

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

July 11, 2024, 9:02 a.m. – 9:46 a.m.

Zoom

Call to Order

Linda Johansen called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. on Zoom.

Introductions

Board members present: Chairman Linda Johansen, Treasurer Jim Flagg, Greer Shull, Kristopher McLaughlin, Will Henry and Jeff Hartman. Kathleen Cochran, Stormie Strickland and Jonathan Rosenson were absent.

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

Members of the public present: Candice Libera, Michelle Boss, and Anna Ferguson.

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:

- Danielle Laudon Ruse provided an economic report on behalf of Economic Dr. Harwood.

Action Item: Ratify Jeff Hartman, owner of Highline Adventures, to the board as a “member at large” director

The board unanimously ratified Jeff Hartman to serve on the board for a 2022 – 2024 term as an at-large board member.

Action Item: Approval of Minutes

Will motioned to approve the June 13, 2024 minutes as presented, Greer seconded, all in favor. The June 13, 2024 minutes were approved.

Financial Report

Jim Flagg presented the current financials.

Action Item: Grant Application

Linda Johansen presented the Danish Days grant request and motioned to approve the requested \$5,000; Jim seconded, all in favor. A \$5,000 grant was approved.

Staff Report

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

- Annual Meeting, tonight, Petros Winery
- Taste of the Santa Ynez Valley update
- DMA West CEO Summit, Cheyenne, WY recap
- Q3 Upcoming Travel
 - Destinations International, July 15 – 19, Tampa, FL

- ESTO, August 10 – 14, Columbus, OH
- Annual Retreat date
- Activity Report for June

Marketing Update

Danielle Laudon Ruse reviewed media approach, social channels, website updates, ad campaigns, SEO, and data tracking. The report included Q2 marketing performance, including strong web traffic, earned media, and digital advertising results.

Board Comments

Linda thanked the board, staff and public for attending the meeting and looks forward to seeing everyone at the annual meeting this evening at Petros Winery. Shelby noted that we will confirm and ratify board officer positions either by email vote or via the August board meeting. Shelby thanked the first responders who are working to contain the Lake Fire and thanked Kristopher for helping our own and getting Danielle a room during her evacuation. He looks forward to seeing everyone this evening. Kristopher shared they've been housing evacuees at both The Landsby and The Genevieve and the fire is having an impact on occupancy. Greer shared she's also been occupied with the fire and they have been assisting the firefighters at Fess Parker Winery. Jim noted Hampton Inn and Suites is pacing with last year. Will shared things have been going well at Lumen and Pico and they have wine events coming up. Cynthia shared she's been making the rounds and doing site visits at all SYV hotel properties and is following up on leads from IPW. Danielle commended Shelby for his leadership during the Lake Fire, ensuring the staff quickly gathered evacuation rates from the hotels. Between the entire team we were able to get rates up and communicate with our community very quickly. Danielle looks forward to sharing with our community and stakeholders the incredible work we did in 2023 and the great things in store for the future. Jeff expressed his enthusiasm for joining the board and noted the rapid growth they've experienced at Highline Adventures.

Adjournment

Linda Johansen adjourned the meeting at 9:46 a.m. The next board meeting is scheduled for August 8, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. at Alisal Ranch.

Prepared by:
Danielle Laudon Ruse
Vice President