

**MBCA Board Meeting APPROVED Minutes – April 9, 2026**  
**Via Zoom**

**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"/> Joani Tremblay |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> David Fick      | <input type="checkbox"/> Janet Johnston excused      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Laraine Turk   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Erin Gatlin     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sarah Kennington | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bob Wold       |

**Call to Order at 5:04 pm**

**Introduction – Board Members and Guests**

Steve welcomed David Shook from JBWD, Meg Foley, and Helen Jeong.

**Approve Minutes from March 12, 2026**

***Brian moved to approve the minutes. Sarah seconded and all were in favor. (11-0)***

**Treasurers Report**

Bob reported that March was an active membership month due to Tour registrations. Large expenditures were \$2000 to Nicholas from the greywater project grant, about \$500 for insurance coverage, and several printing and publication costs for the Tour. Our CD expires on May 14. After discussion about renewing it, Steve suggested we renew the entire amount in another short-term mode due to current economic uncertainties, and there was consensus agreement.

Bob has to wait until after the Tour to close the old bank account because it remains the conduit for Nationbuilder online payments. He also reported he will try to open a Zelle account to be used for late Tour registrations on Sunday April 19 at MDLT. Bob will work with Nora and Cathy (who manages the MDLT registration) to finalize details. The Treasurer’s report was accepted by consensus.

**I. Upcoming**

**DWL Landscape Tour (Stacy)**

Stacy reported everything’s going well and showed a short Reel she created to advertise the Tour. She has also done extensive social media posts advertising the Tour. The Tour is advertised in the JBWD newsletter. Stacy recorded the radio ad started and it’s running. Steve thanked Stacy for doing a tremendous job of promoting.

**Greywater presentation – Sustainable Learning Center May 2 (Steve).**

This is an information with the workshop to follow. It will be at Neville Slade’s home in Apple Valley, including a home solar design workshop with Tony Mallone. MWA will boost the event. 40-50 are expected. Stacy needs more contact detail in order to promote. Brian will make contact with Neville.

**Letters and related actions on current development proposals:**

4-16-26 Zoning Administrator hearing on Pioneertown development and report on Pioneertown meeting re: developments (Joani)

Should MBCA write a comment letter? Joanie reported on the recent Pioneertown community meeting, and the general sense was the community wanted to work with businesses. However, the new project to convert a building across from the Post Office into a coffee shop wasn't discussed. There are so many projects being approved and considered under the proposed business overlay; this is another example where cumulative effects must be considered. Sarah suggested any comment we make should support what Friends of Pioneertown are saying.

29 Palms City Council Meeting – E-Group Harmony Acres

The City rejected the proposal. We'll continue to track whatever the developers do next. Erin noted that Stone James, the 29 Palms City Manager, resigned today.

### **Scholarships (Laraine)**

Applications due – April 12, 2026

Application Review – ? (How many people are needed?)

Award – May 20 6PM at YV HS

Laraine reported that the Scholarship Committee is set to review any applications received (Sarah, Janet, Laraine, Meg Foley, and Karin Messaros). (so far none). She noted it is hard to connect with high school students directly on campus and even harder to connect with them elsewhere. There was a suggestion to “double up” scholarships next year if we don't award any this year, but Laraine noted that there are 3 different sources for the 3 scholarships and one source will end this year. She strongly suggested we review our entire scholarship program and consider alternatives. She also wishes to resign from being Chair of the Committee. Ideas brought up included: offer scholarships to CMC students instead of or in addition to current scholarships; contact prior recipients for feedback; focus on elementary school teachers to start early. The Scholarship Committee and others interested should meet and discuss future changes. *Laraine will initiate a meeting this summer.*

### **Grant Application (Bob, Erin and Joani)**

Other Water Agency due dates (before June 30, 2026)

*Bob will develop and send a letter requesting the donations.*

### **Retreat (July or August 2026)**

*The Retreat will be on Saturday, August 29.*

Potential Topics *to be discussed at upcoming meetings.*

Roles and Responsibilities for 2027

60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Strategic Plan

## **II. Updates from the last meeting Completed Events**

MWA grant application – Bob completed the grant, requested \$9500, and added some new and fresh text. *Bob will send it to Steve.*

SB LUS Meeting and Field Trip – follow up notes and actions notifications and new MAC.

*Erin is working on notes from that meeting and hopes to finish by Sunday.* Steve says the LUS staff are eager to work with us and visit again.

JBWD vs sewer report (Stacy and David)

David noted concerns about the suspicious genesis of the project. Stacy added that the County representatives (Public Works and Special District staff) didn't answer the questions submitted in advance, but they did see how interested the community is. They stated confidently that if there wasn't a real need it wouldn't be mandated, but there is suspicion about that conclusion. It will require a vote by the affected residents. It really appears the County's goal is to support further development.

Harmony Acres – Noted above.

New business cards -- Martha Weir given the go-ahead.

Erin suggested the option of using a Board member's MBCA email instead of a private one.

Proposed Development – comment letters and follow on actions.

The [Landing Hotel](#) in Landers got the approval from the Planning Commission.

### **III. Items that require discussion / decision – including requests (new)**

Nora Lousignont our web ace is retiring – need for additional help with Nation Builder.

Possible solutions include Joanie learning NationBuilder from Nora or hiring someone (Pat suggests Eric Hamburg). NB code is old – we've been using it for 14 years! *The Web Team will discuss.*

Art Tours Catalog – \$950 authorization and content.

There was extensive discussion about the merits of spending so much for this purpose vs. using these funds for other more MBCA-centric purposes.

Points in favor of the full page ad:

- broad exposure of the Art Tours catalog;
- high quality and high volume means they can be found around the Basin and at homes long beyond the actual Arts Tour;
- it appeals to younger people;
- 75% of the Art Tour visitors are from the hi and low desert (Bob);
- there's a lot of overlap of arts and enviro communities (David)c;
- it's actually giving to another non-profit.

Points against the full page ad expenditure:

- there's more direct MBCA benefit by extending advertising for the annual meeting, Landscape Tour, and general promotion;

- if we do the catalog ad, spend less or make it smaller; change message from “congrats” to a call to action; use a QR code for Top Ten Tips; use a “join us” message.

Steve suggested that we can just decide to spend more money on advertising in multiple ways. **Steve moved to spend \$950 to purchase a full page ad at half page price in the 2026 Art Tours catalog and also to increase our general advertising budget. Brian seconded. The motion passed 7-3-1. (Yes: Steve, Brian, Bob, Pat, Laraine, Erin, Sarah. No: Stacy, Joani, Arch. Abstain: David due to financial interest through his business).**

*Steve, Bob, and Joani will work together to create the ad.*

MBCA support amplification of the Monument Manor Neighborhood Association.

Stacy had shared messaging from the group focused on dark skies plus other desert issues. *We agreed to post on the website with attribution (Laraine).* There were additional comments leading to a *recommendation for a future focused discussion about MBCA’s interactions with other organizations and businesses when values align.* We could recognize organizations for their good efforts with an “MBCA seal of approval.”

Should MBCA subscribe to an AI account to assist with our work?

*Discuss at retreat.*

JTABC membership \$200/year as voting member

*Erin suggested this be a retreat topic* as we do some larger thinking about what fits into our mission and vision and how we should interact and possibly donate to other nonprofits. Laraine agreed and noted we did a review of our relations with other organizations some years ago. *She will find it and send.*

Earth Day – *Laraine, Janet, and Meg Foley will handle this (Sat., April 25).*

## **Regular Agenda Items**

\*\* Committee updates not already covered, Submit reports as MS word docs so they can be included in agenda packet . Items requiring further discussion are listed under the Committee. Have all committees prepared their purpose statements?

*Steve asks that all committees send a monthly report, just a simple word document with a brief list of activities, to be included in the agenda packet, so we don’t have to discuss completed activities in the meeting.*

## **Operation and Program Committees**

Finance Committee (Bob)

Committee Budgets – Bob gave us the Budget document with chairpersons’ input. He plans to give each committee a breakout of what was spent compared to your budget. *This is a work in progress and he will provide it at the next meeting and then do it quarterly.*

Desert Wise Living and Tour Committee (Stacy) - In good shape.

Web/ Social Media / Communication (Stacy) - Nothing new.

Education (Laraine) - *Janet's report on field trips will be included next month.*

Board and Volunteer Recruitment (Sarah) - Nothing new.

### **Strategic Committees**

Partnership and Advocacy (Steve) – Discussed above.

Land Use and Conservation (Arch)

WEMO – No news.

Music Valley Mine – There's an [LAT times article](#) in which Chance Williams of NPCA and Krystian Lahage of MDLT accompanied a reporter to the site. This is a proposed rare earth elements mine.

[Hip Camp poll at Z107.7](#) – This is a resurrection of a past issue that was sparked by a Planning Commission hearing on a 12-space campground. Large unsupervised camps are problematic.

Off-Agenda Topics introduced:

A hi desert business roundtable with Obernolte is being planned by the Power in Nature (PIN) group.

Arch sent us an about the federal action re: national monuments and suggests we write a letter to Obernolte. The next local meeting with Obernolte's representative is from 2-4PM on April 14 in Yucca Valley. For these meetings, Arch recommends choosing a few clear messages, reading from notes, and then give the notes to the staff.

Obernolte supports no more cuts of JTNP ranger positions. He needs to hear more messaging emphasizing how public lands shut downs and sell-offs damage local communities, both for the people and the economies.

*Steve will ask Obernolte's office for help with the IRS misspelling of our organization name which is restricting us from some digital programs.*

WMA and JBWD updates –

MWA: Brian talked about the predicted Super El Nino, with “higher highs, lower lows, dryer dries, wetter wets.” Pacific weather patterns indicate an upcoming series of storms. MWA can meet Morongo Basin water obligations the next 4 years. They have some equipment issues in other areas due to deferred maintenance.

JBWD: David reiterated the two major issues are Chrom 6 and sewer authority. A group met with Obernolte and Senator Adam Schiff in February. Stacy and David went to Sacramento and met with 2 assembly offices, Greg Wallis and

Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh. Stacy added that Obernolte promised \$3 million for the district's chromium 6 problem.

Erin reported that bills are being presented to amend the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act (SB 1061, 1062, 1063). The changes are intended to provide greater clarity and to meet homeowner concerns. The bills are to be heard in committee on April 21. Brian said that MWA is involved.

Housing and Community (Janet) – absent.

### **Director's Comments**

Steve shared a letter from Dawn about the MAC. Dawn is looking into different version of a MAC, not subject to state regulations. May be related to Brown Act compliance.

Steve has also had some communication with LUS head Paul Gonzalez about keeping us informed.

Pat spoke about the Lear Solar project, noting that in a Z107.7 interview, the developer said "the project... was approved by the Planning Commission following a January 23, 2025 hearing" and that nearby people had the chance to comment. Pat says there were probably only 3 nearby but she wasn't among the notified but is cleaning up dust from that project. This is an example of how the City's notification rules (homes affected within 300 ft. of the proposed project) shouldn't apply in rural areas with such different physical land situations. Steve noted we have brought this up with LUS and will continue to do so and we need photos to prove the point.

**Adjournment at 6:20 p.m.**

**Next Board Meeting: May 14, 2026, Zoom only.**