



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

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Hilton Palm Springs | Horizon Ballroom  
400 E Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262  
8:30 am – 10:00 am

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:37 a.m. by Waymond Fermon, JPA Chair, at the Hilton Palm Springs in Palm Springs, CA.

### **Roll Call**

The roll call is recorded on the following page.

**SEPTEMBER 26, 2025**

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

CITY OF INDIO	Waymond Fermon, Council Member, <b>Chair</b>	x	
	Elaine Holmes, Council Member		
CITY OF LA QUINTA	Linda Evans, Mayor, <b>Vice Chair</b>	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	x	
	Dr. Toper Taylor, Council Member		
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS	Jeffrey Bernstein, Council Member	x	
	Ron deHarte, Mayor		
CITY OF PALM DESERT	Jan Harnik, Mayor	x	
	Evan Trubee, Mayor Pro Tem		
CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE	Ted Weill, Mayor	x	
	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, <b>Chair</b> - Indian Wells Tennis Garden	x	
Peggy Trott, <b>Vice Chair</b> - Kimpton Rowan Palm Springs	x	
Aftab Dada, <b>Treasurer</b> - Hilton Palm Springs Resort	x	
Kate Anderson, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians		E
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		E

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		E
Shannon Gilbert, The Ritz-Carlton, Rancho Mirage	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	x	
Nusrat Mirza, JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa	x	
Allen Monroe, The Living Desert	x	
Lee Morcus (Emeritus), Kaiser Restaurant Group		E
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		E
Bob Schneider, Desert Consulting	x	
Ankit Sekhri, Two Bunch Palms	x	
Barb Smith, Eventis Destination Services	x	
Boris Stark, Palm Desert Vacation Properties		E
Ebony Stinson, Doubletree Golf Resort	x	
Joe Tormey, CSU San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus		E
Doug Watson, Strategy   Innovation   Co.		E
<b>A quorum was reached: 28 BOD and 10 JPA.</b>		

## STAFF/ATTORNEY

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Scott White, President and CEO  
Brian Kelly, 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  
Bruce T. Bauer, Legal Counsel  
Todd Burke, VP Communications

Joyce Kiehl, Director of Communications  
Bob Wilson, Brand Communications Specialist  
Sean Smith, Director of Economic Development  
Gary Orfield, Director of Tourism Development  
Emily Heggernes, National Sports Sales Manager  
Yvonne Gonzalez, Destination Experiences Coord.  
Rebecca Kirkpatrick, Analytics Manager  
Jorge Rodriguez, Accounting Manager  
Gary Forsythe, Dir. of Palm Springs Tourism  
Erica Abarca, Community Development Manager

## AGENDA ITEMS

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1. JPA Chair, Waymond Fermon, called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.
2. JPA Chair, Waymond Fermon, led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. JPA Chair, Waymond Fermon, queued the playing of the tribal land acknowledgment video.
4. The Clerk of the Board conducted Roll Call. A quorum was reached.
5. JPA Chair, Waymond Fermon, asked whether there were any changes to the agenda. Hearing none, the agenda was confirmed.
6. 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.
7. **Approval of Minutes (All Vote) -**
  - a. **The JPA Executive Committee and VGPS Board of Directors Joint Meeting Minutes dated June 27, 2025, were 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. Dan Johnson with Hyatt Indian Wells seconded. No abstentions. There was no further discussion, and the minutes were approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.
8. **Consent Calendar (JPA Vote) -**
  - a. **The Warrants and Demands dated June 2025, July 2025, and August 2025 for Pacific Premier Bank were presented for approval.**
    - i. JPA Chair Fermon asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. JPA Chair Fermon asked for a motion. Jeffrey Bernstein with the City of Palm Springs made a motion to approve. Linda Evans with the City of La Quinta seconded. The Warrants and Demands were approved based on the roll call vote at the beginning of the meeting.
9. **Presentations were done by City of Indian Wells Council Member, Dr. Toper Taylor, on the Clean Air Coalition, and Riverside County 4th District Supervisor's Senior Policy Advisor, Grace Garner, and CVAG's Executive Director, Tom Kirk, on the Dust Mitigation and AQMD update.**
  - i. Dr. Taylor presented on behalf of CoachellaValleyCleanAir.org, highlighting that the valley has some of the nation's unhealthiest PM10 particulate matter concentrations, a problem worsened by Tropical Storm Hillary. He positioned his organization as an action-oriented advocate needed to push past years of discussion and find tangible solutions, requesting the board's support by lending its logo to the cause.
  - ii. Supervisor V. Manuel Perez and Grace Garner, Senior Legislative Analyst in his office, along with Tom Kirk, Executive Director of the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), provided an update on ongoing efforts related to air quality and dust mitigation. Kirk noted that CVAG has been leading regional coordination and advocacy with the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) to advance this work. The update highlighted AQMD's elevation of the issue as a priority and outlined current initiatives, including expanded monitoring using video technology, coordination among multiple agencies, and a Dust Summit scheduled for November 6th. The update also referenced health impacts on residents across the region, including agricultural workers.

## 10. JPA Executive Committee Items (JPA Vote)

- a. **The JPA Executive Committee was presented with the proposed 2026 Meeting Dates for approval.**
  - i. Gary Gardner with the City of Desert Hot Springs made a motion to approve. Jeffrey Bernstein with the City of Palm Springs seconded. No abstentions. The City of La Quinta was not present to vote. There was no further discussion, and the 2026 Meeting Dates were approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.
- b. **The JPA Executive Committee was presented with Resolution No. JPA 2025-008 – Air Service Reserve for approval.**
  - i. Dr. Frank Figueroa with the City of Coachella made a motion to approve. Jeffrey Bernstein with the City of Palm Springs seconded. No abstentions. The City of La Quinta was not present to vote. There was no further discussion, and Resolution No. JPA 2025-008 was approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.
- c. **The JPA Executive Committee was presented with Resolution No. JPA 2025-009 – Retiree Health Plan for approval.**
  - i. Jan Harnik with the City of Palm Desert made a motion to approve. Brian Penna with the City of Indian Wells seconded. No abstentions. The City of La Quinta was not present to vote. There was no further discussion, and Resolution No. JPA 2025-009 was approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.
- d. **The JPA Executive Committee was presented with Resolution No. JPA 2025-010 – Motor Vehicle Lease for approval.**
  - i. Jan Harnik with the City of Palm Desert made a motion to approve. Dr. Frank Figueroa with the City of Coachella seconded. No abstentions. The City of La Quinta was not present to vote. There was no further discussion, and Resolution No. JPA 2025-010 was approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

## 11. VGPS Board of Directors Items (VGPS Board Vote)

- a. **The VGPS Board of Directors was presented with the proposed 2026 Meeting Dates for approval.**
  - i. Peggy Trott made a motion to approve. Celeste Brackley seconded. No abstentions. There was no further discussion, and the 2026 Meeting Dates were approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.
- b. **The VGPS Board of Directors was presented with Resolution No. BOD 2025-002 – Air Service Reserve for approval.**
  - i. Kenny Cassidy made a motion to approve. Peggy Trott seconded. No abstentions. There was no further discussion, and Resolution No. BOD 2025-002 was approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.
- c. **The VGPS Board of Directors was presented with Resolution No. BOD 2025-003 – Motor Vehicle Lease for approval.**
  - i. Peggy Trott made a motion to approve. Tim Pyne seconded. No abstentions. There was no further discussion, and Resolution No. BOD 2025-003 was approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.
- d. **The VGPS Board of Directors was asked to approve Nusrat Mirza with JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort for the open Secretary position on the Board of Directors.**
  - i. Tim Pyne made a motion to approve. Shannon Gilbert seconded. No abstentions. There was no further discussion, and Nusrat Mirza was approved as the new Secretary of the VGPS Board of Directors based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.
- e. **The VGPS Board of Directors was asked to approve David Putnicki with Hotel PASEO for the open VGPS Board of Directors TBID Hotel seat.**
  - i. Celeste Brackley made a motion to approve. Patrick Klein seconded. No abstentions. There was no further discussion, and David Putnicki was approved for a Board of Directors seat based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

## 12. CEO/President's Report

- a. **Scott White**
  - i. Air Service:
    1. New routes to Santa Rosa on Alaska, Austin on Delta, Chicago Midway on Southwest, Newark on United, and Charlotte on American. However, this was tempered by a projected significant decline in airline seat capacity from Canada for the upcoming November to April season.
  - ii. Canada Travel:
    1. I will be going to Canada in November with Visit California. We continue to invest in Canada and let them know they are welcome in Greater Palm Springs. Palm Springs had "Palm Springs Loves Canada" banners along Palm Canyon Drive earlier this year, so we've encouraged the other cities to also recognize the importance of Canadian visitors, whether it's banners or another visual. Our team is going to be putting together some opportunities for businesses to put window clings and different things to really say to the Canadians that are coming back that they are very welcome here. A change in the exchange rate would also help.

- iii. Amateur Sports Facility:
  - 1. There is a continued push for a \$75 million amateur sports facility to drive tourism during the summer months. We could do a sports and entertainment district to help support or backstop the debt, to take some of the risk off of the cities.
- b. **Sean Smith**
  - i. **Economic Development:**
    - 1. Our new dedicated website, liveworkgps.com, and monthly newsletter, "Thrive and Shine," have been launched to attract business relocation and expansion and to share noteworthy events, programs, activities, and items of importance to Greater Palm Springs Economic Development.
    - 2. We have approved our economic development media plan, which will be centered on the industries that have been initially identified as having a strong opportunity for growth in our valley. We will be targeting individuals in positions to make decisions on the location, relocation, and expansion of businesses.
- c. **Davis Meyer**
  - i. Visitor & Resident Data:
    - 1. An ongoing visitor intercept study shows high visitor satisfaction. A new resident sentiment survey revealed that support for responsible short-term rentals (STRs) has increased to 86%, and STRs are not considered a top community issue.
  - ii. The team graduated another cohort of the successful Passport to Leadership program this summer, which is a six-week initiative for high school seniors to explore careers in the local hospitality and tourism industry.
  - iii. Champions of Hospitality is coming up on November 20<sup>th</sup> at the Palm Springs Convention Center
  - iv. Palm Springs Pride Parade is on November 9<sup>th</sup> – VGPS is participating.
  - v. VGPS Partner Holiday Party is on December 18<sup>th</sup> at our office.
  - vi. Congratulations to Lauren Bruggemans on making it to the final round of the RAP Foundation Nonprofit Desert Fast Pitch.
- d. **Todd Burke**
  - i. Summer media engagement for June through August included 24 media in market, 270 published articles, and 130 media content.
  - ii. We hosted more than 60 trade and media representatives in New York City to highlight the new non-stop flights.
  - iii. Todd and Julie Kawaguchi from the Tourism Development team attended a Visit California trade and PR mission in India, where he met with more than 45 tier 1 and tier 2 media.
- e. **Colleen Pace**
  - i. Welcomed Gary Forsythe, new Director of PS Tourism.
  - ii. IGLTA is being hosted in Palm Springs, October 21-25, with 504 people registered so far.
    - 1. The VGPS Partnership team is hosting a student summit before the convention, October 17-19, which includes tours, workshops, and guest speakers.
    - 2. The VGPS PR/Comms team and the Palm Springs Bureau of Tourism are hosting pre and post-FAMs for about 30 media, with curated experiences.
  - iii. The VGPS Sales team is exceeding all goals, with strong future bookings indicating a return to longer booking windows. A focus on off-peak seasons and the sports market has yielded significant new business. Our new sports sales manager, Emily Heggernes, has helped us book 3,000 new room nights this year so far, and just this week secured a three-year contract for a dance and cheer group that will bring 4,000 room nights per year.
  - iv. Showed summer recap video with performance highlights. The summer marketing campaigns were highly effective, achieving a 42% arrival lift (per Arrivalist, the program VGPS uses that measures advertising effectiveness), well above the industry benchmark.
  - v. Our fall campaign, "Escape Your Ordinary", was relaunched with refreshed assets.
  - vi. "Escapes", a new six-part content series supporting the unique and extraordinary experiences you can have in the destination, will launch in the fall.
  - vii. A new digital campaign we are working on with Lonely Planet will launch later this fall.
  - viii. We are launching our international campaigns in the UK, Ireland, Germany, Mexico, France, and Canada.
  - ix. Unveiled a portion of our new booth at ASAE in August. Met with 245 meeting planners and we're working on 12 leads as a result of the show.
  - x. The annual Event Services Celebration, where we recognized 16 outstanding event professionals within our community, took place at the end of July/beginning of August, and was very successful.
  - xi. A reminder to experience Spa Month before it ends. We have over 100 deals on the website for Spa Month, which ends at the end of September.

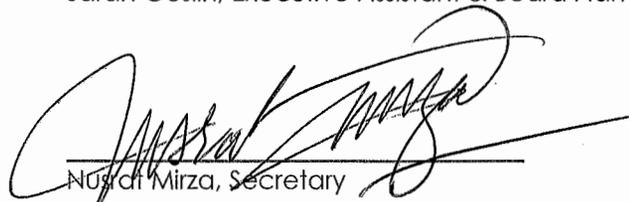
- 13. Members of the JPA Executive Committee and VGPS Board of Directors provided updates on their cities and businesses.**
- a. Gary Gardner – DHS: DHS is participating in Doors Open California, which is a statewide celebration of architecture and historic buildings, at two locations (Cabot's and Rock House) for the month of September. Desert Nights on the Blvd - Art Eats & Beats will be held every Saturday night starting October 25<sup>th</sup> on Pierson.
  - b. Brian Penna – IW: Following up on Toper's presentation, cvcleanair.org is an additional voice for businesses and residents on our clean air issue. Also, the Indian Wells Golf Tournament takes place 10/2-10/5 at IW Golf Resort. The Grand Opening of the IW Players Course takes place on December 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - c. Jeffrey Bernstein – PS: Oak View Group officially takes over the contract for the Convention Center on Sunday. We are also moving forward with \$125 million convention center modernization and connectivity. The airport plans continue, with heavy focus on customs. This week was groundbreaking for the new library and pickleball courts. Palm Springs Holidays takes place from November 15<sup>th</sup> to January 6<sup>th</sup>.
  - d. Jan Harnik – PD: The Measure G sales tax measure generated 6.9 million in the first quarter. October 10<sup>th</sup> street paving will be completed. Free concerts at Civic Center Park to continue soon. Ribbon cutting for 330 new apartment homes near CSU just took place. Join us on October 3<sup>rd</sup> for the Palm Desert State of the City at JW Marriott Desert Springs.
- 14. The next JPA/Board of Directors Joint Meeting date was announced, and a request for a volunteer venue to host the December meeting went out to the Board of Directors, as the location was not yet solidified.**
- a. Friday, December 12, 2025, at the TBD
- 15. The joint meeting of the JPA Executive Committee and VGPS Board of Directors was adjourned at 10:04 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:**

  
 Nusrat Mirza, Secretary

**Approval Date:**

December 12, 2025