

NPHA Fall Meeting Minutes

October 29, 2024

NPHA Chairman Scott Socha called the NPHA Fall meeting to order at 8:35 am MT.

Introductions

NPHA Executive Director Mindy Meade Meyers invited Dave Degler, Co-Executive Director of A Christian Ministry in the National Parks to offer an opening prayer.

NPHA Members in attendance then introduced themselves.

Mr. Socha reviewed the agenda and offered welcoming remarks, noting the importance of the industry and the role played by NPHA members.

Treasurer's Report

NPHA Treasurer Carol Metzler gave a treasurer's report and reviewed the 2024 budget. She noted that there is currently a budget surplus due to better than projected dues numbers for 2024 (NPHA dues are based on a percentage of revenue over a three-year average), which has allowed NPHA to regain a year-end balance on par with its pre-Covid balance in 2019. Mr. Socha thanked Ms. Metzler and Ms. Meade Meyers noted that the goal is for the association to be solvent in the event of another Covid-type situation.

Aramark Membership

Ms. Meade Meyers reminded the membership that the Board of Directors had voted in July 2024 to offer Aramark Destinations provisional membership in NPHA. However, in accordance with NPHA's Bylaws, the full membership must vote to approve Aramark rejoining NPHA as a full member of the association.

Ms. Sasha Day, President and CEO of Aramark Destinations, offered remarks on Aramark rejoining NPHA, noting that the company is exciting to rejoin the association and the importance of being engaged in the association and in the concessions industry.

NPHA Vice Chairman Alex Klein offered a motion in favor of Aramark's full membership in NPHA. The motion was seconded by Ms. Metzler, and all members in attendance voted to approve Aramark's full membership.

Discussion of BLM Concessions Authority

Mr. Kevin Garden of The Garden Law Firm introduced the concept that there is an opportunity to pursue concessions authority on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands. He stated that the BLM currently does not have statutory authority for concessions on BLM lands, but noted that there are new efforts to create a legal framework to establish concessions on BLM lands, and that NPHA has been approached to offer substantive input. Ms. Meade Meyers noted that NPHA will solicit some volunteers and will set up a small working group to draft recommendations for this effort.

Discussion of Proposed NPHA Priorities for 2025-2026

Ms. Meade Meyers then opened discussion on NPHA's proposed association priorities for 2025-2026. The association is currently considering the following list of priorities for the upcoming two years:

- Advocate for Insurance Reform;
- Promote Efforts to Enhance Employee Health & Safety, Including Safe & Affordable Housing;
- Advocate for Park Access Means that Make Sense for Concessioners;
- Strategically Engage with Congressional Leaders and Allies; and
- Continue to Work in Partnership with DOI and NPS to Achieve Shared Sustainability Goals.

With regard to changes from the 2023-2024 priorities, she noted that NPHA is proposing to move away from its focus on tribal engagement and pursuing additional national park visitation data

Mr. Socha raised the possibility of conducting an "RFP lookback" with the National Park Service (NPS), with the goal of making the RFP process more transparent. Ms. Day stated that Aramark would be interested in such discussions. She also noted that Aramark is very focused on efforts enhance health and safety, and she stated that park access and visitation is also very important to them. Mr. Socha stated that he is interested in collecting feedback from guests on park access and timed entry.

NPHA Vice Chair Tim Schoonover stated that Xanterra would also like to focus on increasing clarity of the prospectus process. Mr. Chris Belland noted that his company is still very focused on insurance reform, and he noted the critical importance of liability waivers in his operations. Mr. Nico Foris echoed the importance of insurance reform, stating that there needs to be more visibility into insurance markets. Mr. Klein noted the importance of engagement with policymakers, especially when considering the impacts of government shutdowns. Ms. Metzler echoed this point, stating that NPHA should educate lawmakers on the topic.

Mr. Todd Rutledge asked how other concessioners are impacted by federal minimum wage and overtime requirements, which are crippling for Mountain Trip Alaska. Mr. Socha stated that they are also impacting Delaware North.

Revival of CONPAC

CONPAC is NPHA's political action committee. It was funded with individual contributions from NPHA members in the past, but as discussed at previous meetings, CONPAC has been dormant for several years due to noncompliance issues.

Ms. Metzler asked for an update about continuing CONPAC efforts. Ms. Meade Meyers noted the CONPAC account currently has \$45,000, and the plan is to bring the PAC into compliance and then spend remaining funds in a strategic way. NPHA is currently in the application process for obtaining a separate EIN for CONPAC. She reminded everyone that PAC donations cannot be made by companies, they must be made by individuals, which makes soliciting continued funds challenging. Ms. Metzler noted that CONPAC was historically primarily funded through large dollar contributions by a limited number of NPHA members. Ms. Meade Meyers stated that NPHA does not want to put pressure on current members to contribute to CONPAC, but that the PAC can certainly continue if members find it to be valuable.

Ms. Meade Meyers adjourned the Fall Meeting at 9:39 am.