



MINUTES

Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors

Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, March 29, 2023

8:30 am – 10:30 am

Visit SLO CAL Office – 81 Higuera Street, Suite 220, San Luis Obispo, CA

1. CALL TO ORDER

PRESENT: Clint Pearce, Vic Popp, Amar Sohi, Amit Patel, Bryan Bonelli, Nipool Patel, Jed Bickel, Pragna Patel-Mueller, Aaron Graves

STAFF PRESENT: Cathy Cartier, Chuck Davison, Emily Rudge, Annie Braunschweig, Cynthia Gonzalez

ABSENT: Mark Eads, Hemant Patel, Hamish Marshall, Britten Shuford, Toni LeGras-Price

Call to order at 8:42am, following office tour

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Congratulations to Katelyn and Aaron Graves on the birth of their daughter. American Airlines Phoenix flight will move to an A319 beginning April 1 (512 total seats, four times daily). VSC Annual Bash confirmed for May 12 at 5:30 PM at The Carrisa. Sam Miller, the GM of Grover Beach Holiday Inn has resigned from the Board and is leaving the tourism industry; thank you to Sam for his 8 years of service.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of January 18, 2023 Board of Directors Minutes

4. Approval of February Visit SLO CAL Financials

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion – None.

ACTION: Moved by **N. Patel/Popp** to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion carried: 8:0:1 (Bickel abstained)

CEO REPORT

5. Visit SLO CAL CEO Report

Davison noted that due to time constraints, included in the digital agenda packet was a special report from Tourism Economics predicting how the tourism industry will prevail during a potential recession and a document outlining the pathway for the internal investigation process, following the issues of November/December 2022, which was approved by the Executive Committee on March 2. Davison also noted that the Executive Committee approved the change in labor law counsel to move to Tardiff & Saldo. Davison highlighted the weekly and monthly STR report, noting that the winter storms are continuing to impact the overall numbers and we will continue to see decline for the month of March, although February was not as bad as anticipated. Davison noted Highway 1, north of Ragged Point, will require a long-term closure but Highway 1 in SLO CAL is currently open. Davison announced the resignation of the County Chief Administrative Officer Wade Horton, noting his last day will be May 1, and he highlighted major lodging property ownership changes: KSL bought Martin Resorts and StonePark Capital bought Hotel Cerro. Davison provided a reminder of the upcoming Board seat terms ending, sharing that applications will be accepted from April 4 – May 3 and the Executive Committee has recommended extending the Committee to 7 seats. Davison shared an update on the Mid-State Fair sponsorship including the cost, contract status, and overall purpose for the sponsorship. Davison shared a staffing update, announcing the resignation of Tracy Campbell, VP of Community Engagement & Advocacy and sharing she'll move into a contractor role as of March 20. Davison also announced the hiring of Matt Halvorson, Marketing Manager, and Annie Braunschweig as the VP of Administration, who after 5 years as a contractor, has moved into a full-time role. Davison shared a recap of the recent meetings with elected officials and highlighted the introductory meeting with U.S Congressman Jimmy Panetta, who visited the VSC office on February 23. Davison shared photos from the recent Visit California CEO Mission to Japan and provided details about the trip including the new MOU signed by Caroline Beteta and the Japan Tourism Association. Davison highlighted his two recent guest lectures given at Cal Poly and thanked those who participated in the EIM Auction. Davison provided a recap of Outlook Forum, provided updated statistics on SLO CAL Welcome participants and highlighted his upcoming travel schedule.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion

Business Items

6. Events & Festivals Strategy

Davison introduced Cass McAuley of MMGY NextFactor to present the final development of the Events & Festivals Strategy. McAuley provided a recap of the strategy creation process and detailed how the working group collaborated and arrived at the final result. McAuley reviewed the definitions created for the following: a destination event, signature event, community event, and visitors. She also reviewed the guiding principles, vision, key findings, strategic imperatives, and key recommendations. Davison highlighted that the next steps are for implementation to move to the VSC marketing team, and the strategy will be rolled out and reviewed for finalization with the working group, followed by the DI Event Impact Calculator process being formalized and work on the development of the countywide events calendar. Davison thanked Tracy Campbell, Melissa Murray and the team at MMGY NextFactor for their leadership on the project.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion. Graves voiced his excitement to see this project come to light. Davison reminded the group that while VSC is the owner of this strategy, it is up to each community to decide when their events will occur and that we will need to be very strategic in what the calendar looks like.

ACTION: Moved by **Pearce/Patel-Mueller** to approve the Events & Festivals Strategy as presented and proceed with implementation.

Motion carried: 9:0

7. Strategic Direction 2026

Davison shared the final draft of the Strategic Direction 2026 roadmap, which was created with the assistance of Matthew Landkamer of Whereabout and the planning team, and outlined the process for development, the changes made to the new Vision, Mission, Core Values, Position, Nomenclature, and shared the four objectives and their corresponding strategies and key results.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion. Pearce commented that it was great work done to everyone involved and it seems that a move from drive to excellence shows the new level of execution.

ACTION: Moved by **A. Patel/Popp** to approve Strategic Direction 2026 as presented and proceed with implementation beginning July 1, 2023.

Motion carried: 9:0

8. Travel Trade & Marketing Update

In the interest of time, Cartier shared an abbreviated travel trade & marketing update in effort to keep the meeting from running over time. Cartier announced that the WTTC landing page is now live and highlighted that the blogs are exceptionally written and truly capture each featured person's story despite the writer not being here in person during the shoot. Cartier also shared several WTTC videos with the Board. Cartier highlighted the recent Visit California ad campaign which included filming in two SLO CAL locations.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion. Patel-Mueller noted that she did some research on her own and viewed the WTTC videos and was blown away at how great they are.

9. President & CEO Annual Bonus Review

Cartier, Braunschweig, and Rudge exited the room while Davison shared his annual bonus document with the Board. Davison exited for the board discussion.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion

ACTION: Moved by **N. Patel/A. Patel** to approve the President & CEO's annual bonus at 100%

Motion carried: 9:0

ADJOURN 10:41 am