

## **Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley Board Meeting, Dec. 14, 2023**

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 10:05 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 via phone, Vice Chairman Jonathan Rosenson via phone, Will Henry, Kathleen Cochran, Greer Shull, and Michael Brughelli. Secretary Stormie Strickland was absent. President & CEO Shelby Sim, Vice President of Marketing Danielle Ruse, and Website & Membership Administrator Brenda Ball were present. Members of the public included Debbie Holmes, Jesse Srgo, Elizabeth Orona, Debra Eagle, Don Connor, Jenny McClurg, Michelle Boss, Randy Murphy, Candace Libera, Phil Carpenter, Anna Ferguson, Carol Bloom, Jeffrey Bloom, and Louise Smith.

### **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:

- Louise thanked the board for sponsoring her 12 weeks of Christmas 2024 calendar.
- City of Solvang manager Randy Murphy thanked the board for the Julefest grant and shared positive revenue trends.
- Jeffrey Bloom spoke on behalf of the Los Alamos Theater Group, expressing gratitude for VisitSYV's support and inviting board members to attend the next play.

### **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes (November 9, 2023)**

Kathleen moved to approve the board meeting minutes of November 9, 2023. Greer seconded, all in favor. The November 9, 2023 minutes were approved.

### **Financial Report**

Jim Flagg presented a review of the current financials.

### **Grant Request for Consideration: Garagiste Festival, February 9-11, 2024**

Requested amount: \$5,000+, recommended amount: \$3,250

The event takes place on Superbowl weekend which typically sees low visitation. Kathleen motioned to provide a \$5,000 grant. Michael seconded, all in favor.

### **Staff Report**

Shelby Sim provided updates on various topics, including:

- 2023 Destination Guide Launch Recap
- Solvang Julefest grant approved by the board via email, \$3,500
- Santa Ynez Chamber Christmas Tree Lighting sponsorship, \$300
- Solvang Windmill Lighting, \$5,690.75
- Restaurant Weeks, January 21 – February 3, 2024

- Midweek Promotion
- Website RFP
- Safety Seminar and 2024 Shuttle updates
- 2024 Q1 Travel
- IMM North America, January 25-26, New York
- Copenhagen/Berlin
- Outlook Forum
- Activity Report for November

### **2024 Budget Approval**

Shelby presented the draft 2024 budget which was pre-approved by budget committee; Will motioned to approve, Michael seconded, all in favor. The 2024 budget was approved.

### **Makers SYV Project**

Shelby Sim and Danielle Laudon Ruse presented a proposed “SYV Makers” project which would be a collaboration with Bottle Branding. The project will include development of video assets, photography assets, web copy, and social media execution and showcase various makers in the Santa Ynez Valley. The budget for the project is \$22,000. Will motioned to approve; Greer seconded, all in favor. The project was approved as presented.

### **Santa Barbara International Film Festival (SBIFF) Activation**

Shelby Sim presented the proposed SBIFF Activation for 2024 with a cost of \$10,000. The annual festival has 90,000 attendees. VisitSYV would receive an on-screen ad before every Tribute & Film at Arlington Theater, place Santa Ynez Valley Destination Guides in VIP swag bags, and receive 2 Platinum + 2 Early Entry tickets to all Opening and Closing Night Films & Tributes. Michael motioned to approve the activation, Greer seconded, all in favor. The 2024 SBIFF activation was approved.

### **IPW Activation**

Shelby Sim presented a proposed \$25,000 IPW commitment as part of a co-op with Santa Barbara County DMOs and partners. This activation would provide us with a 20x20 outdoor booth in addition to our own booth at IPW. In the outdoor activation, buyers would have to walk through it each morning and afternoon. IPW is the U.S.’s largest travel trade show. The booth is being designed by Visit California and would have a VisitSYV representative daily. Will motioned to approve, Michael seconded, all in favor.

### **Marketing Update**

Danielle provided a review of VisitSYV’s current media approach, social channels, website updates, ad campaigns, SEO, data tracking, and 2024 SYV Restaurant Weeks.

### **Old Business & New Business**

Shelby thanked the marketing committee for serving in 2023 and officially dissolved the

committee, opening the floor for the 2024 committee to be formed. Greer, Will, Linda and Kathleen volunteered and formed the 2024 marketing committee.

### **Board comments**

During board comments, Shelby poured a celebratory end of year sparkling wine made by Michael Brughelli at Folded Hills. Kathleen invited the board and attending public to stay at Alisal Ranch in the days leading up to Christmas or in the month of January for a special rate. Linda made a toast to the staff and thanked them for their creativity and the success of the organization. She then thanked the board for their participation and efforts, and the community for taking the time to be involved. Greer thanked Shelby, Danielle, and Brenda for all they do to promote this beautiful place, and she's looking forward to a great year. Michael, Will, and Kathleen shared positive updates for Folded Hills, Pico, Lumen and Alisal and gave thanks. Danielle noted it's been a momentous year personally and professionally and the organization has made great strides. Brenda thanked Alisal and Kathleen for hosting our meetings, thanked Shelby and Danielle for being a pleasure to work with, and shared a tip for everyone regarding cyber security. Shelby expressed gratitude for his role and wished everyone happy holidays. Linda also thanked the budget committee and the community for their involvement. Jim congratulated the community, the board, and staff on a successful year. Anecdotally, he noted the Santa Ynez Valley has had a break-even year versus a lot of coastal areas which are down 10% or more. Jim noted our efforts are paying off and he thinks this will bode well for the future and we'll continue to grow in relation to our competition.

The meeting closed at 10:05 a.m. The next board meeting will be held January 11, 2024, 9:00 a.m., Alisal Ranch

Prepared by Danielle Ruse  
Vice President of Marketing