

**Board of Directors Meeting**

**Date: September 24, 2024**

**Aspen Meadows Resort**

**Present:** Cristal Logan, Jeff Bay, Cari Kuhlman, John Rigney, Donnie Lee, Dan Bartholomew, Debbie Braun, Patti Clapper, Matt Cook, Nina Eisenstat, Michael Goldberg, Heather Kemp, Henning Rahm, Dave Ressler, Dwayne Romero, Steve Skadron, Heather Steenge-Hart, Maria Ticsay, Justin Todd, Bill Tomcich, Torre, Brenda Wild, and Pete Yang.

**Absent:** Alan Fletcher, Lisa LeMay, and Justin Nyberg.

**Staff:** Jennifer Albright Carney, Alycin Bektesh, John Davies, Casey Graves, Julie Hardman, Sarah Reynolds Lasser, Eliza Voss and Liz Watson.

**Call to order:** Cristal Logan called the meeting to order at 8:35 AM

**Approval of the August 27th Minutes:** Approved

**Disclosure of Conflict of Interest:** Patti Clapper and Torre

**Airport Ballot Initiatives:** Maria Ticsay and Alycin Bektesh presented the Airport Ballot Initiative to the ACRA Board, summarizing extensive community outreach efforts and feedback, which included newsletters, social media, public hearings, listening sessions, and a survey. Key takeaways from the survey revealed that 82% of respondents supported the Airport Layout Plan (ALP) for safety, service reliability, and economic benefits. The presentation detailed the competing ballot measures for the airport:

**The Citizen-Initiated Home Rule Charter Amendment** – Limits the Board of County Commissioners' (BOCC) ability to modify the runway without public approval. **The County-Initiated Charter Amendment** – Affirms the BOCC's authority to manage the airport layout, including runway expansions, while addressing community priorities like safety and infrastructure. A key focus was the ALP's importance for safety and future infrastructure, with the FAA standards highlighted as critical to ensure continued compliance and avoid disruptions. The survey also indicated strong support (90% backing) for the BOCC's referendum over the citizen initiative. During the discussion, differing opinions emerged about the potential impacts of expanding the runway, including environmental and community concerns. However, many members emphasized the need to align with FAA standards, maintain economic benefits, and empower elected officials to manage complex infrastructure decisions. Ultimately, the Board voted **to oppose** the citizen-initiated charter amendment and **support** the county's amendment. A resolution reflecting this decision was authorized to be finalized by the executive committee.

**Chair's Comments:** Cristal Logan expressed her appreciation for the Aspen Chamber staff, congratulating them on the success of the "Afternoon Blend" event and recognizing SkiCo for their contributions. She also took a moment to acknowledge Alycin Bektesh's departure from ACRA, praising her impactful work. She emphasized the importance of outreach, noting that while the board has been deeply immersed in the airport issue, it's essential to remember that not everyone follows it as closely. She encouraged board members to share the resolution and related information with their friends, colleagues, and constituents, emphasizing the need to make resources and answers available. Cristal also urged the Aspen Chamber staff to extend communication within their own networks, given the complexity and emotional nature of the issue. She acknowledged the contentious nature of the debate and reiterated the value of clear, simple messaging.

**President's Comments:** Debbie Braun shared her upcoming travel plans, mentioning she is heading to Crested Butte for the Governor's Conference on Tourism. She expressed excitement about attending the Adventure Travel and Tourism Association (ATTA) World Summit in Panama in early October, highlighting it as a valuable opportunity for education and networking. Debbie welcomed any travel tips for Panama, as it will be her first time there. She emphasized the importance of spreading the word about the board's resolution regarding the airport ballot initiatives, noting that 12% of voters remain undecided. Debbie encouraged board members to follow up with their constituents by sharing the press release and resolution, stressing that the message could carry more impact when coming directly from them rather than the staff. In closing, Debbie praised Alycin Bektesh's professional growth, reflecting on how far she had come since joining the chamber. She expressed confidence that Alycin would make meaningful contributions in her new role with the county and affirmed that the chamber would send her off on a high note.

**Directors Comments:**

**Patti Clapper** mentioned an upcoming debate on the airport issue, organized by the Aspen Daily News and Aspen Public Radio. The event will take place on October 4th at the Wheeler Opera House, featuring representatives from both sides of the issue. She promised to share more details as soon as they become available.

**Dan Bartholomew** provided an update on the runway closure, confirming it will take place from May 5 to June 1 for a total of 27 days. He noted that the airport will cover the \$7.3 million cost from its own budget. Operations will remain open until 9 PM on May 5 to allow outbound flights, and the runway will reopen after 7 PM on June 1, allowing incoming flights to resume, with departures available early on June 2.

**Henning Rahm** echoed earlier comments about the importance of outreach, sharing that when they met with hotel general managers, about 65-70% participated, though the group was relatively quiet. He emphasized the need to communicate with friends, family, and constituents to ensure they are informed about the airport ballot initiative, as the ballot question differs from the overall airport issue. Henning stressed the urgency of spreading the message, encouraging everyone to talk and engage others to ensure the issue is well understood and addressed. He thanked participants for their time and the meaningful conversation.

**Adjournment:** Cristal Logan adjourned the meeting at 10:28 AM