



## COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

**Date:** October 19, 2024

**Time:** 9:00 AM PT – 12:00 PM PT

**Location:** Garden Terrace, Yosemite Valley Lodge

**Present:** Dave Rossetti & Jan Avent, David & Amelia Cameron, Jessica & Darwin Chen, Diane & Steve Ciesinski, Kira & Craig Cooper, Hal Cranston & Vicki Baker, Carol & Manny Diaz, Jewell & Bob Engstrom, Kathy Fairbanks, Laura Hattendorf & Andy Kau, Christy & Chuck Holloway, Christina Hurn, Mitsu Iwasaki, Erin & Jeff Lager, Bob & Melody Lind, Kirsten & Dan Miks, Robyn & Joe Miller, Kate & Ryan Myers, Daniel Paramés, Sharon & Phil Pillsbury, Lawson Rankin, Alain Rodriguez & Blerina Aliaj, Ann & George Sundby, Cliff Walker, Cicely Muldoon, Frank Dean, Diane Dean, Kevin Gay, Schuyler Greenleaf, Marion Ingersoll, Kimiko Love Martinez, Adonia Ripple, Caitlin Allard, Julia Hejl, Riley Applewhite, Frank Driscoll, Cassius Cash, Vonda Cash

**Absent:** Hollis & Matt Adams, Gretchen Augustyn, John & Meredith Cranston, Leslie & John Dorman, Sandi & Bernie Fischbach, Dana & Dave Dornsife, Cynthia & Bill Floyd, Bonnie Gregory, Rusty Gregory, Patsy & Tim Marshall, Juan Sanchez Munoz & Zenada Aguirre-Muno, Bill Reller, Pam & Rod Rempt, Skip Rhodes, Gisele Rankin, Greg Stanger, Wally Wallner & Jill Appenzeller, Alexis & Assad Waathiq, Helen & Scott Witter, Bob & Suzy Bennett

**START TIME: 9:03 AM PT**

### 1. **Call to Order** (Steve Ciesinski)

- **A motion was made and seconded to approve the 4/6/24 Council minutes**
  - **Decision: Approved unanimously**
- Frank Dean's Final Council Meeting
- Expected year-end balance: \$35 million (cash and investments)
- At board meeting, unanimous approval to allocate \$5M from the Legacy Fund to the Centennial Campaign
- Agenda Overview
- Interview with incoming President & CEO Cassius Cash:
  - Background: Father emphasized aiding underserved communities; mother taught values of dignity and service.
  - Career Path: Former Boy Scout; 15 years in forest service; served in Washington State.
  - Relationship with Mike Reynolds: Trusted mentor; supported Cash's first superintendent role.
  - Leadership Experience: Unifier with experience in bipartisan states; innovator of a \$14M generating parking fee program at the Smokies

### 2. **President's Remarks** (Frank Dean)

- Welcomed Cash and expressed gratitude for his role
- Welcomed David and Amelia Cameron to their first council meeting
- Finance Update
- Donor Meetings: Productive meetings with the development team as Frank wraps up his tenure
- Agenda for Later Today:
  - State of partnership breakout group

- Topics: Mist Trail, staff housing, 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges
    - Housing Report
    - Field Trip:
      - Visiting Glacier Point and Yosemite West
  - Working on a transition Plan for Cash
3. **Partner Report – NPS** (Cicely Muldoon)
- Cicely’s nearing her 5th year
  - Nearly half a billion invested in Yosemite infrastructure projects due to the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) and grants
  - Future Funding: Awaiting GAOA law reauthorization to potentially support housing projects.
  - Visitor Access Management Plan (VAMP):
    - Planning started 2 years ago to reduce congestion; public comment phase just ended; decision expected by December, with permanent enactment by 2025.
    - YC has funded impactful outreach to underserved communities.
    - Public and Congressional Responses: Public is very positive, though working with hotels has been challenging due to the economic impact.
    - Comparison to Zion’s bus program: Moving relatively fast; Zion’s took much longer.
  - Aramark Relationship: Despite challenges, Cicely sees promise with new leadership.
  - Wild Nephin Irish National Park Twinning Ceremony 10/3/24
  - YC Funding Requests: Critical needs in housing and childcare to sustain Yosemite’s future workforce.

4. **G&E Update and Vote (Dave Rossetti)**

- Council non-renewals: 6 family units not renewing
- New Member Recruitment: Emphasis on youth and diversity; strong slate of nominees (5 family units).
- **A motion was made and seconded to approve new Council Members Matthew & Sarah Adams (brother and sister), Susanah Aguilera & Robert Kiesling, Carol DeVol & Katy Fox, Pranav Sudesh, and Ryan & Susan Wiley**
  - **Decision: All new members approved unanimously**
- **A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2025 Board slate as shown in Attachment 1, and to add Jeff Lager as new Board Member**
  - **Decision: Approved unanimously (Jeff Lager abstained)**
- Charter Update Approval: Approved by the board yesterday

**BREAK (15 MIN): 10:18pm**

**RECONVENE: 10:30pm**

5. **Development Update** (Lawson Rankin & Marion Ingersoll)

- Centennial Campaign Efforts: Council to act as ambassadors; gratitude expressed to campaign committee members.
- Campaign Events: Recent events, such as the Tuolumne and Reller events, have positively impacted the campaign.
- Fundraising: Raised \$7M toward a \$40M campaign goal; expecting a productive Q4.
- Schuman Family Bequest: \$2.7 million donation, stemming from decades of engagement.

6. **Grant Review** (Phil Pillsbury & Schuyler Greenleaf)

- Total YNP Request: 72 Projects totaling \$10,602,89
  - We are recommending to fund ~\$7.3M counting annual and campaign funding
- Centennial Campaign Funding:
  - 6 Projects Recommended totaling \$1,472,623

- Protecting Giant Sequoias: Addressing threats from drought, insects, and fire
- Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition
- Wahoga Village Project Management
- Wilson Cabin Collaborative Rehabilitation
- Little Fires: Returning Cultural Burning
- Stream Restoration to Protect Giant Sequoias
- Annual Projects
  - 48 Projects Recommended totaling \$5,940,031
    - Highest funding allocated to Wildlife Programs and Trails
    - Youth Programs
    - Habitat Restoration
    - Interpretation & Visitor Services
    - Visitor Access & Experience
    - Workforce Support
    - Cultural & Historic projects
    - Scientific Research

## 7. Breakout session

- Question 1 Discussion: Given the expected ever-increasing demand, how can national parks provide seamless and engaging experiences for park visitors? How does infrastructure, reservation systems, and technology fit into this challenge?
  - Encourage visitors to plan more before arriving at the park
  - Enhance visitor engagement and communicate in multiple languages
  - Advocacy efforts:
    - Explore partnerships with advocacy organizations
    - Leverage the visitor welcome center
  - Update and adapt technology for improved visitor experience; Explore smartphone app solutions
  - Financial support: Seek state and federal funding opportunities for park support
  - Visitor flow management: Implement a system to inform visitors of crowd levels at various attractions to help them decide on alternate destinations
  - Collaborative approach: Support the communications team and maintain a non-directive role as partners rather than micromanagers
- Question 2 Discussion: Assuming National Park Service bureaucratic and budget constraints are the new normal, how does Yosemite Conservancy respond or adapt to this shift given they are asking us to support them in new ways such as staffing and park community needs? What new major initiatives and paradigms should be considered?
  - Foster greater donor engagement and keep the park at the center of all initiatives
  - Focus on employee experience improvements; build out HR at both YC and NPS
  - Reframe funding for NPS salaries, emphasizing outcomes rather than salaries alone
  - Encourage NPS to act where feasible by offering supportive oversight
  - Address needs sustainably: Leverage visible issues to advocate for larger support when reaching Washington
  - Prioritize seed funding and pilot programs over permanent projects, with intentionality in planning

## 8. Yosemite West Update (Frank Dean & Adonia Ripple)

- Yosemite West could possibly be used as a staff housing solution
- Well update: now with two successful wells could help with community and county support for the project

## 9. Executive Session (Steve Ciesinski)

**ADJOURNMENT: 12:00 PM PT**

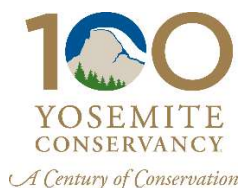
**Next Meeting:**

- Date/Time: April 5, 2025, at 9:00 AM PT
- Location: Garden Terrace, Yosemite Valley Lodge

**Prepared by:** Frank Driscoll

**Title:** Executive Assistant

**Date:** October 19, 2024



## RECCOMENDED 2025 BOARD SLATE

*15 Members*

### OFFICERS

<i>CHAIR</i>	Steve Ciesinski
<i>VICE CHAIR</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>SECRETARY</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>TREASURER</i>	<i>TBD</i>
<i>PRESIDENT</i>	Cassius Cash

### BOARD MEMBERS

1. Matt Adams	2019* (2021/2024/2027)
2. Jessica Clark Chen	2024 (2027/2030/2033)
3. Steve Ciesinski	2020 (2022/2025/2028)
4. Carol Diaz	2024 (2027/2030/2033)
5. Jewell Engstrom	2019* (2021/2024/2027)
6. Robyn Miller	2021 (2023/2026/2029)
7. Juan Sánchez Muñoz	2022 (2024/2027/2030)
8. Ryan Myers	2020 (2022/2025/2028)
9. Lawson Rankin	2021 (2023/2026/2029)
10. Alain Rodriguez	2022 (2024/2027/2030)
11. Dave Rossetti	2020 (2022/2025/2028)
12. Ann Sundby	2019* (2021/2024/2027)
13. Scott Witter	2022 (2024/2027/2030)
14. Cassius Cash	

### RECCOMENDED NOMINEE

#### 15. **Jeff Lager**

**BIOGRAPHY:** Jeff is a native Floridian who traveled west for college, receiving a BA, MA, and MBA from Stanford University. For the past 25 years Jeff has worked with the Capital Group Companies, where he currently is a partner, portfolio manager, and the principal investment officer of the American Balanced Fund. Jeff is the former treasurer of several non-profit organizations and currently serves as the vice-chairman of the board of trustees of the Gill/St. Bernard's School in Peapack-Gladstone, NJ. Jeff, his wife, Erin, and their three sons recently moved from the SF Bay Area to Incline Village, NV. The entire family enjoys connecting with the outdoors, a shared passion born in part from the family's Yosemite visits over the years. The Lagers are avid skiers, hikers, boaters, golfers, and participants in youth soccer and lacrosse.

*Appointment year shown as first year of Board Term*

*\* Appointed to a three-year term starting 2019, eligible for two more three-year terms*

**Highlighted** name marks nominee