



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, January 15, 2026  
Hampton Inn & Suites

**Call to order:** 8:02 AM

**Report on posting of the agenda:** Executive Director Johnson announced the agenda was posted on Friday, January 9, 2025, at 5PM at the California Welcome Center, 8155-6 Arroyo Circle, Gilroy, CA 95020.

**Roll Call:** Jonathan Bohnenberger, Cameron Childers, Cristina Cortes, Larry Imas, Trevor Van Laar, Kelli Jones, Jeff Orth, Mattie Scariot, Amber Atteberry.

**Absent:** Brent Bonino, Eric Gebhardt, Mark Jacobsen, Mike Patel, Terrence Fugazzi.

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

**Public Guests and Advisors:** Jane Howard, Victoria Valencia.

**December 2025 Google Analytics Report and December Marketing Activities** – ED Frank Johnson: We slowed down paid efforts in December, but we are starting some bigger paid Ads now with Expedia. The Holiday Fest Parade drew significant web traffic, and social media posts were well received.

**Consent Calendar**

Motion to approve Financial Reports for October 2025:

First: BM Mattie Scariot

Second: BM Cameron Childers

Motion passed unanimously

Motion to approve Board Meeting Minutes from November 13, 2025:

First: BM Jonathan Bohnenberger

Second: BM Larry Imas

Motion passed unanimously

Motion to approve Financial Reports for November 2025:

First: BM Kelli Jones

Second: BM Jonathan Bohnenberger

Motion passed unanimously

Motion to approve Financial Reports for December 2025:

First: BM Mattie Scariot

Second: BM Jonathan Bohnenberger

Motion passed unanimously

### **Old Business**

**FIFA and Sports Tourism update** – Strong industry momentum. Visit Gilroy launched two new website pages: "Bay Area Sports ft. Superbowl LX" and "FIFA World Cup 2026". Created Sports Fan Map highlighting local venues that stream games, opening opportunities for watch parties and group events. Hotels are not anticipating significant bookings at this time.

### **New Business**

#### **Elect Board Secretary**

Motion to approve BM Kelli Jones as the Visit Gilroy Board of Directors Secretary:

First: BM Jeff Orth

Second: BM Jonathan Bohnenberger

Motion passed unanimously

#### **Elect Executive Board Member**

Motion to approve BM Kelli Jones as an Executive Visit Gilroy Board Member:

First: BM Jeff Orth

Second: BM Jonathan Bohnenberger

Motion passed unanimously

#### **Elect Jeff Orth to the Board as “Community at Large”**

Motion to approve Jeff Orth as a “Community at Large” Visit Gilroy Board Member:

First: BM Jonathan Bohnenberger

Second: BM Larry Imas

Motion passed unanimously

#### **Elect Amber Atteberry to represent the Gilroy Downtown Business Association as a Visit Gilroy Board Member**

Motion to approve Amber Atteberry as a Visit Gilroy Board Member:

First: BM Mattie Scariot

Second: BM Jeff Orth

Motion passed unanimously

**Visit Gilroy’s Position on the TOT increase** – ED Frank Johnson provided an overview of the purpose of the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) and reviewed survey questions from the City of Gilroy regarding community knowledge of TOT. Following discussion and an informal poll, the Board of Directors made a motion to take no position on the potential TOT increase at this time, pending additional input from Gilroy hotels.

First: BM Cristina Cortes

Second: BM Cameron Childers

Motion passed unanimously

**Content creator and influencer update** – Collaborating with local content creators to promote events and build out outdoor information. A new partnership with a young influencer to promote Barrel and Bites wine event to her large audience. Partnering with local Lisa Faria to develop outdoor content regarding hiking trails, and building out informative park descriptions, etc.

**Retreats with community partners** – Reporting that ED Frank Frank Johnson attended the Gilroy Gardens annual retreat, and the Gilroy Downtown Business Association annual retreat. BM Amber Atteberry shares 2026 events, goals, and ideas for downtown Gilroy. Board Advisor and Gilroy Gardens Board Member, Jane Howard, reflects on the plans for the upcoming year for the park, 4 board member positions are open, onboarding new talent with a focus on strengthening the non-profit's roots in education, and reporting a healthy relationship with the city with a renewed long-term lease.

**TV Spots on Bravo, Lifetime Real Women, HLN (True Crime), Expedia, Edible Silicon Valley** – Our new TV commercials have placements in these various channels. We have an Ad buy in Expedia launching soon, as well as a full-page Ad in the back cover of Edible Silicon Valley with a QR code that is gaining traction.

**Star Gazing and Wine Tasting** – Together with L&M winery and James Lick observatory, there is a collaborative stargazing event in the works – the first time exploring this type of partnership and discovering avid groups of enthusiasts. Shared that Gilroy Gardens has camp nights, suggesting a great overnight venue. May 16 is the scheduled date for stargazing at L&M winery.

**Board Binders on the way, and Marketing Team next month** – Board member binders are in progress containing bylaws and marketing messaging. Our marketing team will be making a presentation to the board, scheduled for next month.

**TBID, TOT, CWC Renewal and meetings** – TBID is voted on by Gilroy hotels. TOT is voted on by Gilroy citizens. The California Welcome Center is voted on by the Gilroy City Council.

### **Staff Reports**

**Visit Gilroy Executive Director's December 2025 Report** – Frank Johnson: Visit Gilroy is behind on making some reports to the City; we are working on putting reports together with the help of Board Advisor, Jane Howard. Verdin submitted Visit Gilroy's TV spot to the MARCOM Awards, where it earned a Platinum Award.

**CWC Gilroy Manager's November and December 2025 Report** – Susan Childers: November was a strong month with retail sales up by 45%. Top visiting countries in Nov and Dec: Mexico, Japan, Philippines. November walk-ins down 11%, December walk-ins down 15%, but quarterly walk-ins only down 6% compared to last year; Saturdays remain to be the busiest days. Top retailers in our store are California branded products, Gilroy Logo products, Wild Groves EVOO, and CASA de Fruta products. Quarterly sales are down 3.8%. Gilroy Logo Ballcaps are stocked at the Cannery Marketplace downtown, and our e-commerce store is set up for online purchases of Gilroy Logo ballcaps, t-shirts, and garlic socks. On the subject of sports, we occasionally notice guests coming to the welcome center after attending an event.

**Tourism & Community Engagement Coordinator December 2025 Report** – Mary Gurries Bejarano: Continued coordination with Verdin Marketing on monthly content action plans for social media, e-newsletters, and upcoming projects. QR code tracking provides increased insight into how visitors engage

with Visit Gilroy materials, including consistent use of the Event Calendar flyer in hotels and the Welcome Center. Monitored and responded to website inquiries submitted through visitgilroy.com, supported event calendar entries, and added new business listings. Social media activity was supplemented with additional posts.

### **Board Member Reports**

**BM Kelli Jones** – No report.

**BM Cristina Cortes** – The Chamber will have our annual car show event and harvest festival on Saturday, September 19th. *Spice of Life Gala* nominations close in a few days! The Gala is scheduled for April 25 at the Elks Lodge. Bringing back Lunch and Learn every month. The *Government Relations Committee* is being reinstated after a 6-year hiatus on January 23 in the Chamber conference room.

**BM Jeff Orth** – Very honored to have been the very first customer at the new Cafe Dolce Vita restaurant in downtown. The GDBA's newest Chairperson, Amber Atteberry, is exactly what the GDBA needs and we're looking forward to this year.

**Jane Howard** – No report.

**BM Cameron Childers** – 2025 brought record breaking nighttime events for Gilroy Gardens. Planning to shift *Carnival Nights* into a Saturday/Sunday event. *Voyage the Islands* is our new Spring. New 11 AM – 5 PM standard operating hours all week. *Cherry Jubilee* will return for its second year; we are an international award finalist though IAAPA on a national and international scale for our specialty food offerings in the 2025 *Cherry Jubilee* event. Residents Day is scheduled for Sunday, March 22.

**BM Larry Imas** – *Barrel and Bites Weekend* is a new annual event beginning this year, set for February 21-22; Tastings at multiple wineries with paired foods! *Corks Kegs and 'Que* is Saturday, May 31.

**BM Jonathan Bohnenberger**– The Holiday Parade was amazing, thank you to the GDBA for having Chick-fil-A as a part of it. Entering a partnership with Gilroy Gardens – new things coming to the park.

**BM Amber Atteberry** – Monthly movie nights in downtown will begin in February, held on the second Thursday and alternating every other Thursday thereafter, at Donald Prieto Park. Exploring opportunities to expand and enhance the Art Walks to further develop Gilroy as an arts and culture destination. The *Downtown Live Summer Concert Series* will include eight event nights this year, instead of 10. The annual *Wine and Art Stroll* is scheduled for May 2 with a Derby theme. Other annual events include the *Beer Crawl* in October and the *Holiday Parade* in December.

**BM Mattie Scariot** – *The Poppy Jasper International Film Festival* returns April 8-15, 2026, with 350 films from 40 countries. Working with 5 other regional film festivals to create a Central Coast Film Alliance; Watsonville, Santa Cruz, Cambria, San Luis Obispo, and Carmel; Visit California, the California Film Commission, and other film commissions and societies are on board to support. Each Festival will host a summit meeting with panel discussions – Ours will be Wednesday April 8 at Gavilan College. Attended a town hall meeting in Watsonville with San Benito, Monterey and Santa Cruz counties, to come up with an organizational plan to promote the arts. The PJIFF Radio Station will broadcast live before and during the festival; Marla Davies from Mix 106.5 is a helping partner on this. Sponsorships are open now.

**BM Trevor Van Laar** – An update on the *Garlic Festival* - waiting for contracts to be signed.

**Adjourned: 9:37 AM**