discussion. Sarah noted that MBCA was working with Indian Cove Neighbors. Luke Basulto of NPCA may attend, as well as Richard Good, a

Twentynine Palms business owner and musician.

Outreach and Organizational Issues

- 1) Bring back the MAC
Stacy created a draft petition page on our website to show the possibility of taking a lead on pushing the County on this issue. There was consensus on doing this and expanding the effort in other ways as well, but no specifics planned yet. This could be part of the 29 Palms May 31 event.
- 2) Local business improvement district efforts
Eric reported on his continuing work on a centralized region-wide tourism promotion group (both hi and low deserts). The Joshua Tree Alliance for Business and Culture, a developing chamber-like group, is having a friend and fund raising event tonight.
- 3) Events Committee report
Recap 4-27-25 Landscape tour
Laraine provided some data and Stacy commented on reactions and touched on future plans. There were 211 people by the final reports from all sites. The surveys returned indicated agreement that the number of sites was good but there was also great interest in having 2 days of the Tour and other special events. *Laraine will work on a final report to be shared with funders.*
- 4) Educational Support
 - a. Scholarships 5-21-25
Three scholarships were awarded, all students at YVHS. The MBCA Conservation Scholarship went to Jocelyn Gonzalez, the STEAM Women's Scholarship to Molly Brown, and the Rieman Scholarship to Meghann Arballo. *Steve will create the certificates and Meg Foley will present them at the school's May 21 event.*
 - b. Field trip report
- 5) Website and Social media updates – LT, SD
Lots of activity because of the Tour and many social media postings.
- 6) Recap on up-close; presentation to 29 Rotary Club
Janet made a presentation to the Toastmaster's group that was well-received. There hasn't been any further planning for a 29 Palms Rotary presentation.
- 7) MBCA recruitment event follow up – To be addressed during our retreat.
- 8) MBCA Annual Board Retreat tentatively scheduled for Sunday August 24th.

Housing

- 1) Morongo Basin Housing Solutions Working Group – JJ
Janet continues to work with the East Desert Regional group and other local groups and individuals for a local focus and to try connecting for grants in any way possible.

Climate Change

- 1) OHV - WEMO [rejected](#)– updates.
No updates but we plan to continue to work with Steven Gjerstad.
- 2) Western Joshua Tree Conservation Plan – F&G hearing re-cap
Final Conservation Plan is due in July and the Commission continues to say their hands are tied by the legislation from making some of the exceptions (e.g. related to Yucca Valley’s sewer system) that have been requested.
- 3) Updated Fire Hazard Severity Zones [MAP](#)
Steve encourages everyone to check on their status by location.
- 4) Recap CDC [NEPA workshop](#) 4-12-25
Somewhat helpful in describing some ways that past federal legislation and court cases can be used to reduce the damage from the Administration’s actions.
- 5) [SB-607](#) CEQA **Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation** update

Renewable Energy

- 1) Break [rooftop solar contract AB-942](#)
The utilities continue to gain control in reducing rooftop solar advantages. Laraine mentioned that listening to the recent Solar Valley consortium webinar, there is a growing focus on community solar to reduce somewhat the need for industrial scale and give more local control.

Water Issues

- 1) [Cadiz](#) – BH
A Cadiz presentation to MWA that assumed future MWA involvement in their projects surprised MWA, and they have made a statement clarifying they have no commitment or involvement with the proposed projects.
- 2) JBWD update – DF
- 3) MWA update –BH

Directors’ Comments

Letters: re: revoking non-profit status, Protect Hot Creek as ‘Out standing water resource’

Next <u>Regular</u> Meeting: Thursday, June 12, 2025 4:00 – 6:00 PM – In-person and Zoom
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MBCA Change of Bank Motion

Steve submitted by email on Monday, May 19, 2025. Amendments by Laraine (blue) and Janet (red).

Steve moved to make these changes to MBCA’s banking situation:

1) To move \$50,000 of our US Bank CD funds to open a new \$50,000-13 month-3.75% CD at Banc of California. The balance of the existing CD funds will be transferred to our US Bank checking account.

2) To then close our account at US Bank and with the remaining funds open a savings account and checking account at Banc of California.

3) To close our credit card and debit card at US Bank and open a new credit card and debit card at Banc of California.

Motion passed unanimously by email on May 20, 2025.

Steve-yes
Sarah-yes
Brian-yes
Laraine-yes
Arch-yes
Janet-yes
Pat-yes
David-yes
Bob-yes
Stacy-yes