



Minutes

Visit Morro Bay Board of Directors

Visit Morro Bay Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 23, 2024

9:00 am – 11:00 am

Virtual via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84843611155?pwd=bzdTa1BYaTJMdVY3ck9zUFV2bFI0dz09>

Meeting ID: 848 4361 1155 Passcode: 972262

Call-In Phone Number: 1(669)900-6833

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Board Chair Amish Patel called the meeting to order at 9:03 am.

PRESENT: (VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE) Board members - Amish Patel, Chris Kostecka, Robert Elzer, Yvonne Kimball, Dane Jacobs, and Steven Allen

ABSENT: Amit Patel

STAFF PRESENT: Michael Wambolt, Elizabeth Gilson, Marianna Garcia

PUBLIC PRESENT: ABBI Agency - Hayley Walters, Amanda Barham, Kerri Cecere, Ty Whitaker, Evan Childs, Martin Walter MCI Agency, Kirk Carmichael City of Morro Bay Recreation Department

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items) None**

ANNOUNCEMENTS - None	M. Wambolt
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT	M. Wambolt
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3. **Executive Director Report (20 min)**

Staff will provide an update on current projects, reporting and areas of focus for the months ahead.

Branding: Michael stated that the VW Bus is done. That there was an oil leak and a new engine was needed and replaced. He stated that the Bus was down at the Kite Festival and was a huge hit and that it will be placed around town in the coming days.

Events: Michael stated that there were thousands of people at the Kite Festival and it was a success. Ironman was moved from Saturday to Sunday and we are waiting to see how that impacts the race. The businesses that gave push back last year were happy with the changes this year. Mark Tognazzini gave a positive interview on KSBY news. WE are hearing a little grumbling from businesses close to Ironman village. Michael stated that he and the City will be having a debriefing meeting soon. There was Ironman Kids this year which was lightly attended and we will be working next year to have more promotion. He stated that for the Ironman race the tide came in at the start of the swim portion of the race and around three hundred were not able to complete that portion of the race. Ironman is offering free race entry to those people . It is not our responsibility but we want to work with Ironman to plan the course so it is safe. Council member Landrum and Mayor Wixom were at the finish line to hand out medals.

Board member Steve Allen asked if the State Parks were able to help with funding.

Michael stated that they were in contact with Dawn Addis's office and it was decided not to ruffle any feathers this year. Let's just get State parks on board this year. The big talking point for next year is limiting the funds Visit Morro Bay provides. Michael will also reach out to Visit SLO CAL to see about some funding from them since the race does impact more areas than just Morro Bay not next year but with the new contract.

The Board discussed.

Finances: Michael stated that the operating budget is at one hundred and sixty-six thousand dollars and reserve funds are at nine hundred and fifty-six thousand dollars.

Reports: Michael stated that for STR, we are seeing a slight decrease in April. May was up slightly. January was up a little and February was down a little most likely due to the stormy winter weather. We are tracking relatively well compared to last year. We will have more information coming in from Ironman. Michael stated that it is not unique to us and that the whole county is down. Hwy 1 is open leading into Big Sur and that the rest will be open by Labor Day.

Marketing: Michael stated the he has received a report from Expedia and that he is still waiting for Priceline and Booking.com. he stated that with the second round of Expedia we gained off of our destination page one point two K in room nights. Two hundred and twenty-three K in revenue coming to us and our spend on that is around thirty thousand so that is a 6 to 1 ROI on the OTA side of things. Michael stated that we have had a couple of PR FAMs come through. We had Neil Davey from the UK. The LA Times in market today and someone from Travel Lemur. Michale stated that he had just returned from IPW. Things felt like pre-2019. Eighty appointments were booked. Last year sixty appointments were booked. Those leads will be coming to hotels in the next week. Michael received information from travel agencies and Tour operators this will lead into work that he Board approved for the UK and Germany representation markets and we will hear a presentation from Martin Walter of Germany later in the meeting.

Sales: Michael stated group outreach is continuing and that Mariana is doing a great job with contacting car and Bike clubs.

Stakeholder Engagement: We are continuing stakeholder outreach to make sure they have the information that they need.

CONSENT AGENDA – *motion required*

M. Wambolt

4. Approval of March 25, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes

5. Approval of April 16, 2024, Special Board Meeting Minutes

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ACTION: Board member Yvonne Kimbal made a motion to approve the March 25, 2024, and April 16, 2024, Board meeting minutes. Board member Dane Jacobs seconded the motion.

MOTION: Carried 6:0

6. Approval of Visit Morro Bay Financials

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ACTION: Board member Yvonne Kimball made a motion to approve Visit morro Bay financials. Board member Steve Allen seconded the motion.

MOTION: Carried 6:0

BUSINESS ITEMS & DISCUSSIONS

M. Wambolt

7. VMB Approval of Fiscal Year 2024-25 Board Meeting Schedule (10mins) *motion required*
Board to approve meeting schedule for fiscal year 2024-25.

Michael stated that we are fast approaching the next fiscal year and we need to set the schedule for meetings next fiscal year so that the Board and the public are aware. Our board meets the fourth Thursday of the month, every other month. The dates for fiscal year 2024-25 are July 25th, September 26th, November 28th though this meeting is usually changed to the week before due to Thanksgiving holiday, January 23rd, March 27th, and May 22nd. Meetings are held via Zoom.

Board Chair Amish Patel asked if the November meeting could be moved to November 21st now.

Michael stated yes.

The Board discussed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ACTION: Board Chair Amish Patel made a motion to approve the 2024-25 fiscal year Board meeting schedule with the tentative change of November's date to the 21st. Board member Chris Kostecka seconded the motion.

MOTION: Carried 6:0

8. VMB Transfer Reserve Funds for Ironman Contract Rooms (10mins) *motion required*
Staff to give update on funds needed for contracted rooms for Ironman. Board to approve transfer from reserve funds.

Michael stated annually there is a question, Why do we use reserve funds to pay for the Ironman contract rooms? This is so that our budget stays consistent year in and year out. Ironman is a three-year contract so we utilize the reserve funds for the host fee and contract rooms. Per our contract with Ironman, we are responsible for thirty room nights. Michael is coming to the Board for approval of the Hampton Inn preliminary estimate of seven thousand nine hundred and eleven dollars to be moved from reserve funds to the operating budget for this.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ACTION: Board member Yvonne Kimball made the motion to approve the transfer of funds. Board member Steve Allen seconded the motion.

MOTION: Carried 6:0

9. City of Morro Bay 60th Anniversary Fund Approval September (10min) *motion required*
Staff and City staff will present the Morro Bay 60th Anniversary Celebration. Board to approve funds for the celebration.

Michael introduced Kirk Carmichael Director of the City of Morro Bay Recreation Department.

Michael stated that it was exciting that Morro Bay is celebrating its sixty years of incorporation. We will be marketing this. The City is doing a 3-day event in September. The dates are September 5th, 6th, & 7th. Thursday the 5th will kick off with an enhanced Tunes at Tidelands concert. On Friday, the 6th there will be a Taste of Morro Bay with art & garden showcase and the retail side of things, and then Saturday there will be a Founder's day Parade in the morning and then celebration at noon at Tidelands Park. Kirk will go into more details well and to answer questions. Michael stated that he is asking for ten thousand dollars in funds to come from the reserve funds.

Kirk Carmichael spoke and described the potential ideas and components of 3 days of events as nothing has been finalized. He stated that they are going to go with a sixties theme.

The Board discussed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ACTION: Board member Steve Allen made a motion to approve funding for the Morro Bay 60th Anniversary Celebration. Board member Chris Kostecka seconded the motion.

MOTION: Carried 5:0 with Board member Yvonne Kimball abstaining

10. VMB Update Visit SLO CAL CEO Search (10min)

Staff to give update on Visit SLO CAL CEO search.

Michael stated that The Visit SLO CAL CEO position is open and that Cathy Cartier who is interim CEO from Las Vegas has a very strong background and has been in the community for a number of years. He is requesting that the Visit Morro Bay Board give permission to write a letter of recommendation. He is asking for the Board to discuss.

The Board discussed it and gave Michael permission to write the letter.

11. Visit Morro Bay Website Discussion (30min)

Abbi Agency will present the next steps for the new website.

Michael stated that this is an update from the previous discussion on moving forward with the ABBI Agency creating a new website. Michael stated that we would go to a month-to-month contract with Simpleview with the goal of having the new website up by late spring. It will take about six to eight months.

Michael introduced Hayley Walters of the ABBI Agency to give their presentation.

Hayley spoke on the website process, what's needed, what goes into a website to make it last long term and stands the test of time. She stated that their team has put together some thoughts and a competitive analysis. She stated that today they would be going over the benefits of partnering with ABBI Agency, high level touch on our process best practices, SEO insights and recommendations. Hayley stated that ABBI Agency team have worked with us for a few years now and they know where we have been where we are and where we are going.

Kerrie Cere of Abbi spoke on making sure that the website is structured for user-friendly long-term use. Hayley added to this.

Evan Childs Abbi agency SEO expert spoke on the SEO process. Our current site and where he feels the new one should go.

Hayley finished off the presentation stating how important the SEO process and audit is, the importance of making the new website more user friendly and by refreshing images and making things easier to find, as well as the timeline for the process of building the new website with the plan of launching in June of 2025.

Amanda Barnham went over the costs for the building of and future maintenance of the website.

Hayley asked if there were any questions from the Board.

Board member Chris Kostecka asked what other DMO's have ABBI worked with and if we sever the relationship with ABII who owns the website.

Hayley answered they have worked with Murietta and Carmel, CA. as well as Kalispell, MT.

Ty Whitaker of ABBI stated that regarding ownership of the website, the website would live in their servers but that the website is transferable at any time. He stated that any work that they do for us, we own it.

Board chair Amish Patel asked if we would still use the jackrabbit systems.

Michael stated yes and explained how that would work.

Board member Chris Kostecka asked if the money we spend now would we expect to spend it again in four to five years?

Hayley stated that the importance of the maintenance contract is to be able to keep things updated and fresh but if any major changes to the website had to be made that would incur extra costs.

The Board discussed.

It was concluded that ABBI Agency would bring a quote back to the Board at a future meeting.

Michael stated that since we are running out of time, a special Board meeting in June would need to be called to go over the 2024-25 budget.

12. German International Representation Presentation (10min)

Board to hear presentation from MCI Agency in Germany on upcoming representation in FY 2024-25

Michael introduced Martin Walter owner of the MCI Agency of Germany to speak on their agency's representation of Morro Bay to travelers from Germany and booking vacations in California.

Martin Walters explained who their company is and how they work with travel agencies and travelers from Germany Create itineraries for travel to the united states. He stated that there is great demand for 2024. He stated that the costs for their services will be twenty-two thousand dollars per year.

Michael concluded that this is a good move for us as no other local agencies are doing this to promote European travel.

Board member Yvonne Kimball asked what are examples of day to day work they would do for us.

Martin stated that they first make an assessment, who is selling what in our area, and what are the gaps. Who's missing. what's missing. He also stated that they work with the travel industry to further enhance our product coverage and awareness in the German market. Then there is representation at German trade shows and a bimonthly trade newsletter.

Board Chair Amish patel asked if the Board wanted to vote on whether to extend the meeting.

Michael stated that he could do a quick overview of budget or that a special board meeting

Board member Yvonne Kimbal and Steve Allen stated that they had to leave the meeting and would prefer having a special meeting in June.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ACTION: Board Chari Amish Patel made a motion to move item number thirteen The Visit Morro Bay Fiscal Year 2024-25 Draft Budget Review to a special meeting in June. Date to be determined. Board member Steve Allen seconded the motion.

MOTION: Carried 6:0

Michael thanked the Board.

13. VMB FY 2024-25 Draft Budget Review

Staff to give board update on FY 2024-25 draft budget.

It was decided due to lack of time and the importance of this item to move it to the June Special Board meeting.

14. VMB Marketing Update

Abbi Agency to give marketing update.

It was decided due to lack of time to move the VMB Marketing update to the next Board meeting in July.

15. Next Board of Directors meeting – Tentative - July 25, 2024, Via Zoom

ADJOURN. Board Chair Amish Patel adjourned the meeting at 11:03 am.

Brown Act Notice: Each speaker is limited to two minutes of public comment for items not on the agenda. Public comment for each agenda item will be called for separately and is also limited to 2 minutes per speaker. State law does not allow the Board of Directors to discuss or take action on issues not on the agenda, except that members of the Board may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed by the person giving public comment. Staff may be directed by the Board to follow-up on such items and/or place them on the next Board agenda. The order of agenda items is listed for reference and items may be taken in any order deemed appropriate by the Board.

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