

**APPROVED MINUTES
SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS - WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2022
Virtually on Zoom**

Call to Order: Chairman Albin Gielicz called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Roll Call & Self Introductions: SMTT COO Evan Edwards called for self-introductions. Board Members and those present provided brief self-introductions. The following persons were recorded in attendance:

Board Present: Chairman Albin Gielicz, Vice Chair Neil Carrey, Treasurer Younes Atallah, Secretary Jan Williamson, Member Lauralee Asch, Member Darlene Evans, Member Shahid Kayani, Member Jeff Klocke, Member RoseMary Regalbuto, and City Liaison Anuj Gupta.

Also Present: Chief of Police Ramon Batista, SMTT President/CEO Misti Kerns, SMTT Chief Operating Officer Evan Edwards, SMTT Chief People Officer Rachel Lozano, SMTT Chief Marketing Officer Michael Gurrieri, SMTT Director of Communications Cara Rene, and SMTT Director of Global Business Development Todd Mitsuhata.

Absent: Member Gerry Peck was absent.

Public Comment: Chairman Albin Gielicz called for public comment; there was none.

City Manager Update: City Liaison Gupta informed the Board that the annual homeless count is on January 26th (has now been delayed to February 23, 2022). This is the first one in two years due to COVID-19, and to reduce risk the volunteer training is online, and households can register in pre-formed groups. Gupta requested that Board members share the details and sign-up link with their teams, as volunteers are needed; <https://www.santamonica.gov/santa-monica-homeless-count>. The city's website overhaul is in progress to make santamonica.gov more streamlined, informative, and organized around users' needs. Furthermore, city council approved a major affordable housing project. The city is also doing outreach before deciding on a mandate to require vaccination cards for indoor businesses. Gupta further updated the Board that a task force is working with the police department to assign dedicated resources and build relationships to protect public health and safety on and around the pier with regards to unlicensed vendors. There have been improvements in the number of those vending on the pier, especially in a decrease in unpermitted vendors using combustible fuels.

Chief of Police Update: Chief Batista updated the Board on testing the police department has been conducting for the past 8 weeks of an unmanned aerial system, AS (also known as a drone) that responds in conjunction to 911 calls. Batista reported success in the drone arriving on scene prior to the officers and providing real time video with infrared nighttime capabilities. This AS is observed by police personnel to relay information to the responding officer. Member D. Evans asked if the drone will be used for more than just responding to 911 calls, and Chief Batista responded that operating guidelines as well as SMPD guidelines limit the drone to only 911 call response; it is not permitted to do surveillance or intrude into private spaces and noted that all drone missions are recorded. Chief Batista then updated the Board on the Pier Task Force deployment and reported success in working collaboratively with public health officials to reduce the number of unpermitted vendors on the Pier and beach areas on the weekends. However, on weekdays (without the task force deployed) the unpermitted vendors return. Chief Batista shared that safety for everyone is the priority, and activities of many vending need to be addressed to ensure public safety and the protection of our historic wooden pier. Chairman Gielicz asked about school-age children working the vendor carts, and Chief Batista clarified that school-age children are working on weekdays, not just weekends, with these vendors. Chief Batista requested suggestions for a new location off the Pier for vending and informed the Board that he is working to obtain resources and funding from the city to continue Pier deployment. City Liaison Gupta noted that the permit process is designed to be inclusive and accessible. Member D. Evans asked about the possibility of a statewide vending ordinance, and Liaison Gupta responded that multiple organizations, cities, and individuals are working toward amending the state's current ordinances to ease obtaining county health permits.

Finally, Chief Batista discussed the benefits of the homeless liaison team and expressed a wish to expand the program to 7 days/week to increase its effectiveness.

Approval of the November 2021 Board Meeting Minutes: Secretary Williamson presented the Meeting Minutes; Vice Chair Carrey moved to approve the minutes; Treasurer Atallah seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Member Peck absent.

Acceptance of the September and October 2021 Financial Memos: Treasurer Atallah presented the September and October 2021 Financial Memos. Vice Chair Carrey moved to accept the Financial Memo; Member Regalbuto seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Member Peck absent.

Approval of the 2021-2022 Budget & TMD Reforecast: Treasurer Atallah presented the 2021-2022 Budget & TMD Reforecast, and SMTT COO Edwards expounded upon the numbers and the forecast. Vice Chair Carrey moved to approve the Financial Memo; Secretary Williamson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Member Peck absent.

SMTT Staff Updates: Director of Global Business Development Mitsuata informed the Board of upcoming trade shows and events in North America, the United Kingdom, and France. SMTT's Sales department is also working on collaborations with San Francisco Travel for a Signature Travel e-blast, launching digital promos with the Travel Leaders Network, and finalizing a contract for in-market representation with Pulse Travel Marketing in Canada. They are also planning a familiarization tour for the luxury DMC American Excursionist. Mitsuata further discussed MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, & Events) outreach and meetings, as well as leads and room nights awarded to Santa Monica.

SMTT CPO Lozano updated the Board that the visitor services team decorated all three locations for holidays and participated in the Miracle on Main Street event. She also updated the Board that SMTT is continuing the recruiting process for travel specialists, and dedicated internet service is being added to the kiosk location.

SMTT COO Edwards informed the Board of the charities SMTT donated to in lieu of sending holiday gifts. She also updated the Board that a social media and marketing plan is in the works, the website refresh is in progress, 2022 fundraising events and drives are being planned, and an in-person Board meeting with Santa Monica CARES is being organized. Additionally, SMTT is working toward hiring an accounting manager, two full-time travel specialists, and a public relations manager this year. Edwards is also negotiating with a new tech support company. The Second remote fiscal audit has been completed (expected submission by January 24th) and will be presented to the board on schedule. The SBA loans are budgeted to be paid off by the end of the calendar year if not by the end of the fiscal year. The PPP loan forgiveness packet was submitted ahead of schedule. Upcoming in-person events include a Spring mixer and the annual Tourism Summit. Edwards updated the Board on the TID (Tourism Improvement District), the voluntary district created to clean up and have a presence around the high-traffic area near the Pier and some hotels. The TID does not replace city services but supplements them, especially with continuing lower employment levels due to COVID-19. Edwards clarified that this is a pilot program with a goal to expand if all goes well; there is a 60-day decision making point on whether to continue the TID. SMTT is working closely with the city and Chrysalis, the provider of the services, with the goal to be up and running before the Superbowl. Edwards also informed the Board that this is separate from the TMD, and similarly to the free shuttle program, this is a pass-through cost with separate financials. By the next board meeting Edwards will have statistics and pictures to share.

CEO Update: Kerns updated the Board that SMTT is starting to put out messaging this week with safety notices woven in to look for licensed vendors' "V" decal. SMTT is also working with the city and stakeholders on a shared identity program to compose next steps with our agency of record MMGY. With the collaboration, SMTT can ensure that the city's new branding complements SMTT's brand refresh this year. Kerns provided an overview of the organizational chart and a timeline for hiring for vacant positions. SMTT continues to update procedures for hybrid in-office/remote work situation. Kerns also informed the Board that Kathleen Rawson at Downtown Santa Monica is departing in Jan 2022 after 25 years in DTSM; they are using a search firm to find a replacement. In the meantime, the chair of their board Barry Snell is covering Rawson's duties.

For the Good of the Order: Member D. Evans shared information about virtual MLK Jr. Event and pre-program reception. SMTT CEO Kerns was reappointed to the Pier Board. Member Regalbutto expressed concerns about human trafficking with upcoming sporting events and stated a hope that hotels are aware. SMTT CEO Kerns added hotel staff has been trained in the past and SMTT will be sharing availability of current training with Los Angeles. Kerns also stated that SMTT's marketing team will balance marketing the Pier and communications on permitted vending & safety. She clarified that the task force is focusing on those unpermitted vendors using combustible fuels, littering, and dumping.

Adjournment: Chairman Gielicz adjourned the meeting at 6:40pm.