

Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley April 9, 2015

Visit the Santa Ynez Valley held a board meeting on April 9, 2015 at SYV Marriott, 555 McMurray Road, Buellton. The meeting was called to order by Treasurer Bion Rice at 9:01 a.m. Board members present included Bion Rice, Treasurer, Christine Forsyth, Sandra Hallman, James Colvin, Kady Fleckenstein, and Cammy Pinoli. Shelby Sim, Executive Director, and Danielle Laudon, Marketing & Communications Manager, were present. Mayor Jim Richardson, Dr. Kenneth Harwood, Kris Kersten, Max Hanberg, Mary Angelo, and Peter Robbins were present for public comment.

Public comment was made by Dr. Harwood with an economic report; Mayor Jim Richardson announced the City of Solvang is considering grant allocations for the Solvang Conference and Visitors Bureau for next year, and recommended VisitSYV consider a matching marketing grant.

Minutes of the March 19, 2015 board meeting were approved (Kady made a motion, James seconded, all in favor except Christine who abstained due to absence at March meeting).

The board reviewed the grant application submitted for The Los Olivos Jazz and Olive Festival, to be held in June 2015. Peter Robbins with Los Olivos Rotary made public comment asking for VisitSYV's support. Cammy made a motion to provide the recommended amount and authorize a \$2,000 grant (Sandra seconded, all in favor). A \$2,000 grant was approved.

The board reviewed the grant application submitted for 4th of July Fireworks celebration by Santa Ynez Valley Rotary. Kris Kersten from SYV Rotary made public comment and answered questions. Sandra made a motion to approve the \$3,000 and look to them for next year to have presale tickets available. Kady amended the motion that VisitSYV provide the \$3,000 with the strong recommendation they implement a ticketing system this year. Christine seconded, all in favor. A \$3,000 grant was approved.

The board reviewed the grant application submitted for Danish Days, held in September 2015. Max Hanberg was present to answer questions on behalf of the Danish Days foundation. James Colvin made a motion to approve the recommended amount of \$4,000; Sandra seconded, all in favor. A \$4,000 grant was approved.

Shelby Sim provided the Director Report, which included the following:

- TBID update: The final approval was March 23rd, there were absolutely 0 protests. Neil Zimmerman adamantly said no on a global level. Ed Skytt had to recuse himself. Mayor Jim Richardson, present during this meeting, congratulated VisitSYV on how we are operating as a hotel association.
- The Solvang Expo is coming up on May 7th and VisitSYV supported the Solvang Chamber with \$800 in funds; VisitSYV has a booth, and we are planning to do a spin the wheel for prizes. This is a great opportunity for community outreach, and we are asking for volunteers to man the booth. Christine and Sandra have volunteered and will split shifts from 3 – 7 pm.
- Membership structure: We would like to revolutionize the current structure. We spend a lot of time/resources on VisitSYV basic and non-profit members as opposed to our hoteliers; since it requires a lot of attention, we're setup to fail with the cost to assist members. We would like to reduce basic and non-profit membership price to \$50/year. We win because we have content; they win because it's affordable. Shelby is meeting with SYV chamber partners next week to discuss how we can all work together to benefit. We'll come back next month with another plan. Chamber leaders have been receptive so far. Shelby is also meeting with chamber members to discuss syncing calendars, as well as a cohesive SYV Scarecrow Fest which will require each town's active participation.
- Publication budget: Last year we spent \$58,000 and this year our budget is \$50,000. We need to either increase budget or cut costs.
- ACTION ITEM: Vacation rental editorial in Destination Guide. We have a member that's a vacation rental, which is grandfathered into membership. There are two things we need to decide: (1) Do we have vacation rentals that are allowed to be members? (2) Can they have editorial and/or advertising in the destination guide? Solvang has

a serious ordinance with regard to vacation rentals. They have allowed select vacation rentals within the TRC (Tourism Related Commercial) area. The penalties are severe for having vacation rentals in the city without a license. The membership subcommittee will decide on status of vacation rentals since the TBID has been renewed. Sandra made a motion to resurrect the membership committee; Kady seconded, all in favor. Sandra, Bion, and Danielle are the subcommittee. Danielle will gather membership files and resend to Sandy and Bion.

Bion Rice provided the financial report, and reviewed the March 2015 financials and projections for remainder of 2015. Bion received the budget vs actual from Heather and will email it out today. The good news is we are ahead of the budget and performing well in terms of cashflow. As far as total income, we are \$31,000 ahead of our expectations for the first quarter.

Shelby Sim proposed a \$5,000 budget for VisitSYV's Tuesday, April 21, 2015 Networking Reception. The budget would cover event rentals, venue, catering, entertainment, and event insurance. Christine made a motion we approve \$5,000 budget for networking reception; Sandra seconded, all in favor. The \$5,000 budget was approved.

VisitSYV staff proposed a \$9,000 spend on Westways Discover Co-Op. The Westways Discover Co-Op would be in June issue of Discover, an insert that goes to households with 100k+ income; 2 page advertorial spread with photos, content created by DVA at no additional cost. Kady made a motion to approve the \$9,000 for Westways, Sandra seconded. All in favor. The \$9,000 budget for Westways was approved.

The Logo Subcommittee, consisting of James Colvin, Kady Fleckenstein and Christine Forsyth, was going to provide an update on brand packaging quotes from several firms/designers. Shelby has recommended the committee review all packages together and come back next month.

Danielle Laudon presented Website, Analytics, and CCTC presentation update. Danielle attended the Central Coast Tourism Council Retreat and has joined their membership and website subcommittee. Engagement with CCTC will allow VisitSYV to better market ourselves as part of the Central Coast Original Roadtrip, and data from the subcommittee will also give insight for our own targeting purposes.

Mary Angelo presented both the March recap as well as the quarterly recap for our 2015 DVA Marketing Co-Op. Two things we've been looking for in the campaign is both brand awareness (knowing the name Santa Ynez Valley – organic search increase points to greater brand awareness) and overnight stays (looking at book your stay data is our current metric). Mary also noted we have very little print in our budget, but we start strong January – March in print. With a \$29,000 budget for PR and a PR current valuation of \$115,000 for the first quarter, PR is the easiest, most trackable ROI DVA can present us with currently. Bion asked whether Mary feels she's getting enough from VisitSYV as far as our directions and goals. The consensus from Mary, Shelby, Danielle and Christine is that our monthly conversations via the committee and regular conversations with Danielle, Shelby, and Justin are progressing nicely.

Board comments:

James said he's excited about today's meeting and the progress VisitSYV has made. Christine had an incredibly busy March at Ballard Inn, and thanked VisitSYV and the efforts everyone puts in. Bion was amazed at the work the board has done and is happy with DVA. Cammy requested a class on the Brown Act, and Christine noted she has a great resource. Shelby noted that Mike has tasked Jessy to find a class for VisitSYV.

Christine motion to adjourn, Sandra seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 11:03am to the meeting of May 15, 2015, 9:00 a.m., SYV Marriott

Prepared by Danielle Laudon,
Marketing & Communications Manager

Approved by Bion Rice,
Treasurer