



MINUTES

Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors

Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, September 27, 2023

8:30 am – 10:30 am

Visit SLO CAL Office, 81 Higuera St, Ste 220, San Luis Obispo, CA

1. CALL TO ORDER

PRESENT: Clint Pearce, Vic Popp, Amar Sohi, Amit Patel, Jed Bickel, Pragna Patel-Mueller, Aaron Graves, Hamish Marshall, Toni LeGras-Price (arrived after call to order), Mark Eads, Jim Hamilton, Britt Shuford, Hemant Patel, Erin Nagle (Glenn Burdette)

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

ABSENT: Bryan Bonelli, Nipool Patel

Call to order at 8:34am

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SLO CAL Summit is October 5 and it is already sold out, reach out by end of today if you still need a ticket.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of May 31, 2023 Board of Directors Annual Meeting Minutes
4. Approval of May 2023 Visit SLO CAL Financials
5. Approval of June 2023 Visit SLO CAL Financials
6. Approval of July 2023 Visit SLO CAL Financials
7. Approval of August 2023 Visit SLO CAL Financials
8. Approval of FY 2023 Annual Report

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion – None.

ACTION: Moved by **Pearce/H. Patel** to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion carried: 13:0

CEO REPORT

9. Visit SLO CAL CEO Report

Davison highlighted the STR report for the month of August, commenting that occupancy is slightly down countywide, although some areas were down more than others. Davison shared a 28-day trend report showing a 2019 vs 2023 lookback for comparison noting ADR is up 28.5% and RevPAR up 17.5% vs 2019, an increase of about 4.4% per year. Davison shared a reminder that demand is up because supply is up; noting 2022 was the greatest reported year in the history of county tourism and businesses also are currently facing huge increases in expenses compared to 2019 for items such as insurance, staffing costs, Eco Lab, etc. Davison shared a recent letter provided for US Travel in support of requesting Congress fully fund the new Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Travel & Tourism position. Davison shared a recap of the Mid-State Fair Sponsorship, noting the highlights and key metrics as well as the challenges. Davison provided a recap of the TakeOff Conference and provided several air service updates including the upcoming suspension of the SBP-PDX flight due to the ongoing pilot shortage. Davison provided a recap of the DEI training held on August 30, commenting that the lack of attendance is problematic, and he requested feedback on the direction of the DEI Plan commitment the Board reconfirmed in May 2023, asking should the scope of work shift if some of the Board did not prioritize the training? Davison provided an update on the HWY 1 closure, sharing that there is currently no date set for reopening and VSC is working to elevate the conversation with state officials and Visit California to advance advocacy efforts. Davison provided a recap of CalTravel Summit, commenting that it was the largest Summit ever held and \$150,000 was raised for the PAC. Davison shared an update on the potential ballot measure for the TOT increase, and shared the WOW Alliance/JAJF video highlighting a special family's previous visit to SLO CAL in 2019. Davison noted the date change for the November Board meeting and highlighted his upcoming travel schedule.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion. Hamilton and Pearce voiced their continued commitment to DEI efforts and want to stay on track in alignment with the DEI plan. Eads requested some sort of online DEI training and Popp shared how impactful and unique the training was; he felt it was the best he's ever experienced in 20 years of training.

Business Items

10. Annual Audit Review

Braunschweig shared that Visit SLO CAL has completed a clean Audit with no findings for the 8th year in a row. Braunschweig noted that there was a deficit of \$1 million which was planned due to previously ending with a surplus. Braunschweig introduced Erin Nagle, of Glenn Burdette to share the report on Visit SLO CAL's annual financial statement audit. Nagle shared that the main item to notice which was mentioned last year, is the new requirement for leases to be brought onto balance sheets and be considered a tangible asset, bringing the entire length of the lease as an amortized asset. Nagle shared her gratitude and praise for Visit SLO CAL and Braunschweig for how smooth the entire process was.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion. Hamilton commented that clean audits are not to be overlooked and it's a strong reflection on the staff and leadership.

ACTION: Moved by **Hamilton/A. Patel** to approve the FY 2023 Annual Audit as presented by Glenn Burdette.

Motion carried: 13:0

11. Visit SLO CAL Bylaws Revisions

Davison noted that the revised Bylaws with track changes highlighted were sent via email one week prior to the meeting, and with the last update being 2020, the revisions were provided by John Lambeth of Civitas. The revisions included: changes to government codes, codes regarding teleconferencing, Visit SLO CAL's corporate address, specifically calling out the Past Chair to be included as a Vice Chairperson and their ability to serve in the absence of the Chair, and the establishment of a Compensation Committee to oversee negotiating the compensation of the President & CEO.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion. Sohi suggested that the Compensation Committee to be comprised of 3 or 4 Board members and 3 or 4 Executive Committee members in order to have more unique perspectives and voices from those not as close with the President & CEO. Bickel shared his support of the suggestion, commenting that things coming from the Executive Committee can often feel rubber stamped and this would help relieve some of that. Graves shared his disagreement with Sohi, noting that diverse representation is important, but you can only have so many opinions. Marshall raised concern that if you are going to involve that many people it defeats the purpose of having an Executive Committee altogether. A. Patel noted that if there is question in trusting the Executive Committee to function as the Compensation Committee what questions that raises about the other things the Board is trusting the Executive Committee to handle.

ACTION: Moved by **Pearce/A. Patel** to approve the proposed changes to the Visit SLO CAL Bylaws as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Motion carried: 9:4 (Popp, Bickel, Sohi, Patel-Mueller opposed)

12. Board Member Guidelines Revisions

Davison highlighted the revisions to the Board Member guidelines which are in line with the proposed bylaw changes and include the Board Chair participating in monthly 1:1 meetings with the President & CEO to review and discuss priorities and provide professional development feedback, a required meeting between the Board Chair, Past Chair and President & CEO one month prior to his annual review, and the establishment of the Compensation Committee which consists of the Chair, Vice Chair, and Past Chair and other members of the executive committee as desired.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

ACTION: Moved by **LeGras-Price/Shuford** to approve the proposed changes to the Board Member Guidelines as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Motion carried: 13:0

13. Short-Term Rental Workforce Housing Nexus Study Update

Davison provided a recap on the finalization of the Short-Term Rental Workforce Housing Nexus Study, sharing that the full study was released to the public on September 6, and the study determined that there is not a nexus between short-term rentals and workforce housing in part based on the \$1.2M average home price of short-term rentals, 9% of housing stock being second homes, a disproportionate percentage of single-family homes being built instead of multi-family housing as compared to the State average and over 800 short-term vacation rental units on the market being illegal.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion

ACTION: Moved by **Graves/Bickel** to approve the Short-Term Rental Workforce Housing Nexus Study as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Motion carried: 13:0

14. Travel Trade & Marketing Update

Cartier highlighted the findings from the recently completed Brand Awareness Study which was conducted by Heart + Mind Strategies. The study's key takeaways include that 1 in 8 travelers in targeted DMAs recall having seen advertising for SLO CAL in the past year without prompting, which is up 9% from last year and favorability towards the campaign is nearly universal. Cartier highlighted a recent Visit California shoot that took place in SLO CAL, and their feature which included SLO CAL in a Sustainable Wines Road Trip on social media. Cartier provided a recap of the SLO CAL Crafted pop-up event at Farmer's Market, and the recent shoot with Pensara and Shipyard on the nomenclature initiative. Cartier announced that the Visitors Magazine will move from being produced every year to every other year, and advertisers will be able to opt back in at a lower cost to cover printing.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion

Davison noted a reminder that the November meeting will be moved to November 15 and to sign the Conflict of Interest Forms and Board Member Guidelines forms prior to exiting the meeting.

ADJOURN 10:31 am