

JOINT MEETING MINUTES JPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & VISIT GREATER PALM SPRINGS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Renaissance Esmeralda Resort | Crystal B & C
44400 Indian Wells Lane,
Indian Wells, CA 92210
8:30 am – 10:00 am

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:36 a.m. by JPA Chair, Waymond Fermon, at the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort & Spa in Indian Wells, CA.

Roll Call

The roll call is recorded on the following page.

DECEMBER 12, 2025

JPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ROLL CALL **PRESENT** **ABSENT**

CITY OF INDIO	Waymond Fermon, Council Member, Chair	x	
	Elaine Holmes, Council Member		
CITY OF LA QUINTA	Linda Evans, Mayor, Vice Chair	x	
	Steve Sanchez, Council Member		
CITY OF CATHEDRAL CITY	Raymond Gregory, Mayor	x	
	Ernesto Gutierrez, Mayor Pro Tem		
CITY OF COACHELLA	Dr. Frank Figueroa, Council Member		x
	Denise Delgado, Mayor Pro Tem		x
CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS	Gary Gardner, Mayor Pro Tem	x	
	Daniel Pitts, Council Member		
CITY OF INDIAN WELLS	Brian Penna, Council Member		
	Dr. Toper Taylor, Council Member	x	
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS	Jeffrey Bernstein, Council Member		x
	Ron deHarte, Mayor		x
CITY OF PALM DESERT	Jan Harnik, Mayor	x	
	Evan Trubee, Mayor Pro Tem		
CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE	Ted Weill, Mayor		
	Lynn Mallotto, Mayor Pro Tem		
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE	V. Manuel Perez, Supervisor, 4th District	x	
	Joaquin Tijerina, Economic Dev. Mgr.		

VGPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS ROLL CALL **PRESENT** **ABSENT**

Rolf Hoehn, Chair - Indian Wells Tennis Garden	x	
Peggy Trott, Vice Chair - Kimpton Rowan Palm Springs		E
Aftab Dada, Treasurer - Hilton Palm Springs Resort	x	
Kate Anderson, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians	x	
Lorraine Becker, Cabot's Pueblo Museum	x	
Sejal Bhakta, Hampton Inn & Suites, Palm Desert and Indio	x	
John Bolton, Oak View Group	x	
Celeste Brackley, The Line & Saguaro Hotels	x	
Gary Cardiff, Cardiff Limousine & Transportation	x	
Kenny Cassidy, Acme House Company	x	
Jay Chesterton, Fantasy Springs Resort Casino	x	

Dermot Connolly, La Quinta Resort & Club	x	
Tim Ellis (Emeritus), Ellis Hospitality Services	x	
Eddy Estrada, Smarter Property Management	x	
David Feltman, VRON Palm Springs	x	
Mark Girton, Goldenvoice & Empire Polo	x	
Rob Hampton, Palm Springs Convention Center	x	
Dan Johnson, Grand Hyatt Indian Wells Resort & Villas	x	
Jerry Keller, LULU California Bistro	x	
Patrick Klein, The Shops on El Paseo	x	
Kelly McLean, Poppy		E
Nusrat Mirza, Secretary - JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa	x	
Allen Monroe, The Living Desert	x	
Lee Morcus (Emeritus), Kaiser Restaurant Group		A
Liz Ostoich, FARM and Tac/Quila Palm Springs	x	
Brad Poncher, Homewood Suites by Hilton La Quinta	x	
Greg Purdy, Palm Springs Aerial Tramway		E
Tim Pyne, Renaissance Esmeralda Resort & Spa		E
Saverio Scheri, Agua Caliente Casinos		E
Bob Schneider, Desert Consulting	x	
Ankit Sekhri, Two Bunch Palms		E
Barb Smith, Eventis Destination Services	x	
Boris Stark, Palm Desert Vacation Properties	x	
Ebony Stinson, Doubletree Golf Resort		E
Joe Tormey, CSU San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus	x	
Doug Watson, Strategy Innovation Co.		E
A quorum was reached: 27 BOD and 8 JPA.		

STAFF/ATTORNEY

Scott White, President and CEO
Brian Kelty, VP, Finance and Administration
Colleen Pace, CSMO
Davis Meyer, VP, Government & Industry Relations
Julie Sinclair, Director of Corporate Communications
Samuel Thompson, Director of Indian Wells Tourism
Stefanie Kilcoyne, Director of Technology & Operations
Sarah Goslin, Exec. Asst. & Board Admin
Bruce T. Bauer, Legal Counsel
Andy Cloutier, Director of Human Resources

Joyce Kiehl, Director of Communications
Kahlia Gainey, Senior Destination Experiences Mgr.
Sean Smith, Director of Economic Development
Gary Orfield, Director of Tourism Development
Gary Forsythe, Dir. of Palm Springs Tourism
Krystal Kusmieruk, Senior Marketing Manager
Maya Jimenez, Digital Marketing Specialist
Caroline Polly, Social Media Manager
Jeffrey Farnsworth, Marketing & Sales Coordinator
Carolina Viazcan, VP Sales

AGENDA ITEMS

1. JPA Chair, Waymond Fermon, called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m.
2. JPA Chair, Waymond Fermon, led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. The Clerk of the Board conducted Roll Call. A quorum was reached.
4. JPA Chair, Waymond Fermon, asked whether there were any changes to the agenda.
 - a. Scott White asked for a change in the order of the agenda. The order change requested was to move **Item 9: Presentations**, after **Item 11: JPA Executive Committee Items**. Linda Evans with the City of La Quinta made a motion to approve. Gary Gardner with the City of Desert Hot Springs seconded. The agenda was confirmed based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.
5. JPA Chair, Waymond Fermon, called for public comment.
 - a. No public comment on record. No members of the public requested to speak. Public comment was closed.
6. Approval of Minutes (All Vote)
 - a. The JPA Executive Committee and VGPS Board of Directors Joint Meeting Minutes dated September 26, 2025, were presented for approval.
 - i. JPA Chair Fermon asked for changes or abstentions. No changes noted. Cathedral City abstained. JPA Chair Fermon asked for a motion. Linda Evans with the City of La Quinta made a motion to approve. Gary Gardner with the City of Desert Hot Springs seconded. There was no further discussion, and the minutes were approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.
7. Consent Calendar (BOD Vote)
 - a. Approving Board of Directors renewals for another 3-year term, ending December 31, 2028. Directors up for renewal: Becker, Bolton, Cassady, Connolly, Hampton, Klein, McLean, Mirza, Schneider, Sekhri, Smith, Tormey, and Watson.
 - i. BOD Chair Hoehn called for a motion. Kate Anderson with the Agua Caliente Tribe made a motion to approve. Celeste Brackley with The Line & Saguaro Hotels seconded. BOD Chair Hoehn asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. There was no further discussion, and the renewals were approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.
8. Consent Calendar (JPA Vote)
 - a. The Warrants and Demands dated September 2025, October 2025, and November 2025 for Pacific Premier Bank were presented for approval.
 - i. JPA Chair Fermon asked for a motion. Linda Evans with the City of La Quinta made a motion to approve. Supervisor Manuel Perez with the County of Riverside seconded. JPA Chair Fermon asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. The cities of Palm Springs and Coachella were not present to vote. There was no further discussion, and the Warrants and Demands for September, October, and November 2025 were approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.
9. VGPS Board of Directors Items (VGPS Board Vote)
 - a. The VGPS Board of Directors were presented with Resolution BOD 2025-004 – Legislative Platform Update, for approval.
 - i. BOD Chair Hoehn called for a motion. Liz Ostoich with FARM and Tac/Quila made a motion to approve. Gary Cardiff with Cardiff Transportation seconded. BOD Chair Hoehn asked for changes or

- abstentions. No changes or abstentions. There was no further discussion, and Resolution BOD 2025-004 – Legislative Platform Update was approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.
- ii. BOD Chair Hoehn announced a Board Seat Opening: Vacancy due to Shannon Gilbert moving to Pelican Hill. A new GM was announced for the Ritz-Carlton, Rancho Mirage, who may be interested in the seat once they are settled. Candidate considerations are ongoing.

10. JPA Executive Committee Items (JPA Vote)

- a. The JPA Executive Committee was presented with Resolution No. JPA 2025-011 – Legislative Platform Update, for approval.
 - i. JPA Chair Fermon asked for a motion. Gary Gardner with the City of Desert Hot Springs made a motion to approve. Raymond Gregory with the City of Cathedral City seconded. JPA Chair Fermon asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. The cities of Palm Springs and Coachella were not present to vote. There was no further discussion, and Resolution No. JPA 2025-011 was approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

11. Presentations

a. There were three presentations:

- i. Diana Rosas, Associate Director of Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, gave an overview of the conservancy.
- ii. Jeremy Smith, CEO of Desert International Horse Park, gave an update on the property.
- iii. Chad Mayes, Partner at Capitol Advocacy, gave an update on recent legislation to affect California.

12. VGPS Board of Directors and JPA Executive Committee members provided updates on their cities and businesses

- a. Dermot Connolly with La Quinta Resort – 2026 will be 100 years for the resort. Newly renovated rooms and a new pool are complete. The Desert International Horse Park has transformed over the past 4–5 years, now competing with Wellington, FL. It has added great value to the valley.
- b. Nusrat Mirza with JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort – Strong 2026 group outlook; 2027 uncertain; efforts underway.
- c. Kate Anderson with Agua Caliente Tribe of Cahuilla Indians – New fuel stations opening in Palm Springs and Cathedral City in late spring/summer 2026; Rancho Mirage hotel room renovations; Reservation's 150th anniversary in May 2026; Agua Caliente Cultural Plaza named Indigenous Tourism Destination of the Year; Spirit of Tourism Award received at COH Awards Gala.
- d. Dan Johnson with Grand Hyatt – One-year anniversary post-upgrade; USA Today top ten resort; Condé Nast #5 Southern California resort.
- e. Patrick Klein with Gardens – The Gardens on El Paseo portfolio transition; Simon Property Group acquiring remaining Taubman shares; anticipated benefits in leasing, development, and capital strength; collaboration with nearby Simon properties; new developments expected in 2026+; local holiday lights promoted.
- f. Brad Poncher with Homewood Suites LQ – reintroduced Eduardo Lua, GM; just finished a 6-million-dollar renovation of the hotel.
- g. Lorraine Becker with Cabots Pueblo Museum – spa tour returns to DHS on January 29, and Cabots is hosting the kick-off event.
- h. Linda Evans with La Quinta – Ironman on Sunday was successful. SilverRock Resort bankruptcy case making progress as escrow closed; Turnbridge is the new developer to secure the hotel brand and design.
- i. Gary Gardner with Desert Hot Springs – Tree Lighting and evening parade, tomorrow, December 13; "Desert Nights on the Boulevard" on the 20th; farmer's market on the 21st; updated the spa incentive program for new-build hotels with developer/operator outreach.
- j. Jan Harnik with Palm Desert – Shared progress on CSUSB Palm Desert Campus Student Success Center (post-CVWD meeting); \$79M previously secured (credit to Chad Mayes); Living Desert "WildLights" through December 30; conservation accolades; El Paseo retail growth coming soon; Marriott updates forthcoming. Come January, Raymond Gregory will be the Chair of Riverside County Transportation Commission.
- k. Toper Taylor with Indian Wells – Players course reopened after \$13.5M renovation; eminent domain case won; plans for low-income housing and recreation area; dust mitigation progress with \$3M from AQMD.
- l. Waymond Fermon with Indio – thanks to Chad Mayes for assistance with pushing through infrastructure for Indio. JPAs formed (with IID, the county, and La Quinta) to expand power infrastructure and capacity in eastern Coachella Valley, supporting hotels and affordable housing; "Magic of Lights" at Empire Polo through the 31st; another successful tamale festival concluded; food truck Fridays ongoing.
- m. Raymond Gregory from CC – SnowFest event is tomorrow at 4:00 pm with a tree lighting to follow. Monday at 2:00 pm at Mary Pickford Theater, the Celebration of Life for Mark Carnevale is open to everyone (will also be live-streamed), the LGBT Days headliner is David Archuletta for first weekend in March.

13. CEO/President's Report

a. Scott White

1. The Champions of Hospitality Awards Gala had over 1,000 attendees and raised \$156,000 for the foundation. It was a record year!
2. Vote "Yes" to continue Visit California's marketing programs that are up for renewal at the end of December.
3. Our 10-year Destination Master Plan ends in 2026. We have 6 proposals from vendors bidding on the new plan. Our target date for vendor selection is the end of January, with a kick-off meeting in February, so we can deliver the final report at the end of 2026.
4. Outlook: CPRE forecast suggests 2026 largely flat vs 2025 with possible +1.7% upside; ADR YTD through Oct at 136.46 vs forecast 137; occupancy ~60%; vacation rental rates up 23, occupancy slightly up, RevPAR up, average length of stay down (10.99 to 8.7);
5. Northstar + Cvent Meetings Industry Survey results show planner optimism mixed (Sep vs Nov); DC policies have created headwinds (economic, immigration, regulatory, social); U.S. Travel advocacy ongoing; costs (F&B, rates) are top concerns; first-tier cities too expensive; second-tier appeal rising; AI adoption increasing among planners.

b. Carolina Vlazcan

i. Meetings and Group Sales:

1. YTD Saled Production Metrics: 101% leads, 102% new leads, 98% new bookings, 103% room nights.
2. Future Pace: ending year +14% vs. last year; 2026–2027 ~+1% (flat); 2028 +33%.
3. Off-peak strategy strong: May/Sep ~46,000 room nights (176% to goal); Summer 30,383 (124%); Q4 55,000+ (185%).
4. IMEX America tradeshow: Rolled out our new booth design and had a strong partner presence. Received 120+ planner appointments, 23 new potential leads, which, as a promotion of \$100/lead for FIND Food Bank, we raised \$2,300 (9,200 meals).
5. New east coast non-stop flights for New York starting December 18th, and Charlotte, beginning December 20th. To celebrate the kickoff, VGPS will host a FAM in-market for 16 clients, and another 30 clients in Charlotte.
6. We kick off January with the annual PSIFF FAM (27 clients), which will include travel agents from Mexico and tech-focused media planners. Our January travel begins with PCMA in Philadelphia, then into our Southern California Client Events in LA and OC, and finally, we're hosting American Express clients.

c. Colleen Pace

i. Marketing:

1. VGPS again sponsored the NCAA Acrisure Classic Series, which saw 18 games over 4 days, contracted 1500+ room nights, a 20% increase in attendance from 2024, and plans for next year are in the works. A great addition for 2026 will be Gonzaga and Michigan State.
2. 2025 Holiday Promotion
3. 2025/2026 Event Support examples shown
4. Social Media highlights – 15 channels with 100s of posts, reels, and stories.
5. Canada Marketing is still top of mind and we have a variety of campaigns we are currently running, including the Canadian Air Miles campaign, which is one of the top airline miles programs that they have.
 - a. Canadian Support: We are providing a toolkit for local cities to use, which can be customized for each city. You can use digitally, or in print, and show our community support of Canadian visitation.

ii. PR & Communications:

1. IGLTA was very successful. It was an international event attracting over 750 attendees, which is the most they've ever seen, representing 30 countries.
2. Media Engagement over the past few months included 79 media in market, 138 published articles, and 105 media connects.
3. We partnered with Riverside County to host 25 production scouts for a Film Production Scout FAM, showcasing the east and west ends of the valley.
4. We just completed training in Crisis Planning and are currently updating our Crisis Plan.

d. Sean Smith

i. Economic Development:

1. Attended several conferences over the past couple of months, which I'd like to share some quick takeaways from.
 - a. At Meet the Consultants, we were able to visit with an innovative company by the name of Elroy Air, which is creating drones with a wide variety of applications. This

company is a really great example of a government agency utilizing a facility to create an innovative space, which is an economic benefit.

- b. The CA Forward Economic Summit allowed us the opportunity to participate in working sessions where we were crafting draft language relative to strengthening economic development in California. That feedback was being used to create a final document that will be shared with a variety of other agencies, including CalEd, and other California cities, with the hope of sharing that at the state level and seeing some change.
 - c. Having ICSC Western in Palm Springs allowed us the opportunity to conduct a coach tour of the valley to showcase current projects in each of the nine cities, as well as unincorporated communities, and show the potential for new investment and development.
2. Attended two agriculture events last month: AgVision and the COD Foundation Ag Tour. This allowed us to connect with the ag community, their leadership, higher education, and other interested parties within agriculture, which is important for us because it's the second-largest industry in our valley, producing almost \$650 million in crop value and a significant economic impact for us.
 3. We worked with the Governor's Office of Economic Development to better understand what incentives and rebates are available through the state. They're creating a platform that allows users to access the permitting process for every city and every county in the state of California, among other things in addition to that.
 4. The Economic Development Strategic Plan is complete, with eight main areas of focus. We will be scheduling a walkthrough of the plan with the consultant who did the work, and it will be open to anyone interested in participating, so we'll follow up with more information.
 5. Our new Economic Development website has had over 2,800 unique visitors, mostly driven from our fairly new LinkedIn account. We are working with JNS Next, our marketing agency, to craft campaign creative to really anchor our Thrive and Shine branding. Once complete, we will launch our media plan and share those efforts with you.
 6. Amateur Indoor Sports Complex – how will it be funded?
 - a. We're working with Kosmont to identify financial sources, estimate funding and financing capacity, and create a roadmap for implementation.

e. Davis Meyer

i. Partnership & Community Engagement:

1. In October, we hosted our first in-person STVR Host Summit, for which we received great feedback.
2. The Young Professionals Advisory Board launched on October 30th.
3. Foundation Updates:
 - a. Team GPS Foundation is the new name, which leverages an existing brand and captures the essence of our work.
 - b. We have identified four key objectives for the next two years:
 - i. Convene and connect to foster success
 - ii. Develop targeted and impactful programs
 - iii. Raise our profile through elevated branding and marketing
 - iv. Develop and resource a strong organization
 - c. We've been working with school districts to bring the CTE programs to more districts. We've had over 181 scholarship applicants and 184 graduates of the Leadership Institute Essential Leaders Program, which is in partnership with COD.
 - d. We just completed our pilot program for the Visionary Leadership Program, our advanced level of leadership certification. We will be getting feedback from the group.
4. VGPS as a destination received the 2025 Bronze Award from JRN America, one of the UK's leading travel publications, celebrating innovation in storytelling and tourism. This award we got alongside major destinations such as Washington State, and the recognition really reflects the faculty in this room, the tourism partners, and cities who shared the positivity and acceptance.
5. Reminder to attend our Holiday Party at the VGPS office next Thursday, December 18th!

14. The next JPA/Board of Directors Joint Meeting date was announced.

- a. Friday, January 30, 2026, at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort


15. The joint meeting of the JPA Executive Committee and VGPS Board of Directors was adjourned at 10:05 am by JPA Chair, Waymond Fermon.

The complete Board Packet can be viewed on our website [here](#), and a direct link to the presentation is also available on our website [here](#).

Clerk for the Board:


Sarah Goslin, Executive Assistant & Board Administrator

VGPS Board of Directors Secretary:

DocuSigned by:

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Nusrat Mirza, Secretary

Approval Date:

2/6/2026
