

Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley October 13, 2016

Visit the Santa Ynez Valley held a board meeting on October 13, 2016 at The Landsby, 1576 Mission Drive, Solvang. The meeting was called to order by President Jessy Osehan at 9:00 a.m. Board members present included Jessy Osehan, President, Bion Rice, Treasurer, James Colvin, Cammy Pinoli, and Bob Oswaks. Shelby Sim, Executive Director, and Danielle Laudon, Marketing & Communications Manager, were present. Members of the public present included Dr. Kenneth Harwood, Tracy Farhad, Executive Director of the Solvang Conference & Visitors Bureau, Kathy Vreeland, Executive Director of the Buellton Visitors Bureau & Chamber of Commerce, and Cooper Dunn, Bob Oswak's intern for the week.

Public comment was made by Dr. Harwood and Tracy Farhad. Dr. Harwood presented an economic report. Tracy Farhad shared that there will be a city council debate this evening at the Solvang Chamber Mixer at Bethania Lutheran Church. Bob Oswaks introduced Cooper Dunn, a 6th grader from Dunn Middle School, who's interning under Bob this week as part of Dunn's humanities curriculum.

The board reviewed the September 8, 2016 board meeting minutes, but did not have a quorum from last month's meeting present in order to approve them. The minutes were tabled for the moment.

Jim Rice arrived at the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

Bion Rice presented the financial report, which included review of the September financials and projections for the remainder of 2016.

Ed Seaman entered the meeting and Shelby Sim introduced him as owner of the local blueberry farm. Ed will be hosting a blueberry festival June 10th of next year and looks forward to sharing more in the future with the board.

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

- Data Collection Project: Shelby will schedule another meeting for the data collection project in the near future.
- Board of Supervisors meeting on Winery Ordinance: The next meeting regarding the ordinance is November 1st and Shelby encourages as many folks as possible to attend.
- Fall Reception: VisitSYV is partnering with Santa Barbara County Vintners to invite members to our October 25th Networking Reception at the Vincent Residence; we are anticipating 150 – 200 people in attendance.
- Spirit of the Valley: VisitSYV held its last Spirit of the Valley workshop for 2016, which Danielle organized and hosted in Los Olivos at the Santa Ynez Valley Grange. The next seminar will be held in Spring 2017.
- Sonoma Trip: Shelby provided a presentation detailing his research trip to Sonoma. Some takeaways from the trip included that Sonoma County collaborates and works well as a team and the level of customer service is exceptional. Shelby suggested the following: VisitSYV revisit our Spirit of the Valley program to see if we can include an Ambassador program similar to what Sonoma has; VisitSYV consider raising the TBID to \$3 in June 2017; VisitSYV increase community engagement as an entire Valley as opposed to individual towns; and last, VisitSYV create a stabilization/catastrophic reserve. Jessy suggested we hold a Board Retreat to flesh out and discuss these recommendations.
- Activity report

Randolph (Randy) Pace entered the meeting during Shelby's Director Report.

Jessy asked to revisit the September 8th Board Meeting Minutes with additional board members present. Randy made a motion to approve the September 8th minutes, and Cammy seconded; all approved the minutes except Bion and James, who abstained due to their absence at the September 8th meeting. The September 8th board meeting minutes were approved.

Cammy Pinoli presented on behalf of the booking agent ad-hoc subcommittee and led the discussion on Jackrabbit Systems. The committee's recommendation is to move forward with Jackrabbit Systems for one year, pending answers from Jackrabbit about guaranteed pricing, in order to make the consumer's experience better on VisitSYV.com. Jim Rice made a motion to approve moving forward with Jackrabbit pending confirmation of guaranteed price beyond the first year; James Colvin seconded. All in favor. VisitSYV staff will confirm that the pricing does not increase after the first year, and will also confirm how often the rates are scrubbed from the hoteliers' individual sites.

Based on feedback from concerned hoteliers, Shelby presented the VisitSYV staff recommendation that we relocate both the "Vacation Rentals" and "RV & Camping" categories on the website, as members in these categories do not contribute to the TBID. Cammy made a motion that VisitSYV move both "Vacation Rentals" and "RV & Camping" from the "Where to Stay" tab to the "Local Resources" tab on VisitSYV.com. Jim Rice seconded. All in favor.

Jessy Osehan shared the process behind creating the new Executive Director Review template that is up for board approval. The Executive Review Ad-hoc Subcommittee used discussion from the last board retreat, combined with Shelby's current job description, and incorporated a number system with comments to follow. Bob believes the way this has come together enables a fair, balanced way to judge and grade the Executive Director's performance. Cammy made a motion to approve the Executive Director Template. Bob seconded. Randy asked whether organization goals are a part of the review; Jessy confirmed they are. Randy believes that this is a comprehensive template. After no further discussion, all in favor. The new Executive Director Review template has been approved. Jessy shared that Shelby will be reviewed before the December meeting; the board members' reviews of Shelby will be due to Jessy directly before the month of December. Jessy and Bion will discuss the budget ahead of time, and the board will have a closed session to discuss executive review and staff salaries before the December meeting.

Danielle Laudon presented the Website, DVA, and Marketing Update which included updates on the DVA ad campaign, status of SEO, and review of recent PR successes. Danielle also shared the results of attending the Visit California Crisis Communications Workshop in Los Angeles. Inspired by the workshop, Danielle made a recommendation that VisitSYV create a Crisis Management Team. Jessy agreed that this should take place and asked for the action item to be on the next board meeting agenda.

Bob Oswaks left the meeting at 10:10am prior to board comments.

Board comments:

Shelby shared that we will be reviewing the Julefest grant application at the November board meeting; Shelby was contacted by a friend who will be a presenting speaker at the upcoming IMEX conference, and for a small price, VisitSYV helped sponsor the speaker, and in return VisitSYV will be featured on a one sheet shared at the conference with meeting and incentive planners; Shelby presented the sponsored sheet to the board. Jim Rice shared that things are going well in Santa Ynez and the inn is preparing for renovations with new carpeting and paint; occupancy in September and October has been excellent. James Colvin noted that September and October have been busy with weddings for Hotel Corque. James also shared the community lost Carl Rio this week, who has been a huge supporter of our youth; James shared his condolences with Rio and his family. Bion shared that Sunstone won Best of Class in the LA County Fair Festival this year for their Merlot; Every single judge has to score your wine as a gold medal winning wine in order to win Best of Class, so this is a major accolade for Sunstone; Bion also shared that he would be happy to host the next board retreat at the Sunstone Villa. Cammy shared that Los Olivos Day in the Country is coming up; Cammy is also excited about the Crisis Communications workshop that Danielle attended and looks forward to having a resource on VisitSYV's site to point her staff to; Cammy suggested VisitSYV host a dinner with owners and stakeholder businesses sharing VisitSYV's goals and mission for better cohesion; Cammy would also like to serve on the new education committee. Danielle shared that VisitSYV is hosting international media in the coming weeks, with Australian writer, Craig Tansley, coming next week via Visit California's PR office in Australia, and then a luxury FAM tour from Japan coming in November from Visit California's PR office in Tokyo. Randy shared concerns about water changes; the Sideways Inn remodel is looking very good, and the inn has hired an executive housekeeper who has already made significant

changes; Randy shared a concern about adding staff to VisitSYV now rather than putting it off further, especially with new projects in the works. Jessy shared that creating a Crisis Management Team ad-hoc subcommittee will be on agenda next month along with recreating an education committee. Shelby shared that the Buellton City Council meeting is coming up and it's an important meeting to attend; we will share a report with them, and Buellton is having an interesting conversation about tourism; Shelby believes we need to show our support to the Buellton Visitors Bureau. Jessy reminded the board that in preparation of Shelby's review, the board should look back on meeting minutes in the past; Shelby talked about Sonoma and their cohesiveness; Jessy reminded everyone to keep in mind where VisitSYV was before and where we are now; if board members want time with Shelby, take him out, ask him how the job is going and how he is doing, and really take the time to review. Lastly, in regards to a retreat, Jessy would encourage the board to think about doing a retreat next year before the budget meeting so that the board as a whole can better inform the budget creation. Randy asked if we are we able to get comparative salary information for other Executive Directors. Last, Jessy shared they will have a closed meeting to discuss Shelby's and Danielle's salaries, and the potential for a new hire. With that, Jessy would like to adjourn the meeting.

Bion made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Jim seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:25 am to the meeting of November 10, 2016, 9:00 a.m., The Landsby.

Prepared by Danielle Laudon,
Marketing & Communications Manager

Approved by Bion Rice,
Treasurer