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ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION

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Board of Directors Meeting

Date: January 28, 2025

Aspen Meadows Resort

Present: Dan Bartholomew, Jeff Bay, Debbie Braun, Patti Clapper, Matt Cook, Nina Eisenstat, Alan Fletcher, Michael Goldberg, Heather Kemp, Donnie Lee, Cristal Logan, Tharyn Mulberry, Justin Nyberg, Henning Rahm, Dave Ressler, John Rigney, Dwayne Romero, Steve Skadron, Julia Theisen, Maria Ticsay, Justin Todd, Bill Tomcich, Torre, Peter Waanders, Brenda Wild, and Pete Yang.

Absent: Lisa LeMay

Staff: Jennifer Albright Carney, John Davies, Savannah Grant, Casey Graves, Nichole Hellinger, Julie Hardman, Jessica Hite, Eliza Voss, and Liz Watson.

Guests: Summer Gathercole, Jon Peacock, and Ashley Perl.

Call to order: Cristal Logan called the meeting to order at 8:42 AM

Approval of the November 26th Minutes: Approved

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest: None

Nominating Committee Update: Donnie Lee provided an update on the 2025 Board composition, announcing that three at-large seats have been appointed: Jeff Bay, Justin Nyberg, and Pete Yang. He also outlined changes to the board leadership, with himself stepping in as Chair of the Board, Jeff Bay as Vice Chair, Cari Kuhlman as Treasurer, and Dwayne Romero as Assistant Treasurer. John Rigney will serve as Secretary, while Cristal Logan will transition into the role of Chair Emeritus. Additionally, Donnie introduced the proposed committee chairs, including Justin Todd for Marketing, Cari Kuhlman for Finance, himself for the Executive Committee, Maria Ticsay for Public Affairs, and Cristal Logan as Chair of the Nominating Committee. A motion was made and seconded to approve the nominations, and the motion passed unanimously.

Pitkin County Housing Initiative Tax: Jon Peacock and Ashley Perl presented the Pitkin County Housing Initiative Tax update, outlining the county's efforts to address the ongoing housing crisis following the successful passage of the housing tax ballot measure in November. The tax, which will generate approximately \$8.5 million in its first year and will remain in effect for 25 years, is aimed at expanding workforce housing opportunities and tackling affordability challenges. Ashley Perl, the county's Director of Resiliency, explained that housing affordability remains a critical issue, with data—much of it provided by ACRA—showing that most of Pitkin County's workforce cannot afford free-market homeownership. Even high-income earners struggle to buy homes, making deed-restricted and subsidized housing essential. To address this, the county is focusing on what they call the Three C's: conserving existing housing, converting free-market housing into affordable units, and constructing new housing. Prior to the tax's passage, the county relied on an unpredictable housing impact fee and the general fund for housing initiatives, neither of which provided stable, long-term funding. With dedicated tax revenue now available, the county plans to invest in new housing construction through partnerships, purchase free-market homes to convert into affordable housing, establish a capital reserve maintenance program for deed-restricted properties, and fund initiatives to support the unhoused workforce. A key highlight of the presentation was the Good Deeds program, which helps local workforce members purchase free-market homes by providing financial assistance in exchange for a permanent deed restriction. The program has already converted eight free-market homes into affordable units, assisting over 20 people, including healthcare workers and educators. Given its success, the county plans to expand the program with the new funding. Jon Peacock emphasized that another priority is partnering with small businesses to create housing opportunities for employees. While large employers may have the resources to develop their own housing, the county aims to fill the gap for smaller businesses that lack independent housing programs. This effort is still in the early stages, but the county intends to work closely with ACRA and other stakeholders to develop a strategic plan and ensure businesses have a voice in shaping these partnerships. Looking ahead, the county is focused on identifying development opportunities, scaling housing conversion programs, and refining its funding allocation strategy. The discussion concluded with a strong emphasis on collaboration between the county, local businesses, and regional partners to create long-term, sustainable housing solutions.

Leveraging Housing Tax to Address Homelessness: Summer Gathercole and Ashley Perl presented on Leveraging the Housing Tax to Address Homelessness, outlining how Pitkin County is working to develop solutions for its unhoused population. Summer Gathercole, Managing Director of SHG Advisors, explained that her team specializes in behavioral health, housing, and homelessness, bringing expertise from across Colorado and nationally. Their approach involves engaging the community, identifying gaps in services, and crafting a strategic plan to address homelessness in Pitkin County. One key point was that homelessness in the county is often less visible, with many individuals living in cars, couch surfing, or in overcrowded housing rather than on the streets. As seen in other rural communities, official data often underestimates the scale of the issue. To address this, SHG Advisors is conducting two surveys—one targeting service providers and another collecting firsthand experiences from people who are unhoused. To ensure a comprehensive understanding, they have hired two local individuals to engage with the unhoused population and gather insights into their needs and challenges. Summer emphasized that homelessness is not just a social issue, but an economic one, noting that it costs between \$30,000 and \$50,000 per person per year to provide emergency services to unhoused individuals, while permanent supportive housing costs around \$12,000 to \$15,000 per person. Addressing homelessness reduces burdens on first responders, hospitals, and local businesses, making it a financially sound investment. The county's strategic plan will map out housing assets and service gaps, prioritizing solutions based on feasibility and impact. The plan will resemble a business model, detailing capital and operating costs, staffing needs, and risk factors for each initiative. A major part of the strategy is collaboration, including the formation of an Advisory Council on Homelessness, composed of individuals with lived experience, to provide realistic insights and guide the county toward effective solutions. Additionally, Community Champions—local volunteers—will help spread accurate information, address misconceptions, and advocate for homelessness initiatives. Jon Peacock provided additional context, highlighting that Pitkin County has already successfully re-homed over 200 people through its case management and partnerships with Recovery Resources. However, progress has plateaued, prompting the need for new strategies. He stressed that solving homelessness is crucial not only for community well-being but also for employers and the resort economy. The presentation concluded with an invitation for ACRA and its members to stay engaged, provide feedback, and participate in shaping Vision 2050, the county's long-term strategy for housing and homelessness.

Chair's Comments:

Cristal Logan (Outgoing Chair) expressed heartfelt gratitude as she reflected on her time as Chair and Board Member of ACRA. She described it as an emotional moment, emphasizing how much she has loved being part of the organization and how proud she is of everything they have accomplished together. She specifically acknowledged the ACRA staff, recognizing their dedication and hard work in serving the community. Cristal also gave a special thank you to Debbie Braun, highlighting the strong partnership they have built over the years. She noted that while they have faced challenges, their work has been overwhelmingly positive and impactful. She concluded her remarks simply by thanking everyone, expressing appreciation for the opportunity to have been involved.

Donnie Lee (Incoming Chair) kicked off the year by emphasizing the critical role of ACRA's committees, highlighting how much of the organization's heavy lifting happens within groups like Destination Marketing, Public Affairs, and Finance. He acknowledged the ongoing challenges facing the community, including housing, transportation, and upcoming ballot initiatives, but reminded everyone that Aspen is a special place with a strong, engaged community. While people may not always see eye to eye, he stressed that spirited debate and engagement are what drive progress. Looking at Aspen's current economic landscape, he noted that the resort is having a strong year but is also facing pressures, particularly due to its high costs. International visitation has declined, with some travelers opting for more affordable European ski vacations instead. Despite these challenges, Aspen remains a highly desirable destination, and business continues to be strong. He closed by expressing optimism for the work ahead and gratitude for everyone's ongoing commitment to the community.

President's Comments: Debbie Braun provided several key updates, starting with a reminder that FOOD & WINE passes are selling quickly and encouraging anyone interested to purchase them soon. Representatives from FOOD & WINE are in town for site visits and meetings, signaling the start of preparations for the event. She also highlighted the resident sentiment survey as part of the destination management plan, urging board members and the community to participate despite some survey fatigue. Gathering feedback from residents is crucial for evaluating and improving Aspen's approach to tourism and community impact. Debbie, along with John and Savannah, will be traveling to Henderson, Nevada, for the W.A.C.E. conference, where she will be speaking on the importance of chambers and destination marketing organizations working together. John and Savannah are in their second year of a certification program to become chamber executives, and Jessica is pursuing her Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME) certification, joining Debbie and Eliza, who have already achieved this designation. She announced that Bridget, the



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chamber's social media manager, is leaving to attend film school in London. Interviews are already underway to find her replacement, as well as for a new communications manager, with hopes of filling both positions soon. Debbie is also conducting interviews with all Aspen mayoral and city council candidates, along with deep dives into the two upcoming ballot initiatives. She encouraged board members to save the date for Business Over Breakfast on February 19 at the St. Regis, previously called Eggs & Issues. The event will be a great opportunity to meet candidates and engage in community discussions. She concluded with an update on transportation challenges at the Aspen airport, noting that Eliza has been working with Pitkin County and transportation providers to explore solutions for late-night transit when travelers have difficulty securing rides. While in the early stages, the effort aims to improve guest services at the airport. Finally, she briefly mentioned that ACRA is in the process of moving to a new location, and asked Jennifer Albright Carney to provide an update to the board.

Armory Move Update: Jennifer Albright Carney provided an update on ACRA's move, confirming that the organization is still on track to relocate from the old powerhouse to the armory, which is being referred to as the "temporary armory" since it will only be a short-term solution. The move will include both administrative offices and the visitor center, while the city continues its long-term redevelopment plan for the space. Although the move is planned for the spring, a recent leak in the building has delayed progress slightly as staff works to address the issue. In preparation for the transition, ACRA is collaborating with BVK, the destination marketing creative agency, on branding and design concepts to create a cohesive look and feel across all visitor centers. The goal is to bring elements of the refreshed design to the airport visitor center, the temporary space, and other touchpoints, though some adjustments may be needed in the future when the airport undergoes redevelopment. BVK recently presented branding ideas, which are currently under review. Regarding the redevelopment of the armory, city council and staff held a work session on January 13 to discuss design updates, land use applications, and timelines. Council expressed support for an expedited land use review, which is set for submission on February 3, with a follow-up resolution expected in February. If the current timeline holds, construction on the armory would begin in the summer of 2026, meaning ACRA would only be in the space for about a year. Looking ahead, ACRA will need a permanent office solution, as the redeveloped armory will only have space for the visitor center, not administrative offices. Over the next 12 to 24 months, ACRA will explore commercial real estate options, with an estimated need of approximately 1,000 square feet for office space.

Public Affairs Committee Update: Maria Ticsay provided an update on the Public Affairs Committee's discussions regarding two upcoming ballot measures in the spring election. The first, Referendum 1, would amend Aspen's Home Rule Charter to require a 60% majority voter approval for any sale, exchange, or use of city-owned parks, increasing the threshold from the current 50%. The second, Referendum 2, would grant CDOT an easement for the Highway 82 realignment. The committee heard from proponents of both measures and worked to distill the key points relevant to ACRA members, particularly focusing on concerns about improving travel times, reducing congestion, and ensuring safe entrances into Aspen. The committee acknowledged the complexity and urgency surrounding these measures, with some members expressing concern that they are being rushed to the ballot as a way to pre-determine outcomes related to the entrance to Aspen. While there is widespread frustration among members who want action on traffic and transportation issues, it remains unclear what specific solutions the majority supports. Some members are advocating for immediate safety improvements to the bridge, while others want a full resolution to the long-debated entrance issue. The committee also recognized the broader issue of "ballot fatigue," with overlapping city council discussions and competing public narratives adding to the confusion. To gather additional insight, the committee conducted a membership survey, asking about transportation priorities, including what would make people more likely to use public transit. Early results indicate strong support for improved first and last-mile transit connections and increased bus frequency as the most effective ways to reduce congestion. However, neither referendum directly addresses these concerns, raising the question of whether they meaningfully solve the problems that members have identified. The committee will continue discussions at the February 3 meeting and will present survey findings at Business Over Breakfast. While ACRA does not intend to take a formal position on the ballot measures, the focus will be on providing clear, factual information to help members make informed decisions. Concerns were also raised about the potential unintended consequences of the referendums, including whether the open space measure could impact other projects, such as housing developments or airport improvements. Maria closed by emphasizing the importance of addressing safety concerns surrounding the Castle Creek Bridge, noting that past discussions about its condition have left many commuters and employees feeling uncertain. City officials reassured that recent inspections confirm the bridge is structurally sound, though concerns persist about how safety issues have been communicated. The committee remains committed to providing accurate information to members and the community while continuing to engage in broader transportation discussions beyond the scope of the ballot measures.

Directors' Remarks:

Cristal Logan welcomed Peter Waanders to the board, expressing excitement about his election and his contributions to the arts, culture, and nonprofit sectors through his work at Anderson Ranch Arts Center. She also formally welcomed Tharyn Mulberry, commending his leadership at the Aspen School District and recognizing the significant challenges he is addressing with grace. She shared that the Aspen Institute is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year and is planning summer events to mark the milestone, inviting everyone to participate. Cristal also noted that Justin Todd is leaving his role as General Manager of the Aspen Meadows Resort, and the position is now open. She encouraged board members to spread the word, mentioning that there have already been 110 applicants.

Dwayne Romero shared that his company is designating 2025 as the "year of young and emerging leaders" to focus on developing the next generation of professionals. Acknowledging the aging leadership within the organization, he emphasized the need to create opportunities, offer competitive salaries, and provide leadership development for younger employees. To achieve this, his company is pairing motivated individuals with senior leaders for mentorship, helping them build the necessary skills to advance in roles such as property management and accounting. The goal is to create long-term career growth, improve job retention, and provide sustainable wages that enable employees to remain in the community. Dwayne suggested that the chamber and other organizations consider similar initiatives to invest in future leadership. He pointed out that professional development, economic stability, and housing opportunities are all interconnected and essential to keeping young professionals in Aspen. He encouraged board members to think about how they can support emerging leaders within their own organizations.

Pete Yang shared that Alpine Bank is operating steadily, reflecting the overall business community. He noted that things are running smoothly as the winter season progresses and that there are no significant updates to report at this time.

Nina Eisenstat expressed gratitude to Cristal Logan for her five years of dedicated leadership, highlighting her strategic thinking, listening skills, and problem-solving abilities. She also welcomed Donnie Lee back as chair, noting that while his leadership style is different, he shares many of Cristal's philosophies and will guide the board effectively. She formally welcomed Tharyn Mulberry and Peter Waanders to the board, acknowledging their expertise and contributions. She also commented on the success of recent events, noting how well-attended and well-executed they have been. She specifically praised the decision to move Soupsköll to December, calling it a brilliant move that contributed to its overwhelming popularity. Nina remarked on the strong momentum of Aspen's event season, with Gay Ski Week leading into X Games and now the World Cup. She observed that visitors appear to be arriving earlier and staying longer, keeping the town busy. She noted that the service sector is doing well, and while people are looking forward to a break, there is overall satisfaction with how strong the season has been.

Steve Skadron thanked Cristal Logan for her leadership and welcomed Donnie Lee, Peter Waanders, and Tharyn Mulberry to their new roles. He highlighted Food & Wine as an exciting opportunity for Colorado Mountain College, noting that CMC has been involved for several years. He offered the use of the college's kitchen as a resource, given its proximity to the airport, for any storage, cooling, or prep needs, mentioning that GE Monogram used the space last year to prepare 10,000 meal boxes. He also provided an update on concurrent enrollment, where high school students take college courses. He emphasized its growing importance in community colleges nationwide, noting that around 40% of CMC students now come from high school programs. He expressed pride in the strong concurrent enrollment numbers at the Aspen and Carbondale campuses and shared that CMC is working closely with Tharyn Mulberry and his team to ensure Aspen High School is part of the program. Steve invited everyone to CMC's "Student for a Night" open house on February 19, where participants can sample a variety of courses, including culinary arts, soft goods design, and business classes. He described it as a fun, hands-on way for the public to experience different programs.

Matt Cook noted that things are running smoothly, highlighting the success of Gay Ski Week and X Games. He expressed hope for more snowfall to help bring additional visitors to Aspen.

Justin Nyberg highlighted a recent New York Times article on overtourism, which presented worst-case scenarios of unregulated tourism negatively impacting communities. He viewed the article through the lens of ACRA's destination management plan, emphasizing the careful approach Aspen has taken to balance tourism while maintaining the visitor experience and community well-being. He encouraged board members to read the article and appreciate the thoughtful planning behind Aspen's tourism strategy. He also inquired about feedback on Wintersköll's move to December, noting that from his perspective, the shift was a success. He



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felt the event focused more on locals and fostered a strong sense of community, particularly at events like the historic film screenings. Turning to the recent Los Angeles fires, Justin reflected on how wildfires have become increasingly destructive and unpredictable, emphasizing that Aspen remains vulnerable to similar risks. He raised the idea of expanding ACRA's role beyond destination management to include destination protection, advocating for a large-scale fire mitigation effort led by the city, county, and Fire Protection District. He suggested that initiatives such as brush clearance, fire-resistant building codes, improved hydrant systems, and coordinated fire response plans should be prioritized, even if they take years to implement. While acknowledging that such efforts might fall outside ACRA's core mission, he urged the board to consider whether the organization should play a role in advocating for these protections to safeguard Aspen's future.

Dan Bartholomew provided a brief update on the airport, reminding everyone that it will be shut down for maintenance from May 5 through June 1. He also noted that the planned runway shift is expected to take place over a nine-month period in 2027. However, he acknowledged that the timeline could be impacted by the current federal administration's decision to hold all grants, which may affect funding. He concluded by stating that they will monitor the situation and adjust as needed.

Bill Tomcich provided an update on air travel trends for Aspen-Pitkin County Airport, noting that 2024 set a new record for passenger activity. Total passenger enplanements reached just over 361,000, a 14% increase from the previous year's 315,000. The biggest growth came in the shoulder seasons, particularly April and November, due to Delta's expanded year-round service from Atlanta and Los Angeles. He also highlighted the successful introduction of the Embraer E175 aircraft, which began service on December 3. Over the past eight weeks, more than 240 flights have arrived and departed using this specially modified aircraft. Of the six E175s certified for Aspen, four are brand new, delivered directly from the factory in Brazil. Bill took a moment to recognize Captain Tim Scott, who has played a critical role in training pilots for the E175 flights in Aspen, as well as for Gunnison, Sun Valley, and Eagle airports. After 40 years with SkyWest, Captain Scott is retiring, and his final flight will depart from Aspen at 3:22 PM today. Bill shared that he was able to rearrange his own flight to be on board for the celebratory occasion, recognizing Captain Scott's contributions to making the new aircraft service a reality. He closed with a lighthearted comment about the need to address salt being tracked onto the new aircraft's carpets, suggesting a solution like a red carpet for passengers to wipe their feet before boarding, given that each plane costs \$58 million.

Maria Ticsay gave a shoutout to ACRA for their participation in Gay Ski Week's Downhill Costume Contest.

Heather Kemp expressed excitement about Cristal Logan and Donnie Lee continuing to work together in their new leadership roles, calling them a strong team. She also emphasized the importance of wildfire preparedness, reflecting on her experience living in Basalt during the Lake Christine wildfire. She recalled seeing the fire move rapidly toward El Jebel and noted that both she and Debbie Braun, who also lived down valley at the time, understand firsthand how quickly fires can escalate. She suggested exploring initiatives such as requiring personal hydrants for new developments along Castle Creek Road and other fire mitigation efforts. She also shared her enthusiasm about serving another two years on the board, praising the current group and looking forward to continued collaboration. Regarding Wintersköl, she noted positive feedback but mentioned that the timing in mid-December was difficult for participation. She suggested that an earlier date, around December 10, would allow for more involvement, though she acknowledged that the event's schedule depends on the year's calendar. Heather commented on retail trends, observing that December felt a bit slower, with fewer bookings and less activity, possibly due to election uncertainty causing people to hold off on big trips. However, she noted that businesses are now feeling optimistic, and she expects a strong year ahead.

Dave Ressler apologized for joining late due to an emergency meeting and shared his positive experience flying on the new Embraer E175, noting that it was a significant improvement over previous aircraft and a great benefit to the community. He also appreciated the discussion on wildfire preparedness and fire hardening, emphasizing its relevance for the hospital, which is located on the other side of the bridge. While the hospital is designed to be defensible in place, with fire-resistant features, the biggest concern remains smoke infiltration, as ventilation systems can only be sealed to a certain extent. He stressed that if a wildfire were to approach from Castle Creek or Maroon Creek, evacuation would likely be necessary. Dave highlighted the extensive emergency planning that has been done to prepare for such a scenario, drawing on lessons from other hospitals in Colorado that have faced similar challenges. He encouraged all organizations to consider what wildfire preparedness looks like for them



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Julia Theisen reflected on coming full circle with Donnie Lee returning as chair and expressed appreciation for both Donnie and Cristal Logan's leadership, past and future. She acknowledged the importance of the housing conversation and Dwayne Romero's comments on mentoring and leadership development, emphasizing that housing and upward mobility are the biggest challenges for employee retention in Snowmass. She noted that Snowmass Tourism currently has two open positions—a marketing manager and a special events coordinator—and encouraged board members to help spread the word. Regarding business in Snowmass, she reported that while it remains strong, it is not quite at Aspen's level. Occupancy from November through April is down 5% compared to the previous year, but average rates are up 3.4%, mitigating concerns. She remains hopeful for improvement in the next report. Julia also provided an update on the final phase of the Snowmass Destination Management Plan. Data has been collected through surveys, interviews, and community visioning sessions, and she will present findings to the Town Council next week. The draft plan will be completed in February, with a review period in March for the tourism board, stakeholders, town council, and the community. The goal is to finalize and approve the plan in April, followed by discussions on implementation.

Peter Waanders expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome to the board and shared his amusement at discovering the number of local nonprofits he hadn't previously known about. He suggested profiling one nonprofit each month and mentioned that he had bribed people to vote for him by offering coffee meetings. He highlighted an ACRA member, Americans in Ben Gurion University, run by Julie Spears, who represents the university's fundraising efforts across the western United States. He noted her involvement in hosting events and engaging with the Jewish community and YPO. Peter also met with Amir at We-Cycle and praised the organization's partnerships with RAFTA and other municipalities as they expand through the valley. He shared that We-Cycle is launching a fully supported e-bike program in Snowmass Village, which he sees as an exciting development. Providing an update on Anderson Ranch, he noted that 80% of participants in the ranch's education programs travel in specifically for workshops. Their summer program, launched in January, is already 50% sold out and typically reaches full capacity by the end of the first quarter. Beyond the summer, the ranch operates residency programs, bringing in artists for five to ten weeks to work on individual projects. He also discussed the impact of the Los Angeles wildfires on the artistic community, explaining that when artists lose their homes, they often lose their entire body of work and archives. In response, Anderson Ranch is adjusting its fall schedule to host a residency specifically for artists from LA affected by the fires. This initiative will include public exhibitions and provide a platform for these artists as they rebuild their careers. Peter closed by addressing the anxiety within the local Latino community regarding national immigration policies. He emphasized that many in the workforce are deeply affected by the current political climate. He highlighted the work of Voices You Need Us, an organization led by Alex Sanchez, which focuses on leadership and integration of immigrant communities. They are currently offering Know Your Rights education programs to help immigrants understand their legal protections. He encouraged spreading awareness, emphasizing that many people—regardless of status—know someone who is living in fear, and that supporting them is vital for the broader community.

Henning Rahm addressed concerns about the uncertainty surrounding immigration enforcement and its impact on the hospitality, service, retail, and construction industries. He emphasized the need for educational efforts to help employers and employees navigate the situation, as many businesses are unsure of what they can legally communicate. He noted that internal discussions within his company revealed a lack of clarity on rights and protections, despite organizations like the Colorado and American Hotel & Lodging Associations actively working on the issue. He also mentioned growing rumors of ICE presence in the valley, causing anxiety among local businesses. He suggested that ACRA consider partnering with legal experts to provide guidance and education on this issue, as his company has done. On the hospitality front, he reported that the winter season started well, despite a slight dip in December occupancy. However, business surged in January, partly due to an influx of visitors displaced by the devastating wildfires, particularly those with the means to travel to Aspen. Looking ahead, the remainder of the winter season appears strong. He noted some uncertainty for the upcoming summer, particularly a slight dip in private events and weddings, though he expects demand to increase as the season approaches.

Torre provided updates on key city initiatives, starting with the upcoming election, where six candidates are running for two city council seats. He addressed wildfire mitigation efforts, noting that the city has already engaged in fire hardening by reviewing building codes and implementing regulations for defensible zones and forest separation on private properties. While thinning the urban forest remains a broader community discussion, the city, county, and Aspen Fire District are actively working together on wildfire preparedness. He acknowledged growing concerns about wildfire risks, emphasizing that high winds and dry conditions put Aspen in a vulnerable position. Efforts are focused on both evacuation planning and defensible spaces, though developing effective wildfire strategies remains complex and requires expert input. Torre also raised concerns about the armory redevelopment plans. He pointed out that while the community voted to transition the building from city offices to community use, the current



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redevelopment proposal includes multiple restaurants and bars, with the top floor slated for market-rate restaurants rather than community gathering space. He expressed disappointment in this direction, arguing that the space should prioritize affordability and accessibility to better serve locals. He encouraged ACRA to provide feedback to council members if there are concerns from the business community about the current plans. He wrapped up by acknowledging that many issues, including the entrance to Aspen, remain ongoing discussions, reinforcing the city's commitment to addressing these challenges.

Patti Clapper expressed relief that Pitkin County does not have an upcoming election, joking that she is still recovering from the airport election. She thanked Cristal Logan for her leadership and welcomed Donnie Lee back, acknowledging the challenges ahead. She addressed wildfire concerns, highlighting her personal connection as someone from Arcadia/Pasadena, where friends lost everything in the recent fires. With her long-standing ties to the Aspen Fire Protection District and a family history in firefighting, she emphasized the urgency of the issue. A state advisory board on wildfire hardening and building codes is in the process of developing new regulations, which should be released for public comment by late summer or early fall. Commissioner Jeffrey Woodruff has been appointed to this board, and Pitkin County will use these state guidelines to tailor local fire mitigation efforts. She noted that while fire-resistant structures help, extreme fires—like those in Eaton Canyon—can still destroy hardened homes due to hurricane-force winds and overwhelming fire intensity. She stressed the need for the city, county, and fire district to move quickly on evacuation planning and other wildfire preparedness efforts, emphasizing that action must be proactive rather than reactive. On immigration issues, she noted that Pitkin County passed a "welcoming resolution" during the first Trump administration and is now reviewing it with legal counsel to determine whether updates are needed. However, elected officials have been warned that noncompliance with federal immigration policies could result in criminal charges. She acknowledged the risks officials face in challenging these policies. She also discussed concerns over potential federal funding freezes, referencing President Trump's announcement the night before that could impact federal grants and funding across various sectors. This could have wide-reaching consequences for Pitkin County, including cuts to multimodal transportation funding, the \$2 million RAISE grant for transportation planning, human services, senior services, and even airport funding. She expressed frustration over the unpredictability of federal decisions and the challenges they create for local governments. Patti suggested that ACRA should present to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) about destination management and will work with the new BOCC chair, Kelly McNicholas Kury, to create an opportunity for that discussion. She also flagged the May Economic Development District seminar hosted by the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments (NWCOG) in Silverthorne as a valuable event, noting that she sits on the NWCOG board as vice chair alongside Alyssa Shenk of Snowmass. She concluded by mentioning the BOCC's upcoming retreat, where commissioners will prioritize key projects including the airport, landfill, potential new jail, and housing. Given limited resources, the county must carefully plan its approach to these initiatives, especially in light of potential funding challenges. She ended by thanking everyone for their contributions to the community.

Justin Todd introduced White Elephant Resorts as one of the newest members of the chamber. He shared that White Elephant Aspen will be opening on Main Street across from the Molly Gibson Lodge, and he will be serving as the managing director. The hotel is set to open this fall, and he expressed excitement about joining the chamber and being part of the community.

Tharyn Mulberry expressed gratitude for the warm welcome but joked that he now has 30 more tasks to address for the school district. He highlighted that many of the issues discussed, especially immigration, are also impacting the district. The district relies heavily on staff members who are affected by immigration policies, and they are working on contingency plans for situations where a student may be left without a guardian due to immigration enforcement. He mentioned that Aspen Family Connections, led by Catherine Sands, provides valuable resources, including a red card program to inform students and families of their rights. He also noted that the school district is facing budget constraints and will be reprioritizing its expenses. A task force is working on financial planning, and he expects there will be ballot measures in November for bond sales, a sales tax increase, and a mill levy override to support school funding. Regarding emergency preparedness, Tharyn shared that the district is re-evaluating its evacuation plans. Previously, the designated evacuation site was Buttermilk, but during a swatting incident, it was impossible to get there. They are now working on an updated plan and considering ways to strengthen safety measures. On a lighter note, he mentioned that the search for a new football coach is currently dominating his inbox. He closed by inviting everyone to tour the school district to see the work being done and explore opportunities for partnership, emphasizing the district's central role in the community.

Jeff Bay welcomed the new board members and expressed appreciation for Cristal Logan's leadership during his time as vice chair. He admitted initial hesitation about stepping into the role but joked about now being the "Susan Lucci" of the board. He shared that his recent career transition has shifted his perspective. Moving from the lodging industry to estate management for a second



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homeowner has given him a new lens to view destination management, particularly in terms of service needs rather than visitor attraction. He now manages three homes, working with over 18 different trades and 100 employees, and sees firsthand the critical role of the service industry in Aspen. He looks forward to collaborating with others in that sector, including Dwayne and Nina, to ensure a strong network of trades and businesses that provide essential services to the community. Jeff acknowledged the learning curve of this new role and hopes to contribute his past experience in lodging while gaining a deeper understanding of estate management's unique challenges. He also noted that Public Affairs, where he will be involved, is an intense and demanding committee, tackling complex issues that require careful discussion. He is excited to be back, contributing to the board, and preparing for future leadership responsibilities.

Cari Kuhlman welcomed Tharyn Mulberry and Peter Waanders to the board, noting that she has served with them before and looks forward to working with them again. She also thanked Cristal Logan and Donnie Lee for their leadership and contributions. She shared that Vectra Bank offers safe deposit boxes in a fire-retardant brick building for those needing secure storage. Regarding the Finance Committee, she mentioned that Debbie and her team are finalizing the 2024 financials, and once completed, the committee will meet to review them. Cari also recounted a frustrating personal experience at the Aspen airport on December 26. Her flight was repeatedly delayed until it was ultimately canceled due to the curfew, a situation she suspects many have encountered. She was particularly concerned about families, especially those with children, who had no clear place to go for the night. She emphasized that this remains a significant issue for the airport, as most other airports allow passengers to stay overnight in similar circumstances, and she expressed concern about where those travelers ended up.

Adjournment: Donnie Lee adjourned the meeting at 10:51 AM