



MINUTES

Visit SLO CAL Executive Committee

Visit SLO CAL Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, May 22, 2025

12:00pm – 2:00pm

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

1. CALL TO ORDER: 12:03pm

PRESENT: Clint Pearce, Aaron Graves, Hamish Marshall, Hemant Patel, Amar Sohi (arrived after Consent Agenda)

ABSENT: Toni LeGras-Price

STAFF PRESENT: Cathy Cartier, Annie Braunschweig, Emily Rudge, Molly Cano, Lisa Belsanti

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cartier thanked the Board for their attendance at the annual Bash; Cartier shared the SLO CAL Summit save-the-date; Cartier provided a reminder to complete the partner satisfaction survey and attend the upcoming Advisory Committee meeting on June 12.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of April 10, 2025 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

4. Approval of March 2025 Visit SLO CAL Financials

5. Approval of April 2025 Visit SLO CAL Financials

Committee Discussion – None.

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

Motion: 5:0 (Sohi not present for Consent Agenda)

CEO REPORT

6. Visit SLO CAL CEO Report

Cartier shared the monthly STR report for April, noting that most communities were strong except Atascadero which VSC is still investigating but suspected the Best Western reopening could be related to the dip. Cartier shared an update on the Cal Poly EIM scholarship, noted the new dates for the Avila Drive Roundabout construction and road closure, shared the FY 26 Executive Committee Meeting dates, gave an update regarding Cal Poly's move to a semester system for the 2026-2027 school year, and shared her upcoming travel schedule.

Committee Discussion- Cartier sought Committee feedback regarding the 3.0 GPA requirement for the Cal Poly EIM scholarship. The Committee commented that since athletic scholarships require a 3.0 GPA, the EIM scholarship program should maintain the same requirement.

Business Items

7. FY 26 Business and Marketing Plan

Cartier noted that the draft of the FY 26 Business and Marketing Plan was included in the digital agenda packet for review in concept. Cartier provided a detailed review of the objectives, strategies, and key results which all ladder up to Strategic Direction 2026. Cartier highlighted the new brand campaign concept, areas of focus for integrated marketing, paid media, owned media, earned media, partnerships and events, sales, Film SLO CAL, Experience SLO CAL 2050, and advocacy.

Committee Discussion – None.

ACTION: Moved by **Marshall/Graves** to approve the FY 26 Business and Marketing Plan in concept as presented and make a recommendation for Board approval.

Motion: 6:0

8. Marketing Committee Seats

Cartier and Cano reviewed the applicants interested in renewing: Jim Allen (Hearst Castle), Linda Sanpei (Parker Sanpei Lifestyle Marketing and PR), John Sorgenfrei (TJA Advertising), Jill Tweedie (Breakaway Tours Wine and Events), and reviewed the new applications received: Jessica Blanchfield (Archer & Hound Advertising), Morgan Couch (JUSTIN Winery), Aerin Ginsberg (Pacifica Hotels), Corina Ketchum (Ava Hotel), Rachel Lackmann (Downtown SLO). Cano noted that the Marketing Committee's selection was to approve the four renewals and the addition of Jessica Blanchfield.

Committee Discussion- None.

ACTION: Moved by **Pearce/Patel** to recommend Board approval through the Consent Agenda, the renewal of Jim Allen, Linda Sanpei, John Sorgenfrei, Jill Tweedie and the new seat appointment of Jessica Blanchfield as recommended by the Marketing Committee.

Motion: 6:0

9. FY 26 Operating Budget

Braunschweig presented the proposed FY 26 budget, highlighting TMD revenue, non TMD revenue, investment and interest income, total operating expenses, and key budget initiatives. Braunschweig provided a review of items of focus for each department: general & administrative, industry research and resources, sales, PR & comms, marketing, sponsorships and events, and community engagement and advocacy.

Committee Discussion- None.

ACTION: Moved by **Graves/Marshall** to recommend Board approval of the FY 26 budget and use of reserve funds.

Motion: 6:0

10. Executive Committee Seats

Cartier presented the proposed slate of new Executive Committee seats, as discussed at the April Executive Committee meeting.

Committee Discussion- None.

ACTION: Moved by **Marshall/Pearce** to recommend Board approval of the following slate of FY 26 Executive Committee Seats:

Chair- Amar Sohi

Vice Chair- Clint Pearce

Secretary- Aaron Graves

Treasurer- Toni LeGras-Price

Past Chair- Mark Eads

Motion: 6:0

11. Board Member Selection Process

Cartier reviewed the requirements for Board applicants, shared details of the application process, as well as applications received and positions available. Cartier highlighted that 7 new applications were received, 2 requests for reappointment (County unincorporated seat and Atascadero TBID seat), 4 current at-large board members reapplied (Eads, Marshall, Shuford, N. Patel). Cartier commented that the caliber and volume of applicants for both the Board of Directors and Marketing Committee was excellent. Cartier noted a reminder that Bryan Bonelli did not wish to renew his position, leaving the elected designated vacation rental seat vacant. The new applications included: Charles Amian (Pismo Coast Village RV Resort), Maggie Guy (Beachside Rentals), Kathy Kelly (Digs Vacation Rentals), Matt Kleefisch (Ava Hotel), Diane Ramey (Ragged Point Inn), Rich Verruni (Allegretto), Matt Wright (Hotel Cerro).

Committee Discussion- None.

ACTION: Moved by **Pearce/Sohi** to recommend Board approval of the following Board of Directors seats:

Newly elected:

Charles Amian- RV Park Seat

Kathy Kelly- Vacation Rental Seat

Renewal of:

Britt Shuford (at-large)

Mark Eads (at-large)

Toni LeGras-Price (County unincorporated seat)

Hamish Marshall (at-large)

Nipool Patel (at-large).

Motion: 6:0

12. TMD Renewal Discussion

Cartier provided an overview of the TMD renewal process and introduced Maya Kitt, Civitas Legal Analyst, who joined via Zoom, to provide further details on the proposed timeline and process. Kitt shared additional details as to why early renewal is a good opportunity, what other Civitas clients have done, and the various options for escalating increases throughout the ten-year district. Braunschweig highlighted the local TOT and assessment rates for each local community as well as other regions throughout California. Cartier shared a reminder that early renewal is to evolve the district in advance of the changes in lodging inventory in the next few years, the increased cost of advertising, and that the dollars would be used towards advertising and marketing, not increasing staff headcount.

Committee Discussion- Eads commented that an escalator increase makes sense instead of waiting ten years for the district to renew. Graves and Sohi commented that with all of the new inventory coming, early renewal

with a 1% increase would be best. Sohi shared that he is confident that VSC would manage the additional funds well, and it wouldn't go towards payroll and increased headcount.

ACTION: Moved by **Patel/Graves** to recommend Board approval to explore early renewal and engage Civitas as outlined in the proposal.

Motion: 6:0

13. Marketing, Travel Trade & ESC 2050 Updates

Due to time constraints, Marketing, Travel Trade and ESC 2050 Updates were omitted.

Committee Discussion- None.

Cartier highlighted upcoming meetings and important dates.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 2:02pm