

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

August 8, 2024, 9:00 a.m. – 9:48 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, Will Henry, Kristopher McLaughlin, and Jeff Hartman. Kathleen Cochran, Jim Flagg, and Greer Shull were absent. Staff present: President & CEO Shelby Sim, Vice President Danielle Laudon Ruse, Website & Membership Administrator Brenda Ball. Members of the public present: Don Conner, Julie Hayek, Candice Libera, Phil Carpenter and Emily Byram.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Danielle shared Dr. Harwood's economic report.

Approval of Minutes

Will motioned and Jonathan seconded to approve the board meeting minutes from July 11, 2024. All in favor, approved.

Ratification of Board Officers for the Term of July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025

Linda motioned to approve the following officer positions for a new one-year term, and Will seconded: Linda Johansen as Chairman, Jonathan Rosenson as Vice Chairman, Jim Flagg as Treasurer, and Stormie Strickland as Secretary. All in favor, the board slate was approved.

Grant Request for Consideration

Santa Barbara County Vintners Festival, Oct. 19, 2024, Requested Amount: \$5,000, Recommended Amount: \$3,500. Phil Carpenter spoke on behalf of the event, mentioning this is the 40th year of the Vintners Festival, their flagship event. Linda motioned to approve the requested \$5,000 and Will seconded. All in favor, the grant was approved in the amount of \$5,000.

Financial Report

Financials will be reviewed in September in the treasurer's absence.

Staff Report

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

- Annual Meeting recap
- Taste of the Santa Ynez Valley update
- Destinations International recap
- ESTO, August 10 – 14, Columbus, OH
- Annual Retreat date
- Billboard lease signed
- Compensation Study update
- Destination guide 2025 update
- Activity Report for June

Marketing Update

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

New Business

Shelby shared that Sunstone Winery is the official wine sponsor of CalTravel in Oceanside and will be pouring their wines for all California destinations. Shelby will attend and represent VisitSYV.

Board Comments:

Kristopher shared Q3 is looking promising for The Genevieve, and the Victor's clambake event is coming up with a few tickets left. Stormie noted Hotel Corque and Hadsten House were busy with fire crews. Jonathan shared First & Oak is doing well with many upcoming catering events. Will shared Pico has had a strong summer, with Fresh Fest coming up, which will focus on chilled reds and light whites. Jeff shared the zipline business had its busiest month yet in July, with 15% of visitors being international. August is projected to be even better. Brenda has been working on member microsites, using AI to rewrite content from member listings to improve SEO. Danielle thanked Jeff for his insights on international audiences and echoed the trends seen at IPW, including the rise of the "sober curious" trend. Shelby celebrated his 10-year anniversary with VisitSYV and thanked the board for their support. Linda Johansen thanked the staff and board for their contributions and congratulated Phil on the Vintners' \$5,000 awarded grant. She thanked Alisal Ranch for hosting and encouraged everyone to enjoy the food.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:48 a.m. The next board meeting will be held on September 19, 2024, at 9:00 a.m., at Alisal Ranch.

Prepared by:
Danielle Laudon Ruse
Vice President

Approved by:
Stormie Strickland
Secretary