

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES – Travel Paso Board of Directors
Regular Meeting



Tuesday, April 16, 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 3:02pm by Chairman Alex Villicana with a roll call.

Present: Angela McKee, Victor Popp, Ian Pullan, Rich Verruni, Alex Villicana, Kaitlin Walton

Absent: Jill Alexander, John Arnold, John Lozano

Staff: Stacie Jacob

Guests: Councilmember Gregory (City of Paso Robles), Paul Sloan (City of Paso Robles), Kevin Hindenach and Mary Erdman (San Jose Sharks)

PUBLIC COMMENT

2. No public comment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- No announcements.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Meeting Minutes from Executive Committee Meeting on April 10, 2024
4. Meeting Minutes from Board of Directors Meeting on March 19, 2024
5. Travel Paso March Marketing Report
6. Travel Paso March Media Reports
7. February Community Performance Report (Visit SLO CAL)
8. February STR Reports
9. January TOT by Segment Reports (Visit SLO CAL)
10. TOT Summary FY 2000 – FY 2024 YTD (City of Paso Robles)
11. TOT Summary by Lodging Category FY 2017 – FY 2023 YTD (City of Paso Robles)
12. Winery 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

Presentations

13. San Jose Sharks: Kevin Hindenach and Mary Erdman provided an overview of Travel Paso’s sponsorship and future engagement opportunities that could be incorporated.
 - a. Current sponsorship metrics:
 - Brand awareness: Travel Paso logo averaged 5 min and 45 seconds of screen time per game, featured in 19 events (Sharks games and other community events) with 11 more to come this season.
 - Digital Traffic: email banner ad, featured in 6 email blasts with 45% open rate
 - b. Future opportunities: broadcast opportunities for logo to be seen on tv, “banner” signage around the rink, logo on corners of LED scoreboard, branded wine cart featuring wines from Paso Robles in arena concourse, inclusion in Business Alliance marketing and events (corporate partners and suite holders) to grow corporate mid-week travel to Paso Robles, inclusion in LinkedIn sweepstakes, inclusion in the Foundation’s Annual Wine Dinner fundraiser.

General Business

14. Board Elections and Marketing Committee Recruitment:

- a. Nominating Committee for Board Elections and Marketing Committee Recruitment: Kaitlin Walton and Rich Verruni volunteered to be members of the Nominating Committee and would like to invite John Arnold to participate.

MOTION: Appoint Kaitlin Walton, Rich Verruni, and John Arnold to the Nominating Committee. The motion was made by Rich Verruni, seconded by Victor Popp, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

- b. Board Elections: There are four board members – Alex Villicana, Victor Popp, Angela McKee, and Ian Pullan – with terms expiring on June 30, 2024. Existing board members are permitted to run for re-election. Ballots are due May 24, 2024. Each open position is for a two-year term (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026). Travel Paso’s bylaws dictate the representation categories. Of the four open board seats, three represent lodging partners and one represents the community-at-large. The open positions will be advertised, and ballots will be included in Travel Paso’s Industry Newsletter. Board elections and appointments to the Executive Committee will both occur at the June board meeting.
- c. Marketing Committee: Travel Paso recruits and appoints a Marketing Committee each fiscal year for a one-year term. Applications are due May 15, 2024. The open positions will be advertised, and applications will be included in Travel Paso’s Industry Newsletter. The Board will receive recommendations from the Nominating Committee and appoint the Marketing Committee at the May board meeting.

15. March 2024 Month End Financial Report: Income totaled \$95,767 and expenses totaled \$112,806. As of March 31, 2024, Travel Paso has a total equity position of \$ 1,513,856.59. \$39,746.27 has been accrued in interest from Travel Paso investment accounts. Income is trending behind the projected totals. The FY to-date income total is \$1,430,125 versus the FY to-date projected total of \$1,565,476. The FY to-date expense total is \$1,224,036 versus the FY to-date projected total of \$1,389,965. Stacie Jacob will review expenses in the digital marketing, advertising and media buys, communications, and brand identity categories to ensure invoices are being correctly coded. The Executive Committee continues to closely monitor the budget and does not recommend scaling back the Savor Campaign.

MOTION: Approve the March 2024 month end financial report, as presented. It was moved by Angela McKee, seconded by Kaitlin Walton, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

16. Budget Process for FY 24-25:

- a. Revenue Goal: The Board discussed budgeting “flat” and setting the revenue goal for FY 24-25 at \$2.1 million, the same as the goal for FY 23-24. It is not anticipated that Travel Paso will receive any additional revenue from TBID assessments in FY 24-25. A revenue goal of \$2.1 million will require Travel Paso to utilize \$250,000 from the reserve account.
- b. Timeline: The draft priorities and budget for FY 24-25 will be presented at the May board meeting and approved at the June board meeting.

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

17. 2024 Hospitality and Tourism Awards Program: Nominations closed on March 31, 2024. Judging is underway for all award categories except the Distinguished Leader Award which is selected by the Board.

- a. Distinguished Leader Award: The Board discussed the nominations received and elected to choose multiple recipients the first year. The following recipients, some awarded posthumously, were chosen based on a lifetime of service in tourism and hospitality – Gary Eberle, Tom and Noreen Martin, Shirley Masia, and Mayor Steve Martin.

MOTION: Select Gary Eberle, Tom and Noreen Martin, Shirley Masia, and Mayor Steve Martin as the 2024 Distinguished Leader award recipients. The motion was made by Victor Popp, seconded by Kaitlin Walton, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

18. Tourism Round-Up: The date is set for May 23, 2024 and is aligned with national travel and tourism week.
 - a. RFP for Venue: Travel Paso issued an RFP for a venue to accommodate 100-150 guests. Oyster Ridge Barn was selected as the venue.
 - b. Lynn Carpenter, VP of Marketing for Visit CA, is confirmed as the keynote speaker.
 - c. Draft Program Agenda:
 - 11:30am – Reception on the Patio
 - 12pm – Lunch Buffet
 - 1:00pm – 1:45pm Travel Paso Presentation
 - 1:45pm – 2:15pm Keynote by Lynn Carpenter
 - 2:15pm – 2:30pm Break
 - 2:30pm – 3:30pm Panel Discussion Moderated by Cathy Cartier, Visit SLO CAL
 - 3:30pm – Awards
 - Reception
 - d. Budget and Pricing for Partners: The budget is still being finalized. It is anticipated that 125 guests will attend. It was discussed that tickets would be available for \$35 per person to try to offset the cost of lunch. Travel Paso will also sell tables of eight. The event and awards program are an investment for Travel Paso.

19. TravelPaso.com – Update on Strategies for Lodging Partners Listing/Where to Stay Page: 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 is listed in the description of their respective properties. Each of the four lodging categories has its own pages. The property highlighted at the top of each page was removed.

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

20. Update on the Savor Campaign: The Board will receive a full campaign report at the June Board meeting. Highlights for March include:
 - Coverage in the Wall Street Journal and SF Gate
 - Satellite Media Tour – Met with 20 media outlets
 - 44 articles with 553 million impressions
 - Editorial Content Creation: Where to See Wildflowers, Wine for the Cause, Top Resorts in Paso
 - Coverage in the Conde Nast Traveler and Bon Appetit set for April

21. San Jose Sharks Stadium Sponsorship Renewal: The cost to renew for one year is \$55,000. The renewal deadline is May 1, 2024. The Board discussed the presentation from Kevin Hindenach and Mary Erdman, San Jose Sharks and would like to explore participation/representation with the following engagement activities: Business Alliance (corporate partners and suite holders) to grow mid-week business, inclusion in LinkedIn sweepstakes, and representation at the wine bar (branded wine cart) in the arena and/or the Foundation’s Annual Wine Dinner Fundraiser.

MOTION: Approve Travel Paso’s sponsorship of the San Jose Sharks in the amount of \$55,000. It was moved by Rich Verruni, seconded by Angela McKee, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

Objective 3: Foster Constructive Relationships and Strengthen Existing Partnerships

22. Savor Paso in San Jose (PayPal Park) – June 13, 2024: This is a collaboration with the PRWCA. Vendor registration is open with “early bird” discounts to incentivize participation. The goal is to have 50 vendors. 45 have registered to date. Travel Paso is encouraging lodging partners to register. Tickets are on sale now and available to the public. The goal is to sell 1,000 tickets. 700 were sold for the 2023 event. Travel Paso is also hosting a meeting planner reception in San Jose to follow up with contacts made during the last FAM.

23. City of Paso Robles General Updates

- a. Work on Measure E-12 continues
- b. Installation of permanent lights in Downtown Park will be completed April 20, 2024.
- c. The Economic Development Strategic Plan is on the City Council agenda for May 21, 2024.
- d. A working group has been formed to develop an Outdoor Arts Program.

24. Community Updates

- a. Visit SLO CAL: Cathy Cartier is the Interim President and CEO of Visit SLO CAL. Visit SLO CAL has begun an executive search process to hire a permanent President and CEO. Travel Paso has enjoyed a good working relationship with Cathy Cartier and would like to write a recommendation and endorsement letter for her for the selection committee's consideration.

MOTION: Authorize Stacie Jacob, on behalf of the Travel Paso Board, to write a recommendation and endorsement letter for Cathy Cartier to be selected as Visit SLO CAL's President and CEO and send to the selection committee for consideration. It was moved by Victor Popp, seconded by Kaitlin Walton, and passed 6-0 with a roll call vote.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 4:57 pm.

NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR MAY 21, 2024 at 3pm