

# MINUTES



**Meeting:** Board of Directors Meeting  
**Location:** Kimpton Sawyer Hotel  
**Date/Time:** July 27, 2023 ▪ 12:00 pm  
**Prepared By:** Elizabeth Anderson

*The original agenda was prepared and posted in compliance with the provisions of the Ralph M. Brown Act noting that board action may occur on any identified agenda item.*

## I. Call to Order

A meeting of the Board of Directors of Visit Sacramento was held at the Kimpton Sawyer hotel in Sacramento, CA. Board Vice Chair Royce Pollard called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm and recited the Visit Sacramento Mission. It was established that a quorum was present, and the following attendance was recorded:

### PRESENT

#### Directors

Ariel Roblin	Kipp Blewett
Barry Miller	Larry Lee
Brad Cecchi	Patrick Miller
Doug Warren	Patrick Mulvaney
Greg Shaw	Royce Pollard
Heather Andrade-Neumann	Terry Harvego
Henry de Vere White	Tim Woolslayer
Jeroen Gerrese	

#### Industry Advisors

Annie Keys, <i>Downtown Sacramento Partnership</i>	Mark Davis, <i>Sacramento County Dept of Airports</i>
Emily Baime Michaels, <i>Midtown Association</i>	Crystal Bethke, <i>Sacramento County</i>
Jenna Abbott, <i>Sacramento Metro Chamber</i>	Mariana Sabeniano, <i>MetroEdge BoardLink YP</i>
Michael Jasso, <i>City of Sacramento</i>	

#### Visit Sacramento Staff

Mike Testa, Kari Miskit, Sarah Atilano, Sonya Bradley, David Eadie, Dan Santucci, Linda Odell, Kait Lynch and Elizabeth Anderson (recording secretary)

### ABSENT

#### Directors and Industry Advisors

Alex Rodrigo	Sami Qureshi
Bay Miry	Shelly Moranville
Christine Calvin	Stacey Kauffman
David Huber	Steve Young
Erika Bjork	Michael Ault
John Lambeth	Howard Chan
Josh Nelson	Darrell Steinberg
Mabel Salon	Matt Voreyer
Nikki Carlson	

**II. Public Comments – Matters Not on the Agenda**

Board Vice Chair Royce Pollard called for public comment on items not listed on the agenda; none were presented.

**III. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes:**

A. April 20, 2023

There being no changes to the April 20, 2023 minutes, ***Patrick Mulvaney motioned to approve the minutes as presented; Doug Warren seconded. [Vote: Unanimous]***

**IV. Chair's Report**

None at this time.

**V. President's Report**

A. FY23-24 Budget Approval

Mike Testa shared that the FY 2023-2024 budget was first presented to the STMD committee on July 10, 2023 and they approved it. It also needs to be approved by the board, they will be highlighting changes to the budget and new items during the presentation.

Testa added that the STMD typically has a carryover that goes back into the pool at the end of the FY and there was almost \$1.2M left over following activities approved in FY 2022-2023. Visit Sacramento applied for STMD funding in total of \$1M for convention and leisure travel marketing. The fund still has \$200,000 remaining and is expected to generate \$800,000 this fiscal year.

Budget Rationale:

The 2023/24 budget was designed to support continuous efforts and programming that will:

- Continue a strong focus on attracting conventions of all sizes to Sacramento, including stand-alone citywide meetings, combining two smaller groups to achieve a citywide, and larger events like FFA that utilize multiple venues in Sacramento
- Significant investments in leisure travel marketing, including a new and extensive partnership with Expedia, and a focus on marketing Sacramento as a year-round festival destination
- Position Sacramento as a sporting destination through a deliberate and aggressive NCAA bid process, and by growing existing events like IRONMAN
- And always looking ahead in working to bring new music festivals and food-focused events and conventions to Sacramento

Landscape Overview:

**Regional Industry**

Tourism and hotel occupancy numbers have made great progress in a significant rebound from COVID-19, with convention numbers beginning to approach pre-2020 levels. Leisure travel continues to make an impact in the market, with more and more tourism draws for Visit Sacramento to market to potential visitors. Festival growth,

specifically, continues to be a strong growth point for the market, and the success of the existing festivals continues to attract new outside promoters to the market.

### **Visit Sacramento**

The team continues to focus on utilizing the renovated and expanded SAFE Credit Union Convention Center to grow conventions as a primary business goal. However, we also have considerable focus on making sure that Sacramento's tourism portfolio is diversified by putting significant focus on leisure, special events and sports visitation. By building multiple layers of tourism business, Visit Sacramento can create new visitor revenue streams and better safeguard against future known crises and national economic ups and downs.

### Administration

Testa shared majority of the variance is staffing and bringing positions back that were laid off during the pandemic. The leadership team is strategic in how positions are brought back and focuses on business need when determining staffing.

Testa continued that there will be a board retreat in early 2024 and it will be out of market.

### Marketing

Miskit shared that the discussion of leisure is continuing. As the focus on the market changes, we are continuing to target drive markets in new ways to bring them to the city overnight for specific experiences. The festival campaign just began and will drive to one specific webpage.

Miskit discussed bringing back the Expedia Buy in FY 23/24, this was done pre-pandemic and it is returning on a significantly larger scale. Leisure is hard to measure in data and Expedia shares that data with us, which helps to shape our decisions. In previous years Visit Sacramento spent a quarter of what is planned for FY 23/24 and would generate 18,000 room nights on Expedia, so it is expected to see the room night number grow significantly.

### Sports Marketing

David Eadie shared the budget is less due to events from last year not occurring this year because of their rotation of events. Other than those events not taking place the majority of the Sports budget are at a similar number this year. The largest area of change is in trade shows and sales missions as the team is looking at attending new shows and creating more sales missions this year.

### Convention Sales & Services

Sarah Atilano highlighted the largest variances in the Convention Sales budgets which were in the below:

- Tradeshows- Due to travel costs, show locations, adding new shows, and sending more attendees to the tradeshows
- Sales Mission – Adding new sales missions this fiscal year

- FAMS – elevating the FAM experiences, increasing the number of attendees they can accommodate, and additional FAMS
- Booth Expenses – New line item that will be specifically for booth expenses and tradeshow materials to streamline coding of invoices and making it clear what is being spent. Previously these expenses were split into different lines
- Bid Support – Down from last year but it has all been committed with a small buffer for in the year for the year bookings.

Miskit spoke to the Convention Sales Ad Placement line item which is a continuing partnership with Digital Edge who does the ad buying for the tradeshow space. There is also a new meeting planner night out video that will be advertised throughout the year.

#### Tourism

Sonya Bradley shared that there has been a shift in tour and travel business with some returning, but not all. The budget is built to maintain relationships and capitalize on the continued recovery. IPW is returning to California this year and Visit Sacramento will be a part of Visit California's marketplace. This has happened in previous years and was very well received.

Miskit spoke to the International Representation line item and shared this is the for the Black Diamond agency in the United Kingdom who is also the European arm of Visit California. They produce great results for the PR side of the business so that contract has been kept.

#### Partner Marketing

Testa shares no large variances in the Partner Marketing budget, there is an increase in tradeshows to allow for staff to go to Cap-to-Cap with the Sacramento Metro Chamber. The other changes is the sponsorship contract is no longer active as it has moved to be all in-house.

#### Community Relations

Testa shared that the New Years Eve Sky Spectacular is no longer occurring. When the event was originally created there was not a lot happening in Old Sacramento and there were a lot of benefits to it. Testa believes the city is looking at a different type of programming and Old Sacramento Waterfront may arrange their own events. Visit Sacramento will help to promote those if needed.

#### Farm-to-Fork

Miskit spoke to the media FAM line and shared that a new agency has been hired to arrange two FAMs in September. One during Tower Bridge Dinner and the other during the Farm-to-Fork festival. There is also the potential for a third group in October around GoldenSky.

Testa shared that historically the September festivals made a large profit that would then be put into programming. Now the profit is a tenth of what it was previously due to increased costs of supplies and increase the entertainment budget. Visit Sacramento's

goal is not to make a large profit on these events, but not to lose money either. Visit Sacramento can break even so that all of the business in the community can profit from the visitors.

Comments:

Board Treasurer Kipp Blewett shared that the financial statements show that Visit Sacramentos organization health indicates it has come out of the pandemic and is strong on all fronts.

***MOTION: Royce Pollard motioned to approve the FY 2023-2024 as presented; Kipp Blewett seconded. [Vote: Unanimous]***

B. Reserve Policy Approval

Testa shared that the organization would like to establish a reserve policy to ensure that money is being spent thoughtfully and that there is a back-up fund in case of economic challenges. The executive committee has met to put this policy together and thinks it is best for the organization to have this. Testa concluded that in the past there were years where the organization ran in a deficit and that this will help for that to not happen again.

***MOTION: Royce Pollard motioned to approve the reserve policy as presented; Kipp Blewett seconded. [Vote: Unanimous]***

C. 2023 Mid-Year Goal Achievement Update

Atilano reviewed the Convention Sales current room night achievements including the below:

Goal	Stretch Goal
185,000	193,000
Current Numbers as of June 30, 2023	Projected End of Year Numbers
147,303	195,000

Eadie and Atilano shared where the Sports Commission room nights were pacing including the below:

Goal	Stretch Goal
105,000	110,000
Current Numbers as of June 30, 2023	Projected End of Year Numbers
43,141	105,000

Atilano shared that the combined goal is 290,000 room nights and the current combined projected end of years number is 300,000 room nights.

Testa shared that that the private revenue current numbers are at \$505,000 and the goal is \$2.2M. The team is still collecting on many sponsorships and Tower Bridge

Dinner sales. The numbers are slightly down from last year but expected to increase due to the first time raising the Tower Bridge Dinner price in six years.

D. Convention Sales Update

Atilano spoke about the pent-up demand for convention sales and many leads are coming in and turning definite in a short period of time. The strategy of stacking groups at the convention center is paying off and allowing the team to book more business in the year for the year or one year out.

E. Sports & Entertainment Update

Eadie shared that the next bid cycle for NCAA events is opening in early September, and they were just informed that the NCAA is changing their bid cycle from four years to two years. Eadie and Jill Culbertson will be traveling to Indiana in August to learn more about the process. The team will have six months to put the bids together. Eadie informed the hoteliers in the room to expect the process to be similar to previous years where the event is awarded and then contracts are done at a later date for room blocks, with the exception of basketball events.

Eadie continued that the IRONMAN agreement was signed for five years, and they will be here through 2028. Testa and Eadie shared that there were changes made from the original contract to this new contract that were favorable for Sacramento as a city such as removing hotel rebates. The group asked about dates for the event each year and Eadie shared that it will be evaluated every 18 months to select a date, but that it is still being looked at for the same time frame each year.

Eadie discussed the sports commission coalition that was started between several California cities during the pandemic. It has evolved in the last year and is now partnered with Cal Travel Association. With their assistance the coalition is looking at putting forth legislation to create a sports and events fund for attracting major events to California. Eleven other states have a fund like this, and California could be more successful in compete withing Florida, Texas and others for large events.

F. Marketing Update

Miskit shared that the festival campaign is kicking off and that the team is trying something different with the advertising. They are working with hotels who are willing to participate in offering a rate code with the hotel being fully in control of the rate. Visit Sacramento will be providing branded gift cards for use at the festival to entice people to book through these rate codes. The goal of this process is to be able to gather more data on out-of-town visitors for the Farm to Fork festival.

Testa shared that this idea came from a conversation that Jeroen Gerrese led at the retreat and will help Visit Sacramento track the campaign. Visit Sacramento is not asking for large blocks but just a way to allow us to measure the success or lack there of in the campaign.

**G. Farm-to-Fork Events Update**

Eadie shared that this will be the ten-year anniversary of the Farm-to-Fork events and there are a lot of special items planned. There have been some challenges with construction at the Capitol, but they have confirmed Visit Sacramento can hold Legends of Wine on the west steps this year. The Tower Bridge Dinner lead chefs are very engaged this year and there will be new restaurants in the dessert and appetizer sections.

Eadie continued that there has been a targeted investment in the music for this year's Farm-to-Fork festival and the excitement is unprecedented. Will be announcing soon ticketed events within the festival.

Testa shared that the team is also exploring a partnership with the James Beard Foundation as they have not had a huge presence in Sacramento previously. Looking to have them involved in the festival and the Tower Bridge dinner.

In addition to the farm to fork events KCRA will be airing the breaking bread episodes beginning on September 7, 2023. With them not only being available locally but in 26 markets and will be available to anyone with the Very Local streaming app.

**VI. Staff Reports**

Staff reports were sent prior to the meeting.

**VII. Items for Future Agendas**

None at this time.

**VIII. Adjournment**

Board Vice Chair Royce Pollard adjourned the meeting at 1:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Elizabeth Anderson  
Administration Manager  
(Recording Secretary)



Mike Testa  
President & CEO