

Visit the Santa Ynez Valley Board Meeting
March 13, 2025 | 9:00 a.m. | The Landsby

Call to Order

Chairman Linda Johansen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Board Members Present:

Chairman Linda Johansen, Treasurer Kristopher McLaughlin, Secretary Stormie Strickland, Jeff Hartman, and Greer Arajo

Board Members Absent:

Jonathan Rosenson, Jim Flagg, Will Henry, and Kathleen Cochran

Staff Present:

Shelby Sim, Danielle Laudon Ruse, Cynthia Gonzalez, and Brenda Ball

Public Present:

Pam Roberts, Michelle Boss, Peter Robbins, Anna Ferguson, Candice Libera, Chantel Green, Terri Simmons, Crystal Campa, Don Conner, Will Adams, Ben Sarmiento, David Modelo and Mackenna DuPont.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

No public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Action Item: Approval of the board meeting minutes from February 13, 2025.

- Motion to approve: Stormie Strickland
- Seconded: Jeff Hartman
- **All in favor, motion approved.**

Grant Request – SYV Rotary, 4th of July Fireworks Celebration

Action Item: Requested amount: \$4,000 | Matrix recommended amount: \$3,250

- Peter Robbins spoke on behalf of the event.
 - Linda Johansen spoke in favor.
 - **Motion:** Linda motioned to approve the full \$4,000.
 - **Seconded:** Stormie Strickland
 - **All in favor, motion approved.**
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Solvang Festival Theater 2025 Season Sponsorship

Action Item: Presenting Sponsor, \$10,000

- Sponsorship includes live onstage performances during Spring & Fall seasons and the Summer Sunday afternoon "Music in the Garden" Series.
 - Chantel Green spoke on behalf of the sponsorship request.
 - **Motion:** Linda Johansen motioned to approve the \$10,000 sponsorship.
 - **Seconded:** Jeff Hartman
 - **All in favor, motion approved.**
 - Jeff inquired about including performances for a younger demographic.
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Financial Report

Presenter: Kristopher McLaughlin

- Reviewed recent financials.
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Staff Report

Updates provided on:

- Website
- Employee Handbook
- Membership
- California Cup

- IPW Conference
 - BrandUSA Travel Week
 - Solvang Chamber annual sponsorship (\$2,500)
 - **Recent Travel:**
 - VisitCA Outlook Forum in Los Angeles, March 2–5 (Shelby, Danielle, Cynthia)
 - **Activity Report for February**
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Marketing Update

Presenter: Danielle Laudon Ruse

- Reviewed media approach, social channels, website updates, and ad campaigns.
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Sales Update

Presenter: Cynthia Gonzalez

- Provided updates on recent sales missions, including:
 - GoWest Show in Palm Springs
 - Canadian reverse mission in San Diego
 - Hosted a fam tour for both media and trade from Canada, with seven attendees.
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Old Business & New Business

Billboard Update:

- Our non-paid lease expired while awaiting the City of Buellton's code update.
- Buellton Chamber has agreed to "Buellton Next 3 Exits" as the callout.
- Estimated costs | Monthly lease: \$4,000 | Wrap change: \$12,000 (not budgeted for this year).
- Shelby noted potential interest from Highline Adventures and possibly Vintners for co-op use.
- Jeff suggested submitting a letter of intent contingent on city approval.

- Board asked if another no-pay lease is possible while working out subleasing agreements.

Board Comments

Cynthia Gonzalez: Excited to be back from travel; working on IPW and California Cup. Noted a secured buyer from Scotland attending for the first time.

Kristopher McLaughlin: January was strong for hospitality. Group bookings have increased at The Landsby and The Genevieve. The Victor is closed Mondays and Tuesdays for now, working on staffing.

Jeff Hartman: Had a fantastic January and February, up 20% and 15% over last year. March is looking strong; hoping for favorable weather. Bookings for summer are extending further out.

Greer Arajo: Seeing an increase in group inquiries and leaning further into event planning.

Stormie Strickland: Busy with Hotel Corque's transition into a Marriott Tribute Portfolio hotel. Seeing longer lead times on proposals, with bookings into 2026.

Brenda Ball: Focused on implementing HubSpot for customer relations management. The system will streamline sales processes, analytics, and membership services.

Danielle Laudon Ruse: Onboarding with Datafy, a new data provider, which will enhance reporting and attribution marketing.

Shelby Sim: Acknowledged staff members for their self-starting efforts and contributions.

Linda Johansen: Shared insights from her recent travels. Will miss the April meeting but will be home afterward. Thanked Brian and Kristopher for supporting fundraising events, including Olive Crest's upcoming event. Expressed appreciation for the staff's hard work and the board's input.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:46 a.m.

Shelby Sim thanked Kristopher and Brian for hosting our meetings The Landsby.

Next Board Meeting: April 10, 2025 | 9:00 a.m. | The Landsby

Prepared by Danielle Laudon Ruse
Vice President

Approved by Stormie Strickland
Secretary