



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 21, 2026
Hampton Inn & Suites

Call to order: 8:07 AM

Report on posting of the agenda: Executive Director Johnson announced the agenda was posted on Friday, May 15, 2026, at 5PM at the California Welcome Center, 8155-6 Arroyo Circle, Gilroy, CA 95020.

Roll Call: Amber Atteberry, Brent Bonino, Cristina Cortes, Eric Gebhardt, Jeff Orth, Joley Rosales, Kelli Jones, Larry Imas, Mike Patel, Trevor Van Laar.

Council Member Tom Cline sits in for Terrence Fugazzi

Absent: Jonathan Bohnenberger, Mark Jacobsen, Mattie Scariot, Terrence Fugazzi

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

April 2026 Google Analytics Report and March Marketing Activities – ED Frank Johnson: Social media returning positive metrics, but e-newsletter open rate has slowed; looking to simplify and test how it's received. Speaking with Bay Area travel writers to build content for rich website SEO.

Consent Calendar

Motion to approve Board Meeting Minutes from April 16, 2026, and April Financial Reports:

First: BM Jeff Orth

Second: BM Eric Gebhardt

Motion passed unanimously.

April 2026 Minutes Report and Financials approved together. Minutes and Financials Reports to be approved together under a single consent calendar motion going forward.

Old Business

Show New Video Assets – Our new video spots show more hiking assets, with outdoor visuals captured during the last video shoot. Fruit stands were a great addition this time, building on the Fruit Stand Hwy identity.

CaliforniaMeetings.com – Gilroy is now included in the professional meeting spaces website, a Visit California initiative. Our listing summarizes Gilroy and offerings, video spot, contact info, and a link to our own meeting spaces website. Developing a Small Market Meeting Space Toolkit.

Visit California Podcast – Contacted by Visit California to highlight Gilroy. Interviewees included Joely from Gilroy Gardens, and Ruben, a local artist active in the Gilroy arts scene. Podcast host Josh Meyers discussed Gilroy Gardens, and the greater Gilroy area.

TOT and TBID update – City staff received instructions to develop verbiage for TOT increase on the November 2026 ballot. The Tourism Business Improvement District is proceeding without opposition.

New Business

Pinterest – A platform to be refreshed and curated. Clearing outdated content, building content that will link to new assets on our website, including blog content.

Discussion on Amazon Data Center—Chamber of Commerce will lead –

The Visit Gilroy board was given the latest information from the Chamber of Commerce.

Vote to submit business plan for Exploratorium, Workforce Development, Education Center – Contacts from AWS and the City of Gilroy have been receptive to the proposed concept of a science & education focused center in Gilroy. The Board has authorized spending up to \$4000 to create a 3-5 page business case.

Motion to submit business plan:

First: BM Amber Atteberry

Second: BM Jeff Orth

Motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports

Visit Gilroy Executive Director's April 2026 Report – Frank Johnson: Thank you to board member Larry Imas and L&M Winery for a very successful wine and stargazing event last weekend, with approximately 40 attendees. Several guests were unfamiliar with our local wineries and traveled from as far as an hour away to participate. Attendees have inquired about similar future events.

CWC Gilroy Manager's April 2026 Report – Susan Childers: April was encouraging at the welcome center, with 671 walk-ins, and \$3500 in retail sales. Top visiting countries: Germany, India, and Japan. Generating some sales at the Cannery Marketplace and expanding our available ballcap colors. Preparing for summer tourism with healthy inventory stock and patriotic decor in the welcome center. The Gilroy Gardens welcome center is properly stocked with our tourism media.

Tourism & Community Engagement Coordinator April 2026 Report – Attended regular partner meetings, including the Wineries of Santa Clara Valley and the Third Friday Art Walk Committee. Continued collaboration with Verdin Marketing on monthly marketing initiatives and met the team on day 1 of the video shoot. Provided ongoing website support; inquiries, listing and account maintenance, event calendar, and content updates. Continued work on the Hiking & Biking webpage, with a major update forthcoming. More than 2,000 collateral pieces were distributed in April, including materials provided for the Poppy Jasper International Film Festival welcome bags.

Board Member Reports

BM Eric Gebhardt – The last few months have been solid, with June and the summer outlook continuing the trend. Upcoming events, including the Hollister Bike Rally and Renaissance Faire, are expected to support visitation. Weekend bookings continue to benefit from attendance at Gilroy Gardens. Overall lodging trends remain positive despite the recent loss of the Days Inn property

BM Raissa de la Rosa – A second Downtown Town Hall meeting was held, generating constructive feedback from business and property owners. Discussion focused on downtown vitality efforts, including enhanced public safety measures and opportunities for collaboration between the City, businesses, and property owners. City staff also met with organizations to explore temporary pop-up activations in underutilized downtown spaces. Additionally, a tour of the Intuitive Surgical distribution facility was conducted, with discussion regarding the transition. Finally, we are looking to get the best use of our Placer AI contract for one more year.

BM Brent Bonino – Things such as fuel prices have had a significant impact on business and the industry, but crops are growing and producing. Looking forward to summer.

BM Mike Patel – First quarter was good; April brought spring breakers and construction bookings. An AI event in San Jose brought some overflow to Gilroy, as well as the recent Performance Food Group event. Looking forward to graduation and summer vacation season. Not expecting any FIFA impact at present.

Tom Cline – Highly recommend that people attend the AWS open house event on June 3rd. The Sharks Ice Facility Ad Hoc Committee has a meeting today, progressing with information. As of June 1st, Gilroy will have a new Police Chief, Brandon Sanchez.

BM Larry Imas – *Corks Kegs and 'Que* event is coming at the end of this month – Tickets are still available; last-minute ticket sales continue to be a trend.

BM Amber Atteberry – Elevated police and code enforcement presence downtown has been noticed. Sgt. Jesus Cortes will sit on Gilroy Downtown Business Association Board as Police Liaison. Downtown Movie Night feature for tomorrow is *Cars*, with the last movie night scheduled for June 5th. Recapping the *Wine and Art Stroll*, 70 tickets were sold at the door, +150 tickets more than last year, about 450 total.

BM Kelli Jones – no report

BM Joely Rosales – *Voyage to the Islands* has been a great event so far; comments from guests have been positive. The water features are open for the season, hoping to see increased attendance. *Cherry Jubilee*, an IAPPA award winning event, is returning with amazing attractions and food. The Gilroy Gardens 2025 impact report has been released.

BM Jeff Orth – Traveled in Ireland last weekend, promoting Gilroy as a destination; came across more USA people than Ireland natives. Downtown cleanup days continue. Painting of the new barrel planters will be on May 30th in front of CMAP, where people can stop and watch. Downtown flags went up in downtown this morning.

BM Cristina Cortes – AWS has spurred buzz about investment in Gilroy, according to comments from a Chamber member. The Chamber of Commerce is gearing up for the 26th annual Garlic City Car Show and Harvest Festival, happening Saturday Sep. 19th as a full-fledged family friendly event. We've revamped our Government Relations meetings as an opportunity for local, County, and

Federal representatives to hear and discuss the highlights as well as needs in Gilroy; occurring every other month, next scheduled for June 5th 12-1:30 PM with a Santa Clara County Ag Plan and outreach presentation at this next meeting. Last Friday was the Blue Wave Car Wash ribbon cutting, and Nissan Gilroy will have a ribbon cutting event on June 4th. The next Chamber Lunch & Learn with SJ Spotlight will be focusing on government accountability with a community feedback session – “what do you want to hear in the news?” Happening May 28th 4-5 PM.

Adjourned: 9:52 AM