

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES – Travel Paso Board of Directors  
Regular Meeting



**Tuesday, March 21, 2023 – 3:00 pm**

Meeting Location: Almendra Board Room, Oxford Suites, 800 4<sup>th</sup> Street, 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 3:00pm by Chairman Alex Villicana with a roll call.

**Present:** Jill Alexander, John Arnold, Angela McKee, Victor Popp, Rich Verruni, Alex Villicana

**Absent:** Margaret Johnson, Chance Jorgensen, Kaitlin Walton

**Staff:** Stacie Jacob, Mike Dawson, Stephanie Bertoux

**Public:** Freda Berman (City of Paso Robles), Kristen Buhring and Rachelle Ramirez (Visit SLO CAL),  
Anne Crabbe (One Wealth Management), Ian Pullan (KSL Resorts)

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

2. No public comment.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

3. Meeting Minutes from Executive Committee Meeting on March 10, 2023
4. Meeting Minutes from Board of Directors Meeting on January 17, 2023
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, January, and February STR Reports
9. December and January COVID-19 Recovery Tracker
10. November and December TOT by Segment Reports (Visit SLO CAL)
11. TOT Summary FY 2000 – FY 2023 YTD (City of Paso Robles)
12. TOT Summary by Lodging Category FY 2017 – FY 2023 YTD (City of Paso Robles)
13. January Wine Business Intelligence Report

**MOTION:** Approve the Consent Agenda as presented. It was moved by Victor Popp, seconded by Rich Verruni, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

**NEW BUSINESS, UPDATES & DISCUSSIONS**

Imperative #4: Build and Leverage Relationships with our Partners

14. City of Paso Robles Updates:
  - a. General Updates from the City: No report.
  - b. Sponsorship Request for July 4th Celebration: Freda Berman, City of Paso Robles, provided an overview of the event that includes two free concerts, family-friendly activities from 2-9pm, food trucks and fireworks show. The total event budget is \$151,000. \$50,000 is being requested from Travel Paso and \$65,000 from the City of Paso Robles. The City also intends to roll out a formal sponsorship program for this year's event.

**MOTION:** Approve Travel Paso's sponsorship of the 2023 July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration in the amount of \$50,000. It was moved by Angela McKee, seconded by John Arnold, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

- c. Updates:
  - i. Stacie Jacob and Mike Dawson presented Travel Paso's Annual Report at the City Council meeting on February 21, 2023. The presentation included updates on Travel Paso's three-year strategic plan, the Savor Real California campaign, and collaborations with strategic partners.

- ii. **Conflicting Event Dates:** The Olive & Lavender Festival and the Paso Wine Fest will both occur on Saturday, May 20, 2023. There is a county-wide MOU in place to collaborate on festivals and events to prevent conflicting event dates. Travel Paso will encourage PRWCA to co-author a letter to the Main Street Association Board and City Council.
- iii. **Golden Spike Project Support:** The City of Paso Robles is working with Travel Paso and partners to increase support for the project. The luncheon and tour with elected officials scheduled for March 8, 2023 was cancelled due to weather conditions and will be rescheduled.
- iv. **Changes to the Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) in the State Responsibility Area:** Stacie Jacob reviewed the draft comment letter prepared by Travel Paso to oppose the proposed changes to the Fire Hazard Severity Zones based on errors in data collection and the methods utilized to formulate these findings.

**MOTION:** Approve the Fire Hazard Severity Zones comment letter, as presented. It was moved by Victor Popp, seconded by Angela McKee, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

15. **Community Updates:**

- a. **Visit SLO CAL:** The last Visit SLO CAL Board meeting was January 18, 2023. Visit SLO CAL’s recent activities include a marketing retreat held on March 14, 2023 where their 3-year strategic plan was unveiled, launching the SLO CAL Crafted certification program that celebrates the quality, local products made, farmed, and grown in SLO CAL, and advertising several open, key staff positions such as the VP of Community Engagement & Advocacy. The SLO CAL Welcome, an online customer service-learning program specifically designed for SLO CAL’s travel and tourism industry workers, continues to be well received.
- b. **Visit SLO CAL Advocacy Efforts:** Visit SLO is advocating for an increase in State employee per diem rates. Visit SLO CAL has requested that Travel Paso write a letter of support to Senator Laird. Stacie Jacob reviewed the comment letter drafted by Travel Paso. The Board suggested sharing the letter with Travel Paso’s Industry List to garner more support for the initiative.

**MOTION:** Approve the comment letter to Senator Laird on the State employee per diem rates, as presented. It was moved by John Arnold, seconded by Victor Popp, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

Imperative #1: Actively Lead the Tourism Community in Paso Robles

16. **Mid-Week and Corporate Travel Strategy:**

- a. **Corporate Meeting Planner FAM Update – March 22-24, 2023**
  - i. 18 corporate meeting planners are confirmed to attend representing companies such as Well Fargo and Google.
  - ii. Stacie Jacob reviewed the itinerary that begins with a welcome reception Wednesday night at the Paso Robles Inn followed by dinner at JUSTIN. Thursday’s activities include the Destination Showcase at Cass Winery, tour of Vina Robles, dinner in the wine caves at Eberle, and a VIP experience at Sensorio. Attendees can participate in one of four excursions on Friday concluding with a farewell lunch and tour of Niner Wine Estates.
  - iii. The final budget will be reviewed at the April Board meeting.

Imperative #2: Build and Nurture a Sustainable Destination Marketing Organization

- 17. **January and February 2023 Financials:** Stacie Jacob reviewed the financial reports. As of January 31, 2023, income for the month totaled \$151,848, expenses totaled \$148,082, and Travel Paso had a total equity position of \$1,773,476.30. As of February 28, 2023, income for the month totaled \$104,427, expenses totaled \$183,289, and Travel Paso had a total equity position of \$1,694,614.08. Actual revenue totals are trending about 3.5-4% behind Travel Paso’s projected income targets. Expenses remain on target and within budget.

**MOTION:** Approve the January and February 2023 financial report as presented. It was moved by Angela McKee, seconded by Jill Alexander, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

18. RFP Responses: Travel Paso issued RFPs for Organizational Management, Brand Marketing, Public Relations, and Media Procurement/Digital Marketing. Responses were due on March 6, 2023. Travel Paso staff Stacie Jacob, Mike Dawson and Stephanie Bertoux exited the room so the Board could review and discuss [the following responses received](#).

- Organizational Management: Solterra Strategies
- Media Procurement/Digital Marketing: Vingage Consulting
- Brand Marketing: Kraftwerk and Foreword Brand
- Public Relations: Solterra Strategiees

The Board took action on filling the Organizational Management and Public Relations contracts and awarded to Solterra Strategies as presented. The Brand Marketing and Media Procurement/Digital Marketing positions require further discussion and/or alternative structure. These 2 RFPs will be held until the April meeting.

**MOTION:** Approve the contract as presented with Solterra Strategies for Organizational Management. It was moved by Victor Popp, seconded by Jill Alexander, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

**MOTION:** Approve the contracts as presented with Solterra Strategies for Public Relations. It was moved by Angela McKee, seconded by Jill Alexander, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

19. Travel Paso Financial Accounts: Travel Paso would like to diversify its financial holdings.

- a. Consider Proposal from One Wealth Management: Anne Crabbe, Financial Advisor with One Wealth Management, presented her credentials and firm background and proposed several investment strategies and options for the Board’s consideration including laddered CDs. No action was taken on this item. Ms. Crabbe agreed to make an additional presentation to the Executive Committee who will make a recommendation to the Board at the April meeting.
- b. Review Pacific Premier + American Riviera Bank Options: Travel Paso’s checking account at Pacific Premier Bank has a balance of just over \$1.3 million. Travel Paso’s reserve account at American Riviera Bank has a balance of just over \$385,000. The FDIC insures up to \$250,000 of a customer's deposit accounts at an FDIC-insured depository institution. The Insured Cash Sweep (ICS) service gives individuals, non-profits, and businesses access to multi-million-dollar FDIC protection on balances over \$250,000 with no monthly fees while providing easy access to funds as well as the ability to earn interest.

**MOTION:** Enroll Travel Paso’s bank accounts in the Insured Cash Sweep service at both Pacific Premier Bank and American Riviera Bank and authorize Stacie Jacob to begin the process immediately. It was moved by Angela McKee, seconded by Rich Verruni, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

Imperative #3: Define, Develop and Steward the Paso Robles Brand

20. Savor Real California Campaign: The Savor Real California Campaign was launched on January 23, 2023 including television, print, billboard, social media, streaming tv, YouTube, and partner advertising. The two primary goals are to increase general brand awareness and increase landing page traffic, lead generation, and engagement. Once email addresses are entered via Travel Paso’s website or via the QR code, the visitor receives a complimentary digital copy of The Insider’s Guide to Paso Robles.

21. San Jose Earthquakes: Travel Paso is working collaboratively with the PRWCA for an on-site activation at the stadium on June 15, 2023. The Cab Collective will also participate. The event budget is currently being developed. The goal is 500 attendees. Consumer tickets will be available for \$75 each toward the end of April. San Jose Earthquakes season ticket holders and partners will have the opportunity to purchase tickets at a reduced rate.

22. ReCap of Visit CA Forum: The Visit CA Outlook Forum, held on March 6-9, 2023, is California's premier tourism conference. The highlights included: 1) Reimagining California's Brand in a New Era - the Dream Big campaign is being refocused to Land of Adventure, 2) Economists reported that tourism in California remains strong with consumer debt trending downward, 3) Visit CA was awarded a federal EDA grant to assist DMOs across the state, and 4) Travel Paso participated in a CEO Round Table discussion.

**ADJOURN**

**MOTION:** Adjourn the meeting at 5:27 pm. It was moved by Angela McKee, seconded by Alex Villicana, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

**NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 18, 2023, at 3pm**