



## **CAMBRIA TOURISM BOARD (CTB)**

(Cambria Local Fund Advisory Board)

### **Board Meeting Minutes**

Cambria Pines Lodge

Treetop Room

January 14, 2025

#### **1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Greg Pacheco at 1:00 p.m.

##### **Members Present**

Greg Pacheco

Jim Bahringer

Karen Cartwright

Steve Kniffen

George Marschall (1:05 p.m.)

##### **CBID**

CAO Cheryl Cuming

##### **Guests**

Patty Rixman, Stephanie Vassigh,

Cambria Scarecrow Festival;

Jessica Blanchfield, Archer & Hound

Advertising (via Zoom).

#### **2. Consent Agenda Items**

Board Meeting Minutes – October 8, 2024

***Jim Bahringer moved, and Steve Kniffen seconded, to approve the board meeting minutes of October 8, 2024, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.***

#### **3. Public Comment**

No public comment was received.

#### **4. Discussion & Action Items**

##### **4.1 Board Member Intent to Renew**

Greg explained that Karen Cartwright's current term ends January 31, 2025, she will submit a letter of intent to renew for an additional term. Cheryl Cuming explained that the new bylaws state that board terms are four years and confirmed that will be the length of Karen's new term.

***Steve Kniffen moved, and Jim Bahringer seconded, to approve Karen Cartwright for an additional four-year term on the board through January 31, 2029. Motion carried unanimously.***

##### **4.2 Board Chair Appointment Renewal**

Greg said this is a new item too, according to the new bylaws the Board Chair position term is one year and must be renewed annually. Cheryl confirmed that it will now be an annual renewal.

***George Marschall moved, and Jim Bahringer seconded, to approve the appointment of Greg Pacheco as Board Chair for an additional year term through January 31, 2026. Motion carried unanimously.***

#### **4.3 Board Vice-Chair Appointment Renewal**

Greg said the year term applies to the Vice-Chair position too now. Cheryl confirmed that the Vice-Chair's job is to run meetings when the Chair is absent and participate as part of the Governance Committee. Greg asked if anyone else was interested in the position, or if George would like to continue.

***Steve Kniffen moved, and Jim Bahringer seconded, to approve the appointment of George Marschall as Board Vice-Chair for an additional year term through January 31, 2026. Motion carried unanimously.***

#### **4.4 Letter of Support for North Coast Resiliency Plan**

Greg asked Jim if it was too late to submit the letter, and he said no. Jim explained that the purpose is to support Cambria receiving funding for Highway 1, including a safe crossing for Fiscalini Ranch. Greg said that he has more information on it and his understanding is that the Plan is an ordinance that allows for a lot more oversight and restrictions on development. Cheryl stated that if the board does support submitting the letter she will need to get it on the CBID board packet by tomorrow. Greg asked if Steve or Jim could share more information about it. Jim understood it was for Highway 1 funding, not an ordinance. It addresses climate change too, and Cambria's preparedness. Cheryl said that it should not be supported unless it is fully understood. Greg said that the plan is pretty extensive, and he feels it is restrictive to businesses and creates more bureaucracy. George said that there is already too much of that. Cheryl suggested that business owners write letters of support, rather than the board. Jim agreed.

***No motion was made.***

### **5. Information Items/Presentations**

#### **5.1 Scarecrow Festival 2024 Follow-up Report**

Patty reviewed an outline onscreen, she said it is highlights from the report submitted in December. It was the 16<sup>th</sup> year, and they put out over two hundred scarecrows, with 56 businesses, 16 which were new. They did a survey with 768 people, but were disappointed that it was down from the prior year, they are not sure why. The first week's traffic was almost double the prior year. One of their goals is to get new visitors here and 31% responded that they were new to the Festival. The rest of those numbers were included in your report too. 64% of respondents live outside of SLO, and 71% came just for the Scarecrows. The also broke out where respondents were visiting from 36% from SLO, the largest group was from the Central Valley, followed by Southern California. 42% stayed in lodging in Cambria and San Simeon. 40% of those stayed two nights. They had six bus tours this year. Direct emails increased 33% this year. Patty thanked the board for their support and funding.

#### **5.2 Marketing Committee Report**

Greg asked Jessica Blanchfield to give the monthly marketing presentation. Jessica shared a few highlights from the marketing committee meeting. She said that they are taking a new approach with the blog and itinerary on the website. They are creating new robust landing pages that are more involved and have a little more equity in them. She shared the November and December "Holiday Happenings" page. For January and February she displayed their current page. It has a lot of calls to action, "Book now." It also promotes any seasonal specials. There is a banner for lodging specials. Jessica said that they are reviewing all the lodging websites for specials too. Their Footfall data reflects increases in traffic to properties with specials, so it is especially important to promote those. George asked about elephant seal promotion. He said he feels it is something to use during the slow months as it is the seals most active time. George suggested a Cambria Elephant Seal Festival.

#### **5.3 CBID Reports**

Local Fund Summary – January 2025

*The report was provided to the board.*

#### **5.4 CBID Presentation**

Greg asked CBID CAO Cheryl Cuming to share her update. Cheryl reviewed highlights from the LFA Summary, she is thrilled with web traffic, it continues to grow year over year, up 24% with 75K sessions to the website for the month of December. The subscriber base continues to grow, they are at 132,000 with an open rate of over 50%. November was light, but December was way up. So, year over year they are up 6% year to date. Cheryl said that she wants to focus on the LFA News and Information. The CBID is moving forward with the county. The county has stated that the BID has grown so much, with over 30 subcontractors they are on the B.O.S. agenda every month. She shared that the CBID was formed under the 89 ordinance in 2009. Other SLO County tourism organizations were formed under the other ordinance, 94. It takes about a year to convert to a 94 district and about \$75,000. So, a better option is to modify the ordinance when the annual renewal comes around. It would be modified to allow a non-profit to provide those services rather than the county. This would remove the need for RFPs and RFQs whenever you want to renew contracts with Archer & Hound or for administrative services. It would save a lot of paperwork. The main change would be in procurement. It may not feel that different to all of you but will definitely expedite processes like approval and funding of applications. The CBID will approve and the check is signed. There will no longer be a need to go before the Board of Supervisors every month. She said they just got approval today to create the non-profit that will carry out the services. This process will only take two or three months and cost \$24,000. Cheryl shared that this is great news and will provide more flexibility. The timeline is starting tomorrow, and the new CAO is onboard for the process. Hopefully, it will be completed and effective May 1. Cheryl said that the county is very supportive, and she feels positive about it. Steve asked if amounts over \$50,000 would still need to be approved by the Board of Supervisors after the change and Cheryl said no. Greg asked if the change might allow for the board to have income. Cheryl was not sure and said that could be talked through, most likely it will stay the same. The whole process is a first, so there is quite a bit to work through. Cheryl will continue to report on the progress over the next few months.

Cheryl said that the Bylaws have been revised and approved. The main changes that affect the LFAs are: all board terms have been changed to four years; board officers' terms are renewed annually; and there is no longer a need for a secretary.

#### **5.5 Cambria Chamber of Commerce Update**

Greg asked Steve Kniffen to update the board on any pertinent Chamber matters. Steve said they believe they have found someone now to become the executive director. He thinks they have scared people off by asking too much in the position. Steve shared that the Chamber has an awesome board now. It is him and eight ladies from town. Karen agreed. Steve expressed how important he thinks the physical presence there at the Chamber is to visitors.

#### **5.6 Budget Reports**

Month Ended November 30, 2024:

*Revenue and Expenses*

*Marketing Budget Expenditures*

*Grant Funding Detail*

The budget reports were provided to the board but not discussed at the meeting.

### **6. Future Agenda Items/New Business**

### **7. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Jackson  
Managing Assistant