

## **Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley November 9, 2023**

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 9:47 a.m.

Location: Alisal Ranch

### **Introductions**

Linda Johansen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Board members present included Chairman Linda Johansen, Treasurer Jim Flagg, Secretary Stormie Strickland, Kathleen Cochran, Greer Shull, and Michael Brughelli via phone. Vice Chairman Jonathan Rosenson, Dave Elcon and Will Henry were absent. President & CEO Shelby Sim and Vice President of Marketing Danielle Ruse were present. Members of the public included Jeff Chaney, Anna Ferguson Sparks, Erica Flores, Don Connor, Anthony Curci, Clau Orona, and Michelle Boss.

### **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 shared how Taste of the Santa Ynez Valley's donation will contribute to People Helping People's efforts in the community over the next two months.
- Danielle provided an economic report from Dr. Harwood.

### **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes (October 12, 2023)**

Kathleen motioned to approve the minutes; Jim seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The minutes of the October 12, 2023 meeting were approved.

### **Financial Report**

Jim Flagg presented a review of the current financials.

### **Staff Report**

Shelby Sim provided updates on various topics, including:

- 2023 Annual meeting recap
- Los Alamos Theater Group community sponsorship, \$2,000
- Buellton Fall Fest sponsorship, \$2,000
- Destination Guide Launch, Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, Brick Barn featuring Na Na Thai
- Shuttle update: Clau Orona provided an update on the proposed Santa Ynez Valley shuttle. Her family owns Solvang Trolley & Carriage Company and they've added a fleet of motorized electric vehicles in addition to the horse drawn carriage. They've developed a route for the Santa Ynez Valley that will start at 10am and end at 6pm. The pilot project will begin in a week. Shelby shared VisitSYV will create collateral and purchase tickets for the hotels. We'll get an additional update on the pilot program next month.
- Budget Committee: Kathleen Cochran, Jim Flagg, and Linda Johansen have formed the budget committee and will work with staff to provide a proposed 2024 budget for the next meeting.
- Safety seminar: Shelby will email the board with proposed dates for 2024.
- Staff played a recap video of Taste of the Santa Ynez Valley's 2024 event.

- Activity Report for October

### **Marketing Update**

Danielle provided a review of VisitSYV's current media approach, social channels, website updates, ad campaigns, SEO, and data tracking.

### **New Business**

Visit California is doing an activation during IPW in Los Angeles this year; Visit Santa Barbara reached out to us about a partnership for this activation. VisitSYV would like to join at \$25k. The activation design will go from beach to wine country. We would partner with Visit Santa Barbara, Santa Maria Valley, and Chumash. The board was enthusiastic about this opportunity, and it will be an official action item at the December board meeting.

### **Board Comments**

In September, Jim reported excellent performance for Hampton Inn & Suites, but October saw a decline, particularly in the leisure travel segment. Stormie shared positive news about The Hadsten consistently selling out on weekends, emphasizing the potential for midweek opportunities and the positive impact of the Hilton relationship. Kathleen highlighted a successful group booking for January at Alisal Ranch, and the market's trend of booking very short term. Greer noted a decline in October for Fess Parker Wine Country Inn but indicated a positive outlook for events in 2024. At Fess Parker Winery, they're hosting an exciting chef-in-residence program with Jeremy Tunnel. Danielle reminded everyone to submit open hours for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year. Shelby expressed excitement about the ending of the actors' strike, noting our drive market from LA has decreased since the strike. Linda thanked the staff and board, acknowledging while it's been slower at King Frederik Inn and Pea Soup Andersen's Inn, international travel is finally slowing down, so we should see some pickup soon. She concluded the meeting with Thanksgiving wishes for all.

The meeting adjourned at 9:47am. The next board meeting will be held December 14, 2023, 9:00 a.m. at Alisal Ranch.

Prepared by Danielle Ruse,  
Vice President of Marketing

Approved by Stormie Strickland,  
Secretary