



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

Grand Hyatt Indian Wells | Grand Salon Ballroom
44-600 Indian Wells Lane, Indian Wells, CA 92210
8:30 am – 10:00 am

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:33 a.m. by
Waymond Fermon, JPA Chair, at the Grand Hyatt Indian
Wells Resort & Villas in Indian Wells, CA.

Roll Call

The roll call is recorded on the following page.

JUNE 27, 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	Nancy Ross, Mayor	x	
	Raymond Gregory, Council Member		
CITY OF COACHELLA	Dr. Frank Figueroa, Council Member	x	
	Denise Delgado, Mayor Pro Tem		
CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS	Gary Gardner, Mayor Pro Tem	x	
	Daniel Pitts, Council Member		
CITY OF INDIAN WELLS	Brian Penna, Council Member		E
	Dr. Toper Taylor, Council Member		E
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS	Jeffrey Bernstein, Council Member		E
	Ron deHarte, Mayor		E
CITY OF PALM DESERT	Jan Harnik, Mayor	x	
	Evan Trubee, Mayor Pro Tem		
CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE	Steve Downs, Council Member	x	
	Eve Fromberg Edelstein, Council Member		
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE	V. Manuel Perez, Supervisor, 4th District		E
	Joaquin Tijerina, Economic Dev. Mgr.	x	
VGPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS ROLL CALL		PRESENT	ABSENT
Rolf Hoehn, Chair - Indian Wells Tennis Garden		x	
Peggy Trott, Vice Chair - Kimpton Rowan Palm Springs		x	
Tom Scaramellino, Secretary – Marriott Task Force		x	
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			E
John Bolton, Oak View Group		x	
Celeste Brackley, The Line & Saguaro Hotels		x	
Gary Cardiff, Cardiff Limousine & Transportation		x	
Kenny Cassady, Acme House Company		x	

Jay Chesterton, Fantasy Springs Resort Casino	x	
Dermot Connolly, La Quinta Resort & Club		E
Tim Ellis (Emeritus), Ellis Hospitality Services	x	
Eddy Estrada, Smarter Property Management		E
David Feltman, VRON Palm Springs	x	
Shannon Gilbert, The Ritz-Carlton, Rancho Mirage		E
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		E
Kelly McLean, Poppy	x	
Nusrat Mirza, JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa		E
Allen Monroe, The Living Desert		A
Lee Morcus (Emeritus), Kaiser Restaurant Group	x	
Liz Ostoich, FARM and Tac/Quila Palm Springs		E
Brad Poncher, Homewood Suites by Hilton La Quinta	x	
Greg Purdy, Palm Springs Aerial Tramway	x	
Tim Pyne, Renaissance Esmeralda Resort & Spa	x	
Saverio Scheri, Agua Caliente Casinos	x	
Bob Schneider, Desert Consulting	x	
Ankit Sekhri, Two Bunch Palms	x	
Barb Smith, Eventis Destination Services	x	
Boris Stark, Palm Desert Vacation Properties	x	
Joe Tormey, CSU San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus	x	
Doug Watson, Strategy Innovation Co.		E
A quorum was reached: 28 BOD and 7 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
 Lauren Bruggemans, Dir. of Sust. & Cmty. Engagement
 Samuel Thompson, Director of Indian Wells Tourism
 Stefanie Kilcoyne, Director of Technology & Operations
 Sarah Goslin, Exec. Asst. & Board Admin
 Andy Cloutier, Director of Human Resources
 Bruce T. Bauer, Legal Counsel
 Todd Burke, VP Communications
 Rob Osterberg, Director of Sales Operations
 Marta Battle, Destination Experiences Manager

Joyce Kiehl, Director of Communications
 Carolina Viazcan, VP Sales
 Bob Wilson, Brand Communications Specialist
 Sean Smith, Director of Economic Development
 Joanne Ohanesian, Tourism Development Manager
 Elizabeth Jamison, Destination Experiences Manager
 Edith Alcala, Destinations Experiences Intern
 Gary Orfield, Director of Tourism Development
 Emily Heggernes, National Sports Sales Manager
 Matt Bark, Destination Experiences Manager
 Estevan Aguirre, Partnership Intern
 Alex Mercado, Assistant Destination Experiences Mgr.
 Rebecca Kirkpatrick, Analytics Manager

AGENDA ITEMS

1. **JPA Chair, Waymond Fermon, led the Pledge of Allegiance.**
2. **The Clerk of the Board conducted Roll Call**
3. **JPA Chair, Waymond Fermon, asked whether there were any changes to the agenda. Hearing none, the agenda was confirmed.**
4. **JPA Chair, Waymond Fermon, called for public comment. There were no public comments on record.**
5. **Approval of Minutes (All Vote)**
 The JPA Executive Committee and VGPS Board of Directors Joint Meeting Minutes dated April 4, 2025, were presented for approval. JPA Chair Fermon asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. 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.
6. **Consent Calendar (JPA Vote)**
 The Warrants and Demands dated March 2025, April 2025, and May 2025 for Pacific Premier Bank were presented for approval. JPA Chair Fermon asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. 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. The Warrants and Demands were approved based on the roll call vote at the beginning of the meeting.
7. **CEO/President's Report**
 - a. **Scott White**
 - i. Thanked Tom Scaramellino for his service on the VGPS Board.
 - ii. Dr. Toper Taylor has started a 'Coachella Valley for Clean Air Coalition', and asked for VGPS's support.
 1. Discussion ensued.
 - a. It was decided that Dr. Taylor remove VGPS's logo from the website, and that we ask him to present to the Board and JPA at the September joint Board Meeting so we may vote on supporting the coalition.
 - iii. VGPS is replacing the current Board Liaison program with a Place Making Committee. The committee will focus on developing attractions, activities, and experiences that will drive demand for summer and key need periods. The committee would work with the VGPS team and assist in reviewing potential consultants to assist with the process. The term will be for 12-18 months with a maximum of 10 board and/or JPA members.
 1. If interested in joining the committee, send Scott an email.
 - iv. Air service quick update.
 1. Onboards are up by 26% from 2019 to 2025 (April).
 2. We have a strong presence in Canada on the PR, digital, and sales front. The new airline, Porter, was responsible for about 4,000 passengers out of Toronto, which is a key market for us, especially for group business.
 3. Provided the list of airlines with fall routes that are either new or extended.

- v. Presented the Tourism Economic Impact report for 2024 and our growth since 2011
- vi. A recap of the first quarter Visitor Intercept Study was shared, highlighting feedback from 877 visitors. Scott. presented the study and results. The Visitor Intercept Study is a 12 month research project.
- vii. The 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Sales and Marketing Plan are both on our website.
- viii. Visit Greater Palm Springs had one of 5 exclusive spots as an Exclusive Strategic Travel Partner at TED2025. TED is a great brand alignment with our destination. We are expanding our Strategic Partnership in 2026 to include content and targeted media.
- ix. We've done two feasibility studies for an Amateur Indoor Sports Complex. One with Convention Sports and Leisure, and another with Synergy Sports. Synergy Sports is involved in not only the feasibility, but they also do design, operation, funding, and so forth. The Synergy Sports study confirmed what Convention Sports and Leisure told us, which is that we are missing a huge opportunity to book tournaments in the summertime.
 - 1. Showed results of the Synergy Sports Analysis for an Amateur Indoor Sports Facility and inquired if any of the cities are interested in exploring further.

b. Carolina Viazcan reported out on Group Sales

- i. Presented team results/sales production YTD. Team goal reached 106% for leads, 111% for new leads, 96% for new bookings, and 103% for room nights.
- ii. Presented Future Pace for 2025-2028, and off-peak booking by period and year (summer and Q4)
- iii. The team attended/hosted 13 sales trips/tradeshows from April to May.
- iv. Summer travel includes 22 trips from June-August
- v. New National Sports Sales Manager, Emily Heggernes joined the team in June
- vi. Matt Bark retires after 14 years

c. Colleen Pace reported out for Destination Marketing, Restaurant Week, and the Summer Eats Pass

- i. We launched our new refresh campaign right before Memorial Day
- ii. Showed the summer landing page, digital outdoor billboards, digital display ads, and our summer social media campaign. These are geared for our direct fly and drive markets, and some targeted expanded summer markets. This campaign allows us to show the diversity of how many different ways there are to chill in our destination.
- iii. We have 16 Summer 2025 co-op TV partners
- iv. To impact fall business, the VRBO Summer Campaign will launch in July in partnership with global content agency Beautiful Destinations.
- v. LGBTQ+ Summer Campaign includes geofencing throughout the summer including Provincetown, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, Washington D.C., and San Diego.
- vi. VGPS launched a social media influencer strategy in Q1 and Q2 of 2025 which has engaged a wider audience.
- vii. A local-targeted Staycation campaign is launching to encourage residents in the Coachella Valley and nearby Riverside and San Bernadino counties to experience a summer "staycation" here.
- viii. Continuing ongoing efforts in the UK and Ireland in FY '25/26. International campaigns are planned to continue in FY '25/26 in partnership with Brand USA / Visit California across platforms like Expedia, TripAdvisor, and Sojern. A new international brand campaign "Where You Shine" is in the development process.
- ix. We added Arrivalist at the beginning of 2025 to measure advertising effectiveness.
- x. A very successful RW with 121 restaurants participating. Restaurant Week Website showed 47,900 users and over 240,000 page views. Gathered 220 new followers on social media.
- xi. Along with 30 of our partners, we hosted 8 media guests over 5 days for a Foodie Fam May 4-8, 2025
- xii. Had 4 live broadcast segments with 35 media in attendance during our May 28th media preview/kickoff event to kick off Restaurant Week.
- xiii. The Summer Eats Pass runs from June 9 – September 1

d. Todd Burke reported out on PR and Communications

- i. VGPS recently launched a strategic summer media push promoting GPSgetaway.com and the Summer Eats program across major drive markets.
- ii. VGPS hosted a PR Agency Immersion Fam with representatives from all five of our domestic and international agencies for a deep dive into the destination. They met with local representatives from each of our 9 cities,
- iii. Our new Media Relations Manager, Madison Morgan, joins our team on July 7, 2025.

e. Sean Smith reported out on Economic Development

- i. Our work with Northstar Consulting on the establishment of our brand creative has been completed.
- ii. Finalizing our GPS Economic Development Branding website and media & marketing plan. Within the next week, we will be sharing this with our TAC members, the representatives from each of the

cities, as well as the county, our tribal partners, and some other entities to get their feedback before we officially launch.

- iii. We attended several trade shows and conferences over the last few months. CALED, ICSC, Select USA, and City Nation Place. ICSC Western is a regional conference focused on development, taking place at PSCC from September 28-30, 2025.

f. Lauren Bruggemans reported out on Partnership & Community Engagement

- i. Provided an update on our workforce development youth engagement and foundation projects
- ii. We have two CSUSB Hospitality Students interning with us. Estevan in the Economic Development Department, and Edith in the Destination Experiences Department.
- iii. Student Hospitality Day, April 1, 2025 was very successful, with almost 100 high school sophomores and 30 industry partners coming together.
- iv. We just launched year two of our 6-week Passport to Leadership summer Program with ten seniors from all Coachella Valley school districts.
- v. We've had a record number of applications, 181, for our scholarship program. We will be rewarding 10 students studying hospitality with \$40k in college scholarships for 2025/2026.
 - 1. We've raised \$184,000 for our Tourism Foundation through events like Champions of Hospitality.
- vi. Our Tourism Foundation is being rebranded to Greater Palm Springs Foundation for Leadership & Advancement. We're expanding our mission to reflect our new economic development lens, and on our mission of growing our leaders locally and giving Coachella Valley youth the opportunity to become the next generation of leaders in our industry.
- vii. Reminder of our current PACE Program with the College of the Desert to provide workforce training for future leaders, as well as a new executive-level leadership program, tentatively called Visionary Leaders, to be launched in the fall.
 - 1. There are Visionary Leaders Sponsorship opportunities, so please reach out to Lauren for more information and to participate.
- viii. September is Spa Month. We're going to be providing marketing and promotion to drive business in September in all of our markets. We have 10 spas participating so far.
- ix. Department Staffing Updates: Erica Abarca will now assist Sean with Economic Development, but will continue her workforce development and youth engagement work. Laura Hunt Little is moving from PR to our team as a Community Engagement Manager, taking over Team GPS Champions and supporting community engagement and partnership.

g. Scott White presented the VGPS Budget for review

- i. Bill Judson retired last week, and Brian Kelly took his place as VP of Finance & Administration.

8. VGPS Board of Directors Items (VGPS Board Vote)

a. The Proposed 2025-2026 Budget was presented for approval.

- i. BOD Chair Hoehn asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. BOD Chair Hoehn asked for a motion. Celeste Brackley made a motion to approve. Tom Scaramellino seconded. There was no further discussion, and the 2025-2026 Budget was approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

b. TBID Annual Report (by Civitas) – Required by the State of California was presented for approval.

- i. BOD Chair Hoehn asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. BOD Chair Hoehn asked for a motion. Tim Pyne made a motion to approve. Peggy Trott seconded. There was no further discussion, and the TBID Annual Report was approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

c. Resolution No. BOD 2025-001 – Capital Asset Reserve was presented for approval.

- i. BOD Chair Hoehn asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. BOD Chair Hoehn asked for a motion. Brad Poncher made a motion to approve. Lorraine Becker seconded. There was no further discussion, and Resolution No. BOD 2025-001 was approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

d. Tim Ellis introduced Ebony Stinson with DoubleTree Golf Resort as a recommendation for a Board of Directors seat.

- i. BOD Chair Hoehn asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. BOD Chair Hoehn asked for a motion. Celeste Brackley made a motion to approve. Lee Morcus seconded. There was no further discussion, and Ebony Stinson was approved to join the VGPS Board of Directors based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

9. JPA Executive Committee Items (JPA Vote)

a. The Proposed 2025-2026 Budget was presented for approval.

- i. JPA Chair Fermon asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. JPA Chair Fermon asked for a motion. Linda Evans with the City of La Quinta made a motion to approve. Jan Harnik with the City of Palm Desert seconded. Representatives from the cities, Indian Wells and Palm Springs, and the County of Riverside were not present to vote. There was no further

discussion, and the 2025-2026 Budget was approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

b. TBID Annual Report (by Civitas) – Required by the State of California was presented for approval.

- i. JPA Chair Fermon asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. JPA Chair Fermon asked for a motion. Gary Gardner with the City of Desert Hot Springs made a motion to approve. Dr. Frank Figueroa with the City of Coachella seconded. Representatives from the cities, Indian Wells and Palm Springs, and the County of Riverside were not present to vote. There was no further discussion, and the TBID Annual Report approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

c. Resolution No. JPA 2025-005 – Carrying Over Funds to FY 2025/2026 was presented for approval.

- i. JPA Chair Fermon asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. JPA Chair Fermon asked for a motion. Linda Evans with the City of La Quinta made a motion to approve. Jan Harnik with the City of Palm Desert seconded. Representatives from the cities, Indian Wells and Palm Springs, and the County of Riverside were not present to vote. There was no further discussion, and Resolution No. JPA 2025-005 was approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

d. Resolution No. JPA 2025-006 – Revising Authorized Signatories & Trustees to the Defined Benefit Pension plan was presented for approval.

- i. JPA Chair Fermon asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. JPA Chair Fermon asked for a motion. Jan Harnik with the City of Palm Desert made a motion to approve. Linda Evans with the City of La Quinta seconded. Representatives from the cities, Indian Wells and Palm Springs, and the County of Riverside were not present to vote. There was no further discussion, and Resolution No. JPA 2025-006 was approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

e. Resolution No. JPA 2025-007 – Capital Asset Reserve was presented for approval.

- i. JPA Chair Fermon asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. JPA Chair Fermon asked for a motion. Gary Gardner with the City of Desert Hot Springs made a motion to approve. Dr. Frank Figueroa with the City of Coachella seconded. Representatives from the Cities, Indian Wells and Palm Springs, and the County of Riverside were not present to vote. There was no further discussion, and Resolution No. JPA 2025-007 was approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

10. Members of the JPA Executive Committee and VGPS Board of Directors provided updates on their cities and businesses.

11. The future JPA/Board of Directors Joint Meeting date and location were announced.

- a. Friday, September 26, 2025, at the Hilton Palm Springs in Palm Springs, CA.

12. The joint meeting of the JPA Executive Committee and VGPS Board of Directors was adjourned at 10:19 am by JPA Chair, Waymond Fermon.

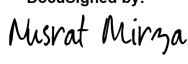
The complete Board Packet can be viewed on our website [here](#), and a direct link to the presentation also available on our website is [here](#).

Clerk for the Board:



Sarah Goslin, Executive Assistant & Board Administrator

VGPS Board of Directors Secretary:

DocuSigned by:

9/26/2025
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VGPS Secretary

Approval Date:

