



MINUTES

Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors

Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, June 27, 2024

2:00pm – 4:00pm

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

PRESENT: Mark Eads, Aaron Graves, Clint Pearce, Toni LeGras-Price, Bryan Bonelli, Britt Shuford, Vic Popp (arrived after consent agenda), Amar Sohi, Jim Hamilton (arrived after consent agenda), Hamish Marshall, Pragna Patel- Mueller, Jed Bickel (arrived after consent agenda), Hemant Patel, Amit Patel

STAFF PRESENT: Cathy Cartier, Annie Braunschweig, Emily Rudge, Kristen Carlson

ABSENT: Nipool Patel

Call to order at 2:01pm

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of May 29, 2024 Board of Directors Annual Meeting Minutes

4. Approval of May 2024 Visit SLO CAL Financials

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion – None.

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

Motion carried: 10:0 (Popp, Bickel, Hamilton not present during vote)

CEO REPORT

5. Visit SLO CAL CEO Report

Cartier noted the arrival of the FY 25 Business and Marketing Plans, which were distributed during the meeting. Cartier shared a reminder of the cancellation of the July Board of Directors and Executive Committee meeting, noting the next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 18. Cartier thanked the Board for their attendance at the June 6 Advisory Committee meeting and reception, highlighting some of the positive

feedback received. Cartier shared the recent CNN Travel article which named San Luis Obispo one of America's best towns to visit in 2024. Cartier reviewed the May STR report, noting a softening in the market and the decision to increase media spend in the drive markets. Cartier shared that the U.S. Travel Association is prioritizing the Visa wait time issue in advance of the upcoming 2026 World Cup and the 2028 Olympics, as the World Cup is expected to attract 6 million international visitors and generate \$20 billion in spending. Cartier shared a Highway 1 update, noting that Paul's Slide reopened on June 23 and Regent's Slide is expected to reopen in late Fall. Cartier shared her upcoming travel schedule.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

Business Items

6. Approve President & CEO Selection

Eads highlighted the members of the Ad Hoc Selection Committee: Mark Eads, Amar Sohi, Aaron Graves, Pragna Patel-Mueller, Jim Hamilton, and reviewed the timeline of the executive search process. Eads shared the details of the recruitment process, beginning with 138 candidates, moving to virtual interviews with four finalist candidates, followed by 3 finalists invited to in-person interviews, with further due diligence completed on Cartier as well, resulting in excellent marks in both the background check and all of the screening rounds. Eads shared that all of the finalists began to withdraw from the search due to various reasons pertaining to either being unable to relocate families or leveraging a higher salary in their current role. Eads noted that Winner Partners' final recommendation was to move forward with Cartier as the best suited candidate for the President & CEO role. Eads highlighted Cartier's background, qualifications and the lengthy list of support letters received from both community partners and national industry leaders. Eads shared the exemplary performance Cartier exhibited throughout the process. Eads noted that per the Selection Committee's request, she'll give her candidate presentation which she presented to Winner Partners, the Executive Committee & Search Committee. Cartier shared her presentation, which focused on the prompt: What are the top three transformational opportunities on the horizon and how would you utilize them for Visit SLO CAL?

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion. Hamilton shared details as to how the search process was conducted, noting that it felt similar to Executive Searches for County positions. Hamilton commented that the questions and screening were focused on what type of executive leader each candidate would be and how they'd promote stability in the organization. Hamilton noted that while Cartier scored incredibly high in every area, what really stood out was her care for the growth and happiness of the staff, both on a personal level and as a leader. Hamilton and Patel-Mueller commented on how detailed and thorough the process was, and the professionalism of Winner Partners. Cartier thanked the Board and shared how excited she is to work with each community, grow and develop the team, and partner with the Board. Hamilton thanked Eads for his hard work and dedication to this process. Eads thanked Graves and Sohi for their help throughout the process.

ACTION: Moved by **Bickel/Popp** to approve the selection of Cathy Cartier as President & CEO of Visit SLO CAL, as recommended by the Executive Committee and the Ad Hoc Selection Committee.

Motion carried: 14:0

7. Approve President & CEO Compensation

Cartier shared the details of her requested compensation package: 3- year contract, annual salary and up to 25% bonus eligibility.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

ACTION: Moved by **Marshall/A. Patel** to approve the compensation of the Visit SLO CAL President & CEO, as recommended by the Executive Committee and the Compensation Committee.

Motion carried: 14:0

Cartier presented Amit Patel with a plaque to thank him for his years of service as a Board of Directors member. Cartier provided a reminder for the upcoming events and meetings.

ADJOURN 2:54pm