



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 20, 2026
Hampton Inn & Suites

Call to order: 8:09 AM

Report on posting of the agenda: Executive Director Johnson announced the agenda was posted on Friday, August 14, 2026, at 5PM at the California Welcome Center, 8155-6 Arroyo Circle, Gilroy, CA 95020.

Roll Call: Brent Bonino, Cristina Cortes, Eric Gebhardt, Jonathan Bohnenberger, Larry Imas, Mark Jacobsen, Mattie Scariot, Mike Patel, Terrence Fugazzi.

Absent: Amber Atteberry, Jeff Orth, Joley Rosales, Kelli Jones, Trevor Van Laar.

Staff: Executive Director- Frank Johnson, CWC Manager- Susan Childers, Tourism & Community Engagement Coordinator- Mary Gurries Bejarano.

Public Guests and Advisors: Raissa de la Rosa

July 2026 Google Analytics Report and July Marketing Activities – ED Frank Johnson: Instagram followers in July were up 19% compared to prior month. Our E-newsletter had a 33% open-rate, sent to a focused recipient group with consistent activity; will analyze with the new marketing company. Web traffic increased, driven by summer events, painting Gilroy as a great place to be. Organic search made up 53% of web traffic, and the third most visited page in July was our /Stay page.

Consent Calendar

Motion to approve Board Meeting Minutes from July 16, 2026:

First: BM Terrence Fugazzi

Second: BM Jonathan Bohnenberger

Mark Jacobson abstains – absent last meeting

Motion passed.

Motion to approve Financial Reports for June 2026:

First: BM Terrence Fugazzi

Second: BM Cristina Cortez

Motion passed unanimously.

Vote to approve July 2026 Financial Reports postponed until the next meeting on September 17th

Old Business

None

New Business

Funding for WSCV way finding signs \$1,682 – Wineries of Santa Clara Valley Wine Trail signage refresh.

Motion to approve funds in the amount of \$1,682, not to exceed the amount of \$2,000, to be paid to the County of Santa Clara for the use of WSCV Wine Trail Wayfinding signs in Gilroy:

First: BM Johnathan Bohnenberger

Second: BM Mike Patel

Motion passed unanimously.

2026-2027 FY Budget Approval – No action; postponed to next meeting.

New Marketing Company – We have a new marketing company. Frank and the committee deliberated and pared down to a top 2, settling on Abbi Agency. More budget discussions are happening today. Location visits will be scheduled, probably around a signature event. Start date should be September 1.

Garlic Festival Update – Mark Jacobsen: The 2026 *Gilroy Garlic Festival* was a great success. 4,000 guests admitted per day, 37 non-profits volunteered, and 1,100 individual volunteers supported the setup week and event weekend. New features this year included a Kids Area, along with Gourmet Alley JR offering non-garlic food items. Garlic Beer supplied through a partnership with downtown Gilroy brewery, Christopher Ranch book debuted a new children's book and provided free garlic sleeves, ice cream, and garlic dip as attendees left. The Garlic Queen Pageant made a return for 2026, over 60 arts & crafts booths. 9,000 pounds of Christopher Ranch garlic was used for this event. Looking to next year in 2027 - increase attendance by 500 people, add more shade, additional entertainment, expand kids' activities, and possibly some pre-festival events.

Staff Reports

Visit Gilroy Executive Director's July 2026 Report – Frank Johnson: Hotels had a strong month in July, with 70% occupancy. Outreach efforts – Silicon Valley Creates' Executive Director was given a tour of Gilroy Gardens by Frank, Raissa, and the Mayor of Gilroy. Gilroy Gardens is making great advances in developing their education program, incorporating S.T.E.A.M. education. Connecting Silicon Valley Creates with Gilroy Gardens is a great way to build on this momentum. The *Carnival Nights* event is running Saturdays and Sunday evenings at Gilroy Gardens. Networking is San Jose helps make connections and keeping Gilroy relevant. On a sad note, Andy's Orchard will begin downsizing in the near future, as their land is sold.

CWC Gilroy Manager's July 2026 Report – Susan Childers: July Walkin's: 1,153 and July Sales were just under \$5K. Top visiting countries in July: Mexico, China, South Korea. We had a peak of visitors in July for the Garlic Festival. Several staff members and I attended and volunteered at the Garlic Festival over the weekend. Visitor requests for Garlic Festival merch, in person, and mailed.

Tourism & Community Engagement Coordinator July 2026 Report – QR tracking show consistent popularity for the Visitor's Guide, Rack Card, and Wine Brochures, with the Online Event Calendar leading with 63 scans. Website support included updating accounts, listings, landing pages, and online event calendar. A noticeable increase in submissions from partners. New Blog posted; "Hike, Sip and Stay a While, Part 1" focused on pairing outdoors with wine tasting; part 2 is in the works. Visited Tru-2-Earth Farms, part of a future Ag and U-Pick promotion effort. Collateral Distribution:

1,112 pieces were distributed to hotel, motel, and hospitality partners in July. The Third Friday Art Walk has their event on August 21st in downtown, and Casa de Cultura celebrates their 2-year anniversary with 2 days of events this weekend. The Winery Mixer invite will be sent to the board.

Board Member Reports

BM Cristina Cortes – Legacy MMA had a ribbon cutting event last weekend downtown. Promised Land Brewing Company debuted their new patio space. Urban Air Adventure Park plans to open soon, with a kitchen and party room. September is National Preparedness Month. On the 4th Wednesday is our monthly Chamber Lunch Mixer. Gilroy Foundation mixer tonight at the Neon Exchange. We are hosting a 401K workshop next week. Workforce development, connecting youth with exposure to the trades and local employment opportunities here in Gilroy. Government relations committee, a non-partisan committee, connecting govt offices with stakeholders in our community, filtering and advocating for business-friendly policies. Connect Bay Area Transportation measure will be cutting funds, so looking to make up those funds in other ways.

BM Terrence Fugazzi – Six new pickleball courts at Las Animas Park will be open in October. Parks and Trails Master Plan has been approved. Gateway road repair will begin soon and continue through the spring.

BM Mark Jacobsen – Openings available on the Garlic Festival Board of Directors as a 2-year commitment.

BM Larry Imas – September monthly winery mixer on September 3rd at Miramar Vineyards. Discussion on Wine Trail signage. California ABC has started to allow wineries permits for off-site sales with a booth; more research to be done. The local crush facility has plans to be sold, putting strain on local wine storage needs.

BM Johnathan Bohnenberger – Summer movies at Chick-fil-A have come to an end, bringing people from as far as Salinas and Morgan Hill during the summer series.

BM Mike Patel – July was good, lots of events in the area including Morgan Hill and San Jose. Regarding the Concourse d'Elegance this year, the internet and new audiences have changed the face of the event. Hotel rooms were compressed, which was good for us. School is back, summer is over, but weekends still look busy, and Ren Faire is coming up.

BM Brent Bonino – Summer is over and shifting into gear for Fall. Pumpkins are starting, and pumpkin patch prep has begun. Harvesting through early November, hopefully without early rain.

Raissa de la Rosa – Discussion on the unique positioning of Gilroy and economic development opportunities. Now with updated data (last done in 2019), we can identify and incentivize growth locations, creating an action plan with a strategy for business attraction, retention, expansion paired with economic vitality and resiliency.

BM Mattie Scariot – Lots of work going on in the new space in downtown Gilroy, in addition to running podcasts out of the Casa de Cultura office. Talking about doing some movie nights at Casa de Cultura. For Poppy Jasper, almost 500 films have been submitted, +30% compared to this time last year. The fundraiser at DeRose and LUV tasting room attracted over 70 attendees. Monica Gavino, an HR Management

professor at Stanford Uni, is the new PJIFF Operations Manager and will be helping a lot with the festival. Mattie attended Silicon Valley Community Foundation mixer, lots of excitement and very receptive to PJIFF.

BM Eric Gebhardt – September looks strong with the Renaissance Faire, Sports, Weddings, and Gilroy Gardens supporting weekend bookings, with construction and Caltrans bookings during the week. Compression from the North and the South. Hotels' biggest concerns are operating expenses.

Adjourned: 9:37 AM