

Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley September 9, 2021

Visit the Santa Ynez Valley held a board meeting on September 9, 2021 at Chumash Casino Resort. Chairman Linda Johansen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Board members present included Chairman Linda Johansen, Vice Chairman Jonathan Rosenson (via conference line), Treasurer Jim Flagg, Will Henry, and Kathleen Cochran. Shelby Sim, President & CEO, and Danielle Laudon Ruse, Vice President of Marketing, were present. Board Members Stormie Strickland, Budi Kazali, Louise Smith and Kimberly Walker were absent. Members of the public present included Anna Ferguson Sparks, Mary Nash, Erica Jane Flores, and Tymari LoRe.

Linda opened the meeting with a toast to celebrate Visit the Santa Ynez Valley's recent award from the U.S. Travel Association. The team brought home a Destiny Award for Best Digital Campaign at ESTO, the premier annual learning and knowledge sharing forum for destination marketing professionals. Linda also recognized the honor on behalf of Montecito Bank & Trust and awarded the staff with gift cards for a local restaurant.

Kathleen motioned to approve the August 12, 2021 minutes as presented; Will seconded; All in favor. The August 12, 2021 minutes were approved.

The board reviewed a grant request for the Los Olivos Chamber's Day in the Country, Saturday, October 16, 2021 event; the requested amount is \$3,500. VisitSYV staff processed the grant, and the recommended amount came out to \$3,000. Mary Nash was available to answer any questions the board may have. Kathleen made a motion to accept the proposed \$3,000 grant; Will seconded; all in favor. A \$3,000 grant was approved. Mary thanked the board for their support and looks forward to bringing this event back.

Jim Flagg presented the current financials.

Shelby Sim provided the staff report, which included updates on the following:

- COVID-19 Update
- Travel conferences & tradeshow
 - ESTO recap, Los Angeles, August 15-17,
 - Winner for Digital Campaign "The Place to Be".
 - CH&LA Crystal Ball Conference recap, Napa, August 26th
 - IPW, Las Vegas, September 18-22
 - Telluride Wine Festival, Telluride, September 23-26
 - Cal-Travel, Huntington Beach, September 14
 - Shelby to speak on Small DMO Covid Recovery Panel
- SYV Polo Classic People Helping People donation
- DiscoverSYV Update: filming is underway.
- TasteSYV Update: Staff held a kickoff meeting for Taste of the Santa Ynez Valley. After consulting with our restaurants experiencing staffing and resource shortages, the decision has been made to postpone the event.
- 2022 Budget Committee Formation: Jim Flagg, Linda Johansen, and Jonathan Rosenson will serve on the committee with staff and will meet in October.
- Activity Report for month of August

Danielle presented reports on VisitSYV.com web trends, ad campaigns with DVA, a Visit Widget update, and SEO with Madden Media for the month of August.

In new business, Shelby shared that staff is meeting with several data vendors and will likely present a data purchase proposal at the October board meeting.

Board Comments:

Jim shared the first half of August was excellent for Hampton Inn & Suites, and the second tailed off; weekends are softer, and midweek has lessened; Sunday of Labor Day weekend was a sellout; they are not seeing corporate travel right now. Jonathan shared there wasn't much to report, but that things are going well for Mirabelle and First & Oak. Will shared they've seen a slight downturn in the recent weeks at Pico; some weddings were cancelled in Los Alamos which affected their business, but they're still happy with the business they're seeing; they hosted a great dinner to celebrate Jim Clendenen; Kathleen commended the dinner and couldn't say enough good things about how it was executed and the food was outstanding; harvest has started and Will is wearing multiple hats; the fruit looks to be a good year, and they're looking to launch The Dirt Shepard farm tours soon. Kathleen shared Alisal finished the last 2 months with 98% occupancy; occupancy is also looking very high for the fall and early winter; Alisal won the USA Today Award for Best Destination Resort; they've hired a branding company, so we'll start to see a different look and feel; Kathleen is looking for a director of hotel operations, the #2 person at the ranch. Danielle put a bug in everyone's ear about the approaching holiday season, and asked how we can encourage the look, feel and charm of the holidays as a draw for visitors; last year we decorated the windmill, and she questioned whether there was something further we can do to expand that holiday feel from Solvang into the other towns; Kathleen suggested awards. Shelby shared a big shoutout to Danielle for her work, saying she was integral to our digital campaign which won the Destiny award; Shelby is loving his job and as busy as we are, it doesn't feel like work. Linda closed the meeting thanking the public for being here and being involved; she congratulated Shelby, Danielle and the board on the major U.S. Travel award win. Linda thanked Anna Ferguson Sparks for all she does for the Santa Ynez Valley; she also shouted out what Anna has done for nonprofits in the area. Linda congratulated Kathleen and the Alisal on their USA Today win.

The meeting closed at 10:06am to the meeting of October 14, 2021 to be held at Chumash Casino Resort.

Prepared by Danielle Laudon Ruse,
Vice President of Marketing

Approved by Linda Johansen,
Chairman