

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES – Travel Paso Board of Directors
Regular Meeting



Tuesday, April 15, 2025 – 3:00 pm

Meeting Location: Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance, Conference Room
1314 Spring 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 3:01pm by Chair Alex Villicana with a roll call.

Present: John Arnold, Erica Fryburger, Victor Popp, Rich Verruni, Alex Villicana, Kaitlin Walton

Absent: Jill Alexander, Angela McKee, Hemant Patel

Staff: Stacie Jacob, Tracy Dauterman

Guests: Councilmember Gregory and Paul Sloan (City of Paso Robles), Matt Halvorson (Visit SLO CAL),
Matt Kleefisch (Hotel Ava), Mary Edman (San Jose Sharks)

PUBLIC COMMENT

2. No public comment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Sensorio: New exhibit open, new Events Manager hired, can host private events on non-operational evenings (Mon-Wed).
- Community reception on April 24, 2025 at 6pm in the garden at the Paso Robles Inn
- Paso Robles Horse Park is hosting their Spring Classic April 16–20, 2025

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Meeting Minutes from Board of Directors Meeting on March 18, 2025
4. Meeting Minutes from Executive Committee Meeting on April 9, 2025
5. Travel Paso March Marketing Report
6. Travel Paso March Media Report
7. February Community Performance Report (Visit SLO CAL)
8. February STR Report
9. TOT Summary (City of Paso Robles)
10. TOT by Lodging Category Report (City of Paso Robles)
11. TOT by Segment Report (Visit SLO CAL)
12. February Wine Sales Report (Visit SLO CAL)

MOTION: Approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. It was moved by Rich Verruni, seconded by Erica Fryburger, and passed 5-0 with a roll call vote. John Arnold arrived late and did not vote on this item.

NEW BUSINESS, UPDATES & DISCUSSIONS

Presentation:

13. Mary Edman, San Jose Sharks, presented the sponsorship agreement for the 2025-26 League Year totaling \$60,000. The Board will discuss and vote on the agreement under agenda item 24.

General Business

14. Giving Back Scholarship Program: A total of 60 applications were submitted, with 42 applicants meeting the established scholarship criteria and moving forward to review by the Selection Committee. After a thorough evaluation process, eight students will each be awarded a \$2,500 scholarship—amounting to a total of \$20,000 invested in the future of Paso Robles' tourism industry. The recipients will be announced at the Tourism Round Up.

15. Board Elections and Marketing Committee Recruitment for FY 2025-26:

- a. Nominating Committee: The Executive Committee recommended Alex Villicana, Angela McKee, and Victor Popp to serve on the Nominating Committee.
- b. Timeline: Applications are due May 7, 2025. The Board will receive recommendations from the Nominating Committee and will elect (5) directors for (5) open seats for a two-year term and appoint the Marketing Committee members for a one-year term at the June Board meeting.

MOTION: Appoint Alex Villicana, Angela McKee, and Victor Popp as the Nominating Committee for Board and Marketing Committee recruitment. It was moved by John Arnold, seconded by Kaitlin Walton, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

16. Bylaws: The are five current board members with terms expiring on June 30, 2025. Travel Paso's bylaws dictate the representational categories for the Board - (6) lodging, (1) vacation rental/bed & breakfast, and (2) Community-At-Large. The Board discussed amending the bylaws to include a category for (1) winery owner or representative that is also a PRWCA member. The vacation rental representative could be elected as a community-at-large member rather than its own category to keep the number of directors at nine.

MOTION: Amend Travel Paso's bylaws to include a seat designated for a winery owner or representative on the Board of Directors. It was moved by John Arnold, seconded by Kaitlin Walton, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

17. March 2025 Financial Report: Income totaled \$85,340 and expenses totaled \$245,292. As of March 31, 2025, Travel Paso has a total equity position of \$1,279,231.17. The bulk of Travel Paso's media spend occurs February – June. Expenses are within budget but present a cash flow issue. To cover current expenses, the ICS account will be drawn down to roughly \$50,000. The ICS and checking accounts are rebalanced monthly to meet FDIC thresholds and to cover expenses. The Executive Committee directed Stacie Jacob to transfer \$100,000 from the Cetera Securities account to the checking account.

MOTION: Approve the March 2025 financial report, as presented, and authorize the \$100,000 transfer from the Cetera Securities account to the checking account. It was moved by Erica Fryburger, seconded by Victor Popp, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

18. Budget Process for FY 2025-26: The Board discussed the income projection for FY 2025-26 and recommended budgeting flat with no increase in income. The FY 24-25 income goal was \$2.1 million with current year end projections of \$1.8 million. The first draft of the FY 25-26 budget and program priorities will be presented at the May Board meeting and finalized in June.

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

19. Tourism Economics Studies:

- a. Studies in collaboration with Visit SLO CAL - The Lodging Forecast and the Economic Impact Study are complete.
- b. The City's Economic and Fiscal Impact of Tourism Study was completed by Beacon Economics and was shared at the February 18, 2025 City Council meeting. Highlights include: 2.5 million visitors annually, tourism accounts for 40% of the City's general fund, without tourism households would pay an additional \$1,800 per year in taxes.
- c. PRWCA also engaged Beacon Economics for their own study that provides data for tourism impact outside of the City limits.
- d. Communications Plan: Travel Paso, the City, the Chamber, and PRWCA are collaborating on message development and roll out. A press release will go out the first week of May prior to the Tourism Round Up event. Long term plans include outreach and presentations to Rotary clubs, real estate agencies, and other community groups.

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

20. 2025 Tourism & Hospitality Awards: Travel Paso received approximately 20 nominations. The judges' panel has reviewed the nominations. The final decision on recipients for the Visitor Experience, Emerging Leader, and Tourism Champion award categories is due this week.
21. 2025 Tourism Round Up:
 - a. Date/Time/Venue: May 8, 2025, 11:30am-5:30pm, at the Paso Robles Inn.
 - b. Program: Adam Montiel is the Master of Ceremonies. Dr. Chris Thornberg, Beacon Economics, is the keynote speaker and will highlight the recent economic impact studies completed for the City of Paso Robles and the PRWCA. The SLO County Arts Council will provide a short presentation on their recent economic impact study. Stacie Jacob will present on behalf of Travel Paso. The awards will be weaved throughout the program. The Travel Paso Scholarship recipients will also be announced.
 - c. A reception will follow in the garden.
22. The 2025 Savor Media Campaign is underway. Highlights for this month are included in the marketing and media reports.
23. 2025 Savor Paso Event: The date is set for Friday, June 27, 2025 in San Jose. Vendor registration for wineries, restaurants, and lodging partners is now open. The goal is 40 vendors.
24. San Jose Sharks Sponsorship Renewal: The cost to renew the sponsorship is \$60,000. The benefits provided to Travel Paso in the current sponsorship agreement are primarily marketing – signage and promotions, advertising, tickets to games, etc. – and not focused on business-to-business and other strategies to drive corporate business or mid-week stays in Paso Robles. The Board authorized Stacie Jacob to negotiate with the San Jose Sharks to include more direct business-to-business benefits within the same budget. If an agreement cannot be reached, the Board will explore strategies to allocate the funds elsewhere.

MOTION: Decline to the sponsorship proposal from the San Jose Sharks for the 2025-26 League Year, as presented. It was moved by Victor Popp, seconded by John Arnold, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

Objective 3: Foster Constructive Relationships and Strengthen Existing Partnerships

25. City of Paso Robles General Updates:
 - The City is negotiating a contract with the interim City Manager Chris Huot to make the position permanent.
 - The sponsorship campaign for the July 4th Community Celebration is underway with a goal of raising \$60,000. To date, \$35,000 has been secured.
 - The City's Economic Development Strategic Plan identified childcare as a critical need. The City signed an agreement with CAPSLO for a Childcare Business Expansion study.
 - The City has designed and installed new banners on lamp posts in the downtown corridor highlighting business sectors.
 - The City received a grant from Caltrans to enhance pedestrian safety throughout the city with the installation of new Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) and upgrades to existing devices, as well as improvements to traffic signals at the intersection of Golden Hill and Creston Road.
 - The design for the South Vine Bridge connecting South Vine Street to the intersection of Theater Drive and Highway 46 is complete.
26. Community Updates:
 - a. Visit SLO CAL:
 - New committee formed to expedite progress for Highway 1
 - Airline development – increased number of airlines, plane size, and flights
 - Review of brand guidelines is underway
 - b. PRWCA:
 - The ribbon cutting for the Chamber's new Visitor Center was held on April 9, 2025.

- PRWCA has created and sent promotional codes to Travel Paso lodging partners for discounted tickets for Wine Fest. Travel Paso will inquire about one promotional code for all lodging partners for consumer-facing emails.
- PRWCA will begin developing their strategic plan in May 2025. The process includes updating their bylaws to designate a lodging partner seat on the Board of Directors.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 pm.

NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR MAY 20, 2025 at 3pm