

Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley October 12, 2023

Time: 9:02 a.m. - 9:56 a.m.

Location: Zoom

Introductions

Linda Johansen called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and welcomed everyone. She reordered the agenda and moved up an action item for two sports grants to be considered after the approval of board meeting minutes.

Board members present included Chairman Linda Johansen, Vice Chairman Jonathan Rosenson, Treasurer Jim Flagg, Secretary Stormie Strickland, Kathleen Cochran, Dave Elcon, Greer Shull, and Will Henry; Michael Brughelli was absent. President & CEO Shelby Sim, Vice President of Marketing Danielle Ruse, and Website & Membership Administrator Brenda Ball were present. Members of the public who RSVP'd included Katie Smith Adair, Allison Diaz, Erica Flores, Dana Sauter, Kimberly Vawter, Philip Grant, Anna Ferguson Sparks, Phil Carpenter, Josh Lujan, and Pam Roberts.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Members of the public were given the opportunity to provide comments, limited to three minutes. The following public comment was made:

- Erica Flores thanked Visit the Santa Ynez Valley for supporting Hispanic Heritage Celebration. Flores also thanked the Inn at Mattei's Tavern for working with them on a tree lighting event this holiday season and thanked Visit the Santa Ynez Valley for donating 5% of ticket sales for Taste of the Santa Ynez Valley to the non-profit.
- Danielle Ruse presented Dr. Harwood's economic report.

Linda shared the board voted for salary adjustments and bonuses for staff for 2024.

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes (August 10, 2023)

Stormie motioned to approve the minutes; Dave seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The minutes of the August 10, 2023 meeting were approved.

CalCoast Sports Ventures Grant Requests

Cal Coast Sports Ventures applied for two separate grants for "805 Lacross Project"; they will hold two Lacross tournaments in the Santa Ynez Valley, January 27-28, 2024 and February 2-4, 2024. The first tournament will book an estimated 252 hotel rooms and the second event will book an estimated 360 hotel rooms in the Santa Ynez Valley. Jonathan motioned to approve both \$5,000 grant requests; Kathleen seconded, all in favor. Two \$5,000 grants were approved.

Financial Report

Jim Flagg presented a review of the current financials.

Staff Report

Shelby Sim provided updates on various topics, including:

- Taste of the Santa Ynez Valley recap
- 2023 Retreat recap
- 2023 Annual meeting, tonight, 5-7pm, Sunstone Winery
- Day in the Country/Old Fashioned Christmas sponsorship, \$4,000
- 3 Day Multi Town Viking Car Show Sponsorship, \$2,000
- IMM North America & NYC Media Mission, January 24-26, 2024
- Destination Guide Launch, Thursday, December 7th
- Activity Report for August and September

Marketing Update

Danielle Ruse provided a review of media approach, social channels, website updates, ad campaigns, SEO, web trends, Sunset partnership, and a recap of Taste of the Santa Ynez Valley.

Board Comments

Jonathan from Mirabelle Inn reported a dip in occupancy for the first time in three years, particularly midweek in September and October. First & Oak is thriving, catering frequently. Jonathan also shared the exciting news of expecting a baby soon. Stormie mentioned that October has been busy for The Hadsten and Hotel Corque, with The Hadsten having a successful first month. Both hotels anticipate a slight slowdown in early 2024. Dave Elcon highlighted a busy fall at The Inn at Mattei's Tavern and announced the launch of new menus. They have a Friendsgiving event with a food influencer on November 9th. Will is busy with harvest season for Lumen, though restaurant traffic at Pico has dipped slightly. They have exciting events planned to boost visitation. Kali is excelling in the kitchen, and the menu is better than ever. Kathleen at Alisal Ranch had a fantastic September, but the market remains short-term. Group bookings are last-minute, typically 4 weeks out. November and December bookings are slightly behind compared to last year, but they have a lot of activities planned. Jim reported Hampton Inn & Suites had a good September due to project work in the area. They are hopeful of finishing the year as strongly as the previous one. Brenda shared a website tip regarding Google and keywords. Danielle expressed gratitude to Shelby for leading Taste of the Santa Ynez Valley and praised En Fuego Events for their increased involvement. She thanked members and partners for their hard work. Danielle mentioned that dinners for Taste were booked quickly, while daytime events had a shorter booking window. Shelby thanked the board for their support and acknowledged the challenges of competing with Europe for travelers, along with decreased traffic due to strikes in Los Angeles. Linda thanked Danielle and Brenda for their hard work and appreciated the board's contributions to Taste. King Frederik and Pea Soup Andersen's Inn are both doing well. Linda concluded by expressing her gratitude for everyone's attendance and looked forward to seeing them at the annual meeting later.

The meeting adjourned at 9:56am. The next board meeting will be held November 9, 2023, 9:00 a.m. at Alisal Ranch.

Prepared by Danielle Ruse,
Vice President of Marketing

Approved by Stormie Strickland,
Secretary