

## **Visit the Santa Ynez Valley Board Meeting Minutes**

### **February 13, 2025 | 9:00 a.m. | The Landsby**

#### **Call to Order**

Shelby Sim called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., leading the meeting on behalf of Jonathan Rosenson, who attended by phone.

**Board Members Present:** Kathleen Cochran, Kristopher McLaughlin, Stormie Strickland, Jim Flagg, Jonathan Rosenson (by phone), Greer Araujo (by phone).

**Staff Present:** Danielle Laudon Ruse, Shelby Sim.

**Public Present:** Phil Carpenter, Anna Ferguson, Brian McLaughlin, Don Conner, Candice Libera, Michelle Boss, Brit Zotovich, Sarah Nichol, Erica Flores, Ben Sarmiento, Terri Simmons.

#### **Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items**

- **Erica Flores:** Thanked Kristopher and his team at The Victor for hosting a celebratory dinner for Santa Ynez Valley People Helping People (PHP). Shared updates on PHP's community initiatives. Also thanked Kathleen and Alisal for hosting their leadership retreat.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

- Motion to approve the minutes from the January 9, 2025 meeting: Kathleen Cochran.
- Second: Jim Flagg.
- All in favor. Motion approved.

#### **Financial Report**

- Presented by Kristopher McLaughlin.
- Review of recent financials.

#### **Staff Report**

- Restaurant Weeks 2025 Recap
- Midweek Membership Club Promotion Update
- Website Update
- Employee Handbook Update
- Membership Update
- Chumash Web Advertising Update
- Data Vendor Update
- Vintners BID Update – Shelby invited Phil Carpenter to provide an update. The Vintners BID has been successfully approved.
- Billboard Update – Jim proposed that Shelby come back with an alternate offer to negotiate terms. The board agreed with this consensus.
- Recent Travel
  - GoWest Summit Palm Springs, January 6 – 9 (Cynthia)
  - IMM New York, January 20 – 24 (Shelby & Danielle)
  - VisitCA Reverse Canada Mission, San Diego, February 10 – 12 (Cynthia)

- Upcoming Travel
  - VisitCA Outlook Forum, Los Angeles, March 2 – 5 (Shelby, Danielle, Cynthia)

## Marketing Update

Presented by Danielle Laudon Ruse:

- Review of media approach, social channels, website updates, ad campaigns, SEO, data tracking, and Restaurant Weeks performance.

## Old Business & New Business

- **Old Business:**
  - The Solvang Trolley has returned, and Clau has offered free tickets to hotels.

## Board Comments

- **Danielle:** Thanked attendees for coming despite the rain. Shared that her move to Los Alamos has been a success.
- **Jim:** Hampton Inn had a record-breaking January.
- **Stormie:** Hotel Corque is transitioning to a Marriott. Received some traffic from the lacrosse tournaments.
- **Greer:** Expressed excitement for the Wine BID passing, noting the positive impact on both the wine and hospitality industries.
- **Jonathan:** Apologized for attending remotely. Praised Restaurant Weeks for boosting First & Oak's numbers.
- **Kathleen:** January was stronger than last year, with a boost in visitation due to fires. Noted an increase in group business RFPs.
- **Kristopher:** The Genevieve has seen strong catering and group sales, with ongoing walkthroughs. Secret Service occupancy helped performance. March and April look promising.
- **Shelby:** Congratulated the Vintners Association on their BID. Thanked The Landsby and Brian McLaughlin for hosting. Expressed optimism for 2025 projections.

The meeting closed at 9:53am.

## Next Meeting

- The next board meeting will be held on March 13, 2025 at The Landsby.

*Prepared by Danielle Laudon Ruse  
Vice President*

*Approved by Stormie Strickland  
Secretary*