



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

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Waymond Fermon, JPA Chair, at the Agua Caliente Resort Casino Spa in Rancho Mirage, CA.

Roll Call

The roll call is recorded on the following page.

JANUARY 31, 2025

Location: Agua Caliente Resort Casino Spa Rancho Mirage
Room: Cahuilla CDE
32-250 Bob Hope Drive,
Rancho Mirage, CA 92270
January 31, 2025
8:30am – 10:00am

JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

Waymond Fermon, Chair
City of Indio

Linda Evans, Vice Chair
City of La Quinta

Nancy Ross
City of Cathedral City

Dr. Frank Figueroa
City of Coachella

Gary Gardner,
City of Desert Hot Springs

Brian Penna
City of Indian Wells

Jan Harnik
City of Palm Desert

Jeffrey Bernstein
City of Palm Springs

Steve Downs
City of Rancho Mirage

V. Manuel Perez
County of Riverside

VGPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rolf Hoehn, Chair
Indian Wells Tennis Garden

Peggy Trott, Vice Chair
Kimpton Rowan Palm Springs

Tom Scaramellino, Secretary

Aftab Dada, Treasurer
Hilton Palm Springs Resort

Kate Anderson
Agua Caliente Band of
Cahuilla Indians

Lorraine Becker
Cabo's Pueblo Museum

Sejal Bhakta
Hampton Inn & Suites

John Bolton
Oak View Group

Celeste Brackley
The Line & Saguaro Hotels

Gary Cardiff
Cardiff Limousine &
Transportation

Kenny Cassidy
Acme House Company

Jay Chesteron
Fantasy Springs Resort Casino

Dermot Connolly
La Quinta Resort and Club

Tim Ellis (Emeritus)
Ellis Hospitality Services

Eddy Estrada
Smarter Property Management

David Fellman
VRON of Palm Springs

		PRESENT	NOT/YTD
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	x	
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	Steve Downs, Council Member	x	
	Eve Fromberg Edelstein, Council Member		
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE	V. Manuel Perez, Supervisor, 4th District		
	Joaquin Tijerina, Economic Development Manager	x	
VISIT GPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS ROLL CALL		PRESENT	EXCUSED
	Rolf Hoehn, Chair - Indian Wells Tennis Garden	X	
	Peggy Trott, Vice Chair - Kimpton Rowan Palm Springs	X	
	Tom Scaramellino, Secretary	X	

VGPS Board of Directors
(continued)

Shannon Gilbert
The Ritz-Carlton, Rancho Mirage

Mark Girton
Goldenvoice & Empire Polo

Rob Hampton
Palm Springs Convention Center

Dan Johnson
Grand Hyatt Indian Wells Resort & Villas

Jerry Keller
LULU California Bistro

Patrick Klein
The Gardens on El Paseo

Kelly McLean
MJM Holdings, Inc.,
McLean Company and Poppy

Nusrat Mirza
JW Marriott Desert Springs

Allen Monroe
The Living Desert

Lee Morcus (Emeritus)
Kaiser Restaurant Group

Michael Murray
Hotel Paseo

Liz Ostoich
FARM and Tac/Quila Palm Springs

Brad Poncher
Homewood Suites by Hilton, La Quinta

Greg Purdy
Palm Springs Aerial Tramway

Tim Pyne
Renaissance Esmeralda Resort & Spa

Saverio Scheri
Agua Caliente Casinos

Bob Schneider
Desert Consulting

Ankit Sekhri
Two Bunch Palms

Barb Smith
Eventis Destination Services

Boris Stark
Palm Desert Vacation Properties

Joseph Tormey CSU
San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus

Doug Watson
Strategy | Innovation | Co.

Aftab Dada, Treasurer - Hilton Palm Springs Resort		
	PRESENT	EXCUSED
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		A
Kenny Cassady, 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	
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		E
Allen Monroe, The Living Desert		E
Lee Morcus (Emeritus), Kaiser Restaurant Group		A
Michael Murray, Hotel Paseo		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	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.	X

A quorum was reached. 31 BOD and 10 JPA.

STAFF/ATTORNEY

Scott White, President and CEO
 Bill Judson, VP, Finance and Administration
 Brian Kelty, Director of Finance
 Colleen Pace, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer
 Davis Meyer, Senior Director of Community Affairs
 Julie Sinclair, Director of Brand Communications
 Lauren Bruggemans, Dir. of Sustainability & Community Engagement
 Samuel Thompson, Director of Indian Wells Tourism

Samuel Espinoza, Help Desk Manager
 Sarah Goslin, Executive Assistant & Board Administrator
 Kimber Foster, Director of Palm Springs Tourism
 Andy Cloutier, Director of Human Resources
 Bruce T. Bauer, Legal Counsel
 Todd Burke, VP Communications
 Joyce Kiehl, Director of Communications
 Krystal Kusmieruk, Senior Marketing Manager
 Carolina Viazcan, VP Sales
 Bob Wilson, Brand Communications Specialist
 Sean Smith, Director of Economic Development

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Land Acknowledgement for the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

JPA Chair, Waymond Fermon, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

JPA Chair, Waymond Fermon, asked whether there were any changes to the agenda. Hearing none, the agenda was confirmed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

This Public Comment period is for items that appear within the Consent Calendar or matters that are not listed on the agenda.

JPA Chair Gardner called for public comments. There were no public comments on record and no members of the public commented.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (All Vote)

JPA – VGPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS JOINT MEETING MINUTES DATED December 13, 2024 (all vote)

The JPA Executive Committee and VGPS Board of Directors Joint Meeting Minutes dated December 13, 2024, were presented for approval. 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. Linda Evans with the City of La Quinta seconded. No abstentions. There was no further discussion, and the minutes were approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

CONSENT CALENDAR (only JPA Executive Committee votes)

1. Warrants and Demands Dated December 2024

The Warrants and Demands dated December 2024 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. Steve Downs with the City of Rancho Mirage, seconded. The Warrants and Demands were approved based on the roll call vote at the beginning of the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT – TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (TBID)

TBID Public Comment period

Davis Meyer addressed the room.

The city of Coachella joined the Joint Powers Authority last year. In order to include lodging properties in the city of Coachella in the GPSTBID, we need to modify the current district to expand the boundary into the city of Coachella. That process began last board meeting on December 13, 2024, when the JPA passed the resolution of intent. Following the passed resolution of intent, there are two public meetings. The first meeting is this one, and the next one is the next board meeting on April 4, 2025. Assuming no majority protests, there will be a resolution to affirm the modification and the city of Coachella lodging properties will be added to the TBID starting July 1, 2025.

Davis asked for questions:

- Linda Evans with the City of La Quinta asked if we will have a reporting process in place to accurately report the TBID assessment for the City of Coachella by the July 1st date.
 - Davis Meyer responded, "Yes, we have worked with the City of Coachella staff to establish that process. This is the same process for the other cities."
- Dr. Frank Figueroa commented that he appreciates the positive language in the letter we sent out notifying vacation rental holders.
- Sarah Goslin with Visit Greater Palm Springs, Clerk of the Board, stated that they had 3 public protests on record.
- Scott White asked for public comment.
 - No members of the public gave comment.

Public comment period for the TBID was closed.

CEO / PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Scott White:

1. Thanked Gary Gardner for his service as our JPA Chair and presented him with a framed desert photo and signed card.
2. Welcomed our new JPA representatives and alternates.
3. Visit California has seen major decline in visitation to Southern California from the fires in Los Angeles, which could potentially impact us as well. They're continuing to now emphasize that Southern California is open for business.
 - Airbnb has a program to sponsor individuals displaced from the fires and help them with temporary residences. We provided \$120,000 to sponsor the program. The goal is to apply those funds to vacation rentals in the Coachella Valley, but we left it up to them to decide who was most in need.
 - The LA Fire Relief landing page went live on January 9th with information on local special accommodations, rates, offers, and air quality updates. VGPS is trying to raise additional dollars for the American Red Cross and will match up to \$100,000. Thanked

the Board for giving us the opportunity to do that. The QR code can be found on our website for donations.

4. Desert Horse Park is a must-see venue and Desert Circuit is a wonderful tournament that we are proud sponsors of.
5. VGPS was awarded with the 2024 Fired Up! Cultural Achievement Award.
 - We work with Fired Up Culture throughout the year, and every 2 years they send out an organizational survey to all staff. The questions are about how the individuals think our company is performing from culture to processes. Our 2024 survey came back even more positive than 2023. The cultural achievement award is awarded to the company that really sets the standard amongst its peers when it comes to how engaged their team members are feeling about their workplace culture.
 - We take the results from the survey and work on any low scoring areas. This year's survey shows processes as our lowest score, which is still a high score overall, so we plan to continue educating and better training our staff on the many processes we have in place.
6. In 2024, four new flights were added and ten airlines either enhanced or started service earlier in the season.
7. Visit Greater Palm Springs hosted 24 top-tier clients for a FAM during the Palm Springs International Film Festival.

We also hosted 16 airline network planners during Airport Roundtable, a lot of which had never been to the destination.

Go West Summit was also hosted in January with over 400 attendees.

8. The 2025-2027 Priorities were presented with a note that we can make changes down the road, if needed. These allow our staff to build their goals and objectives for the year understanding you've set these as your priorities.
 - a. **Increase demand with off-peak emphasis**
 - o Expand initiatives for need period (June-September) to include shoulder months (May and October-December) & develop programs to drive demand for these time periods
 - o Focus on the development of an indoor sports complex and overall sports strategy to attract new sporting events, especially during the need periods.
 - We will ask this group to form a task force to explore a sports improvement district to hopefully make an indoor sports complex a reality in the future. The Berger foundation would like to lease the land, but we need someone to help with funding.
 - b. **Regional collaboration and economic diversity**
 - o Grow regional initiatives to include expanded workforce development and advocate for infrastructure support
 - o Launch the new economic development web site and campaign
 - c. **Destination Stewardship**
 - o Develop strategies around sustainability, cultural heritage, accessibility, community engagement and advocacy.
 - o Workforce Development strategies include rebranding the Tourism Foundation and expanding the Board in the future. Moving forward, we're going to do a workforce analysis program, continue to advocate for housing, and launch Team GPS 2.0.
 - o We are only two hotels away from becoming a Autism Certified Destination.

Colleen Pace presented the Marketing 2024 results and 2025 goals.

Todd Burke presented the PR/Communications 2024 key achievements and 2025 goals.

Carolina Viazcan presented the Convention Sales 2024 results and 2025 goals.

Davis Meyer presented the 2024 results and 2025 goals for the following priorities: Economic Development, Workforce Development and Tourism Foundation, Stewardship, Vacation Rental Resources and Development, and Advocacy and Partnership.

VGPS BOARD (BOD Vote Only)

1. **The Board made a recommendation to the JPA Executive Committee to approve Resolution No. JPA 2025-001, to close the Pension Plan to new participants.** This was not a vote, only a recommendation that the Board supports the resolution. The recommendation passed with no abstentions.

2. **The 25/26 Board Priorities were presented for approval.**

Board Chair Hoehn asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. Board Chair Hoehn asked for a motion. Celeste Brackley made a motion to approve. Peggy Trott seconded. The 25/26 Board Priorities were approved based on the roll call vote at the beginning of the meeting.

3. **The 2025 Visit Greater Palm Springs Goals were presented for approval.**

Board Chair Hoehn asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. Board Chair Hoehn asked for a motion. Lorraine Becker made a motion to approve. Dan Johnson seconded. The 2025 Goals were approved based on the roll call vote at the beginning of the meeting.

JPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (JPA Vote Only)

1. **The JPA Executive Committee voted to approve Resolution No. JPA 2025-001 – Pension Plan Closure to New Participants.**

JPA Chair Fermon asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. JPA Chair Fermon asked for a motion. Mayor Linda Evans with the City of La Quinta made a motion to approve and Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner with the City of Desert Hot Springs seconded. No abstentions. All approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

2. **The 25/26 Board Priorities were presented for approval.**

JPA Chair Fermon asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. JPA Chair Fermon asked for a motion. Dr. Frank Figueroa with the City of Coachella made a motion to approve and Councilmember Jeffrey Bernstein with the City of Palm Springs seconded. The 25/26 Board Priorities were approved based on the roll call vote at the beginning of the meeting.

3. **The 2025 Visit Greater Palm Springs Goals were presented for approval.**

JPA Chair Fermon asked for changes or abstentions. No changes or abstentions. JPA Chair Fermon asked for a motion. Mayor Linda Evans with the City of La Quinta made a motion to approve and Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner with the City of Desert Hot Springs seconded. The 2025 Goals were approved based on the roll call vote at the beginning of the meeting.

JPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATES

- Waymond Fermond with the City of Indio
 - The Desert Horse Park and Acrisure are both amazing venues for our destination.
 - Thank you everyone for supporting the Chuckwalla National Monument.
 - February 13- March 2 is the Riverside County National Date Festival. Go to datefest.org for tickets.
 - Presidents Day Parade taking place on Monday, February 17th.
 - February 8th in downtown Indio we're hosting a Black History event with food trucks, panel discussions, and guest speakers.
 - Gary Gardner with the City of Desert Hot Springs
 - It was an honor to be invited to the White House in Washington DC for the Chuckwalla National Monument project.
 - The City of Desert Hot Springs Arts and Recreation Department just completed their autism certification.
 - Desert X is coming back and Desert Hot Springs is looking forward to hosting several of the sculptures.
 - Jeffrey Bernstein with the City of Palm Springs
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- The Tour De Palm Springs is next weekend,
- There will be Black History Month events all over Palm Springs in the month of February.
- Celebrating the 20th anniversary of Modernism Week and 25th anniversary of Modernism Show this year.
- The College of the Desert Campus in Palm Springs project is moving fast.
- The 2.2-billion-dollar airport master plan was approved and includes a hybrid car rental facility.
- A 1 million dollar plus upgrade to the Palm Springs Convention Center was approved.
- Jan Harnik with the City of Palm Desert
 - May 9th will be the groundbreaking for the 79-million-dollar CSU building.
 - Fashion Week El Paseo is taking place March 14-19, 2025.
 - We are working hard on affordable housing in the north area of Palm Desert to support our workforce.
 - Working hard on Vision Zero and our VIP program (very important pedestrians)
Vision Zero is an international initiative aiming to eliminate traffic-related fatalities and severe injuries while promoting safe and accessible transportation choices for everyone. The City of Palm Desert won a Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) planning grant to advance its vision of a safe and well-connected transportation system that prioritizes safety, health, and access for the community's most vulnerable road users, including school-aged children and seniors.
- Steve Downs with the City of Rancho Mirage
 - The Rancho Mirage Writers Festival takes place next week.
 - The Galleri Classic Golf Tournament at the end of February.
- Kate Anderson with Agua Caliente Band
 - The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians donated \$100,000 to the American Red Cross for the LA Wildfire Victims
 - We partnered with KESQ and the local Find Food Bank to provide a donation match up to \$50,000 for the LA Food Bank that generated over \$115,000 for our friends over in LA.
 - The tribe has launched the first-ever restaurant revitalization grants program. We're offering up to \$5,000 for each restaurant/bar that is located on the reservation for improvements to their restaurants, and up to \$20,000 for those establishments that want to increase their seating capacity.
- Linda Evans with the City of La Quinta
 - The American Express Golf Foundation donated \$50,000 to the American Red Cross for the LA fire victims, and that's in addition to the \$1,000,000 that the AMEX Golf Tournament donates to charities.
 - The La Quinta Arts Celebration is from February 27th to March 2nd
 - La Quinta was the first city in the valley to amend and pass a resolution for short-term vacation rental allowance for those that don't have permits but have occupancy, so they can get a business license to help the displaced fire victims. We're working on being able to allow that on either a short or long-term basis.
 - Hopefully, by the end of summer, we will have selected a new funder/developer to reengage the Silver Rock/TAUs/Montage project and seek to completion.
- Nancy Ross with the City of Cathedral City
 - Today through Sunday is the Taste of Jalisco. We're having immersive cooking classes, two petting zoos, and even two stages that run all day through all three days.
- Brian Penna with the City of Indian Wells
 - Reminder to attend the BNP Paribas March 3 – 16.
 - Indian Wells City Council passed a gift to Living Desert in the amount of \$500,000.
- Rolf Hoehn with Indian Wells Tennis Garden
 - Next week, February 8th IWTG hosts the Dr. George classic Car Show.
 - BNP Tennis is taking place in March with Family day held on Saturday March 1st
 - Sunday, March 2 – Tuesday, March 4th are qualifying days and the tickets go to charity and only cost \$10-\$20.
 - Tickets on sale for the evening tie-break mixed doubles tournament
- Liz Ostoich with FARM & Taq/Quila Palm Springs
 - OpenTable announced the top 100 romantic restaurants in the country for 2025. FARM and Wally's Desert Turtle made the list.

Waymond Fermon's closing remarks:

Recognized Board & JPA birthdays for January, February, and March.

Sending prayers for all that those lost their lives or loved ones in the horrible DC plane accident.

FUTURE MEETING DATE

- April 4, 2025 | The Ritz-Carlton, Rancho Mirage
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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Scott White & Waymond Fermon at 10:04 a.m.

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:



Tom Scaramellino, Secretary

Approval Date:


