

Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley Board Meeting

June 13, 2024, 9:00 a.m. – 10:20 a.m.

Alisal Ranch

Call to Order

Linda Johansen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Introductions

Board members present: Chairman Linda Johansen, Vice Chairman Jonathan Rosenson, Secretary Stormie Strickland, Treasurer Jim Flagg, Greer Shull, Michael Brughelli, and Will Henry via phone. Kristopher McLaughlin and Kathleen Cochran were absent.

Staff present: President & CEO Shelby Sim, Vice President Danielle Laudon Ruse, and Director of Sales Cynthia Gonzalez.

Members of the public present: Shannon Marang Cox, Don Connor, Randy Murphy, Candice Libera, Debra Eagle, Julie Holland, John Martino, Stacey Otte Demangate, Michelle Boss, Pam Roberts, Erica Flores, Anna Ferguson Sparks, and Scott Gold.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

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

- Debra Eagle reported on the mental health wellness walk.
- Randy Murphy discussed the city's budget difficulties and reduced grants; mentioned the inclusion of a TOT (Transient Occupancy Tax) proposed increase on the ballot; if you have questions or want to know more about that Randy is happy to answer questions. Santa Barbara County and Buellton are also putting a proposed TOT increase on the ballot.
- Danielle Laudon Ruse provided an economic report on behalf of Economic Dr. Harwood.

Action Item: Approval of Minutes

Stormie motioned to approve the April 11, 2024 minutes as presented, Jim seconded, all in favor. The April 11, 2024 minutes were approved.

Financial Report

Jim Flagg presented the current financials.

Action Item: Grant Application

Shannon Marang Cox presented on behalf of the Arthritis Foundation, California Coast Classic Bike Tour.

- Dates: September 21 - 28, 2024
- Requested Amount: \$5,000
- Recommended Amount: \$3,250
- Motion: Jim to approve the full requested amount of \$5,000
- Seconded: Linda
- Outcome: Approved unanimously.

Presentation: A Danish Troll in Solvang

Stacey Otte-Demangate, California Nature Art Museum Executive Director presented a request for funding for a 15-year art installation by Thomas Dambo. The troll sculpture would be displayed inside the museum and requires significant funds. Michael Brughelli motioned to approve the request for VisitSYV's support. Jonathan seconded, all in favor. A pledge of \$10,000 to be paid over two years (\$5,000 per year) was approved and funds will be committed post-approval of the project. VisitSYV will not fund the project until it's officially moved forward.

Staff Report

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

- 2023 Annual Report submitted
- Annual Meeting scheduled for July 11 at Petros Winery.
- Election results: Jim Flagg elected for the 2024-2026 term.
- Taste of the Santa Ynez Valley event from September 26 – 29.
- Q2 Travel Recaps and IPW report.
- Upcoming Q3 Travel:
 - DMA West CEO Summit, June 22 – 24, Cheyenne, WY.
 - Destinations International, July 15 – 19, Tampa, FL.
 - ESTO, August 10 – 14, Columbus, OH.
- Special Projects & Promotions:
 - Jazz & Olive Festival, \$3,000
 - California Nature Art Museum, \$750
 - SYV Pride, \$2,500
 - Juneteenth, \$3,000
 - Elverhoj Sundowner Solstice, \$1,500
- Activity Report for May and June.

Action Item: Lease Billboard on 101 South Before Buellton Exit

Shelby Sim presented an opportunity to lease the former Pea Soup billboard on 101 South before the Buellton exit. The details are as follows:

- \$4,000 monthly lease once approved by City of Buellton.
- 5-year contract with maintenance responsibilities.
- Initial costs: \$10,000 for maintenance, \$4-5k for wrap changes.

Linda motioned to approve, Michael seconded, all in favor, subject to City of Buellton's approval.

Marketing Update

Danielle Laudon Ruse reviewed media approach, social channels, website updates, ad campaigns, SEO, and data tracking.

Board Comments

Will shared it's been a successful early summer in Los Alamos, with weddings ongoing. Greer announced they hired Crystal Campa as Assistant GM of Fess Parker Wine Country Inn. Jim noted improved business at Hampton Inn & Suites. Jonathan shared they've had success with wedding events at Mirabelle Inn and First & Oak and he has a new restaurant. Stormie provided a positive outlook for summer at Chumash

properties. Michael is stepping down from the board to focus on his brand, expressing gratitude for the experience. Cynthia noted a successful IPW and ongoing site visits with hoteliers. Shelby thanked Alisal for hosting, acknowledged Michael's efforts on the board, Cynthia's new contributions to the team, and praised Danielle's efforts. Brenda provided website tips and the importance of providing authentic and relevant content. Danielle shared insights from Zartico data, noting 41% of visitors have children in the household, and is interested in exploring family targeting. Linda thanked the board and public for their contributions and attendance.

Adjournment

Linda Johansen adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m. The next board meeting is scheduled for July 11, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom.

Prepared by:
Danielle Laudon Ruse
Vice President