

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES – Travel Paso Board of Directors
Regular Meeting



Tuesday, March 19, 2024 – 3:00 pm

Meeting Location: Best Western Plus Black Oak, Acorn Room 1135 24th St, Paso Robles, CA 93446.

Members of the public had the option to participate virtually or in-person.

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:01pm by Chairman Alex Villicana with a roll call.

Present: Jill Alexander, John Arnold, Victor Popp, Ian Pullan, Rich Verruni, Alex Villicana, Kaitlin Walton

Absent: John Lozano, Angela McKee

Staff: Stacie Jacob

Guests: Councilmember Bausch, Councilmember Gregory, Ty Lewis, Chris Huot, Paul Sloan and Freda Berman (City of Paso Robles), Alyssa Manno (Visit SLO CAL), Fred Reed (The Oaks Hotel & Suites), Brad Rubin (Vingage Consulting), Jamie Smith (Foreword Brand Marketing)

PUBLIC COMMENT

2. No public comment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- No announcements.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Meeting Minutes from Executive Committee Meeting on February 14, 2024
4. Meeting Minutes from Board of Directors Meeting on January 16, 2024
5. Travel Paso January and February Marketing Reports
6. Travel Paso January and February Media Reports
7. December and January Business Intelligence Report
8. December and January STR Reports
9. November TOT by Segment Reports (Visit SLO CAL)
10. TOT Summary FY 2000 – FY 2023 YTD (City of Paso Robles)
11. TOT Summary by Lodging Category FY 2017 – FY 2023 YTD (City of Paso Robles)

MOTION: Approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. It was moved by Victor Popp, seconded by Rich Verruni, and passed 7-0 with a roll call vote.

NEW BUSINESS, UPDATES & DISCUSSIONS

Presentations

12. Accommodations on TravelPaso.com: Brad Rubin, Vingage Consulting provided an overview of the The Where To Stay and Hotels & Resorts pages and their development based on best SEO practices. Currently, four lodging categories are listed on the Where to Stay page – Hotels Resorts, Downtown Lodging, RV Resorts, and Vacation Rentals. Listings of all the properties are at the bottom of the page where properties can easily be filtered by lodging type and other preferences. Lodging partners control what's listed in the description of their respective properties. Each of the four lodging categories has their own pages with a with a property highlighted at the top of each page. This is based on SEO. Travel Paso has received comments that this approach is not equitable for all lodging partners. It was suggested that either the highlighted properties be removed or frequently rotated. Travel Paso staff will bring back a recommendation in April.

General Business

13. Month End Financial Reports

- a. January 31, 2024 (Cash Basis): Income totaled \$153,747 and expenses totaled \$284,008. As of January 31, 2024, Travel Paso had a total equity position of \$1,657,161.45. \$31,301.05 has been accrued in interest from Travel Paso investment accounts. In January, \$60,000 was moved from the general checking account to the ICS account.
- b. February 29, 2024 (Cash Basis): Income totaled \$112,025 and expenses totaled \$246,736. As of February 29, 2024, Travel Paso has a total equity position of \$1,525,465.97. \$34,317.04 has been accrued in interest from Travel Paso investment accounts. Income is trending behind the projected totals. The Executive Committee continues to closely monitor the budget.
- c. Accrual-based Financials (July – December 2023): The FYT income totaled \$962,147 and FYT expenses totaled \$615,342. As of December 31, 2023, Travel Paso had an equity position of \$1,958,335.96. \$27,864.69 has been accrued in interest from Travel Paso investment accounts. Notes on accrual-based financials: There is a 60-day “lag” due to the timing of collecting TBID assessments. Travel Paso spends the majority of the Savor Paso campaign budget in the second half of the fiscal year (January-June 2024).

MOTION: Approve the January and February 2024 month end cash basis financial reports and the accrual-based financial report for July-December 2023, as presented. It was moved by John Arnold, seconded by Kaitlin Walton, and passed 7-0 with a roll call vote.

14. Audit for FY 2022-23: The Board reviewed and discussed the audit for FY 2022-23. Travel Paso has completed audits for FY 21-22 and FY 22-23. Travel Paso may consider conducting audits every two years rather than annually and will discuss with the City of Paso Robles per the PRTID agreement.

MOTION: Approve the audit for FY 2022-23, as presented. It was moved by Victor Popp, seconded by Kaitlin Walton, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote. Rich Verruni left the meeting early and did not vote on this item.

15. Annual Report for FY 2022-23: The Paso Robles Tourism Improvement District 2022-23 Annual Report was submitted to the City of Paso Robles. Stacie Jacob presented the report at the February 6, 2024 City Council meeting. The report is posted on Travel Paso’s website and was circulated to tourism partners in the Industry Newsletter.

Objective 1: Collaboratively Lead and Advocate for the Paso Robles Tourism Ecosystem

16. 2024 Hospitality and Tourism Awards Program: Information about the awards program and the nomination form is posted on Travel Paso’s website and has been advertised in the Industry Newsletter. Nominations are open January 15, 2024 – March 31, 2024.
 - a. Distinguished Leader Award: Travel Paso’s Board of Directors will select the recipient(s) for this award. Stacie Jacob will re-send the link to the Nomination Form to the Board. The Board may choose to select multiple recipients. This recipient(s) will be chosen based on a lifetime of service in tourism and hospitality so not all recipients are required to be lodging partners. The award can be given posthumously. The Executive Committee will review and discuss the nominees and make a recommendation to the Board at the April meeting.
 - b. Panel of Judges: The Executive Committee selected the judging panel. The list was included in the agenda packet.
17. Tourism Round-Up: The date is set for May 23, 2024 and is aligned with national travel and tourism week. Travel Paso issued an RFP for venues for approximately 100-150 attendees and will review the responses this week. Lynn Carpenter, VP of Marketing for Visit CA, is confirmed as the keynote speaker. The budget, program format, and details will be presented to the Board in April.

Objective 2: Amplify the Paso Robles Brand through Strategic Marketing Initiatives

18. SLO Partners – In partnership with PRWCA and Travel Paso
 - a. Hospitality Bootcamp: Travel Paso has committed \$2,500 to provide scholarship opportunities (\$100 each) for 25 people to attend. SLO Partners is administering the scholarship program.
 - i. Hospitality 101 Bootcamp – April 30, All Day Event
 - ii. Virtual Resume & Interview Building Skills Workshop – May 2, 2-Hour Workshop
 - iii. Hospitality Job Fair in Paso Robles – May 9, 2024, 4-6pm, Oxford Suites – May 9
19. PRHS Career Day – April 9, 2024, 11am – 1:45pm: Travel Paso staff will participate.

Objective 3: Foster Constructive Relationships and Strengthen Existing Partnerships

20. Update on the Savor Campaign: The campaign kicked off in January and is achieving great results.
 - Website traffic is up 150% from February 2023 to February 2024.
 - Earned Media: February recorded a total of 34 articles with 954 million impressions. Impressions are considerably higher than in previous months.
 - Owned Media: Content focused on events, dining, activities and experiences. 7 Collab Posts & Reels, 83 Stories. Accounts reached increased by 180%.
 - Consumer Newsletter: 98 new subscribers so far
 - Out of Home: Travel Paso secured 51 prime billboard spots throughout Los Angeles, San Jose, and Fresno/Bakersfield.
21. Consider Main Quad Sponsorship Opportunity for 2024 California Mid-State Fair: The Board reviewed and discussed the sponsorship proposal. In addition to advertising and hospitality benefits, the sponsorship includes an area in the Main Quad with Travel Paso signage and the opportunity for patrons to take selfies. Travel Paso will develop a promotional campaign for giveaways for patrons who post their photos and tag Travel Paso. Giveaways may be able to be announced during concerts each night.

MOTION: Approve the Main Quad Sponsorship for the 2024 California Mid-State Fair in the amount of \$20,000. It was moved by Victor Popp, seconded by John Arnold, and passed 5-0 with a roll call vote. Rich Verruni and Jill Alexander left the meeting early and did not vote on this item.
22. Collaborations with PRWCA
 - a. Visit CA Poppy Awards: Travel Paso and PRWCA were finalists for Visit CA’s Poppy Award in the Best Strategic Partnership Destination Category. Unfortunately, another DMO won, but it was an honor for Travel Paso to be recognized among peers at the 2024 Visit CA Outlook Forum held March 11-13, 2024.
 - b. Savor Paso in San Jose (PayPal Park) – June 13, 2024: Travel Paso and PRWCA continue to have coordination meetings to develop the budget, event logistics, promotions, etc. Vendor registration is now open with discounts offered for “early-bird registration” to incentivize participation. Tickets for the general public will go on sale in early April.
23. City of Paso Robles
 - a. Presentation on the Future of Road Repairs in Paso Robles: Ty Lewis (City Manager), Chris Huot (Assistant City Manager) and Freda Berman (Public Works Director) presented an update on Measure E-12.
 - Measure E-12 sunsets in March 2025. It generates \$6-7 million annually.
 - Must be placed on the November 2024 ballot if it is to continue. The City Council is considering 3 options: renewed at ½ cent rate until ended by voters; renewed at ½ cent rate with a sunset date; renewed and increased to 1 cent until ended by voters. June 2024 is the deadline to place the measure on the November 2024 ballot.
 - Removing sunset would allow for the potential acceleration of road repair work
 - Continuing at ½ cent will not increase sales tax rate
 - If Measure E-12 does not continue, other City programs, public safety will be impacted, and road conditions will worsen
 - b. Appoint Representative for the Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Committee: Victor Popp has served on this committee in the past and volunteered to represent Travel Paso for another term.

MOTION: Appoint Victor Popp as Travel Paso’s representative on the City of Paso Robles’ Supplemental Sales Tax Oversight Committee. It was moved by John Arnold, seconded by Kaitlin Walton, and passed 5-0 with a roll call vote. Rich Verruni and Jill Alexander left the meeting early and did not vote on this item.

- c. General Updates:
 - Installation of permanent lights in downtown park
 - Paso Robles Housing Authority Executive Director is retiring

24. Community Updates

- a. Visit SLO CAL Board – V. Popp
 - i. Previous CEO Chuck Davison elected not to renew his contract with Visit SLO CAL. Cathy Cartier is now the Interim President and CEO.
 - ii. The Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors has not met in open session since January. The next meeting is scheduled for March 27, 2024.
 - iii. Board Appointment: Visit SLO CAL has asked Travel Paso to appoint a representative to their Board of Directors.

MOTION: Appoint Victor Popp as Travel Paso’s representative on the Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors. It was moved by John Arnold, seconded by Kaitlin Walton, and passed 5-0 with a roll call vote. Rich Verruni and Jill Alexander left the meeting early and did not vote on this item.
- b. Visit SLO CAL Welcome Program – Alyssa Manno was unable to present this month. The presentation will be rescheduled for a later date.
- c. Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce 2024 Gala – March 23, 2024.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 5:14 pm.

NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 16, 2024 at 3pm