

Visit the Santa Ynez Valley Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
October 16, 2025
The Landsby, 9:00 a.m.

Call to Order

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

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

None.

Room Introductions

Led by Linda Johansen.

Board Members Present

Will Henry, Linda Johansen, Jeff Hartman, Jim Flagg, Kathleen Cochran, Stormie Strickland, Greer Araujo (by phone)

Board Members Absent

Kristopher McLaughlin, Jonathan Rosenson

Staff Present

Shelby Sim, Danielle Laudon Ruse, Cynthia Gonzalez

Public Present

Anna Ferguson Sparks, Candice Libera, Camden Wirick, David Modelo, Charlene Rossoll, Will Adams, Olivia Uribe Mutal, Alvie Whitaker, Brit Zotovich, Erica Flores, Jenifer Sanregret

Action Items

Approval of September 11, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes

Correction: Remove Jim Flagg from the attendance list in the previous month's minutes.

- Motion to approve with amendment: Kathleen Cochran
- Seconded: Jeff Hartman

- All in favor. Motion approved.
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Financial Report

Presented by Shelby Sim on behalf of Treasurer Kristopher McLaughlin (absent)

- Review of recent financials.
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Staff Report

Presented by Shelby Sim

- **Taste of the Santa Ynez Valley Recap**
 - **Community Donations and Sponsorships:**
 - \$4,000 donation to Community Health Centers of the Central Coast (CHC)
 - \$2,000 donation to SYV People Helping People for building renovation completion
 - \$325 sponsorship of Los Alamos Old Days
 - \$500 sponsorship of Santa Ynez Valley Foundation's *Champions of the Valley*
 - \$500 sponsorship of *Movies in the Park* at Dunn School (for SYV community)
 - **Upcoming Travel:**
 - BrandUSA Travel Week, London – October 18–23 (Shelby)
 - Small & Boutique Meetings, Park City – October 26–28 (Cynthia)
 - **September Activity Report**
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Marketing Update

Danielle Laudon Ruse

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

Cynthia Gonzalez

- Provided updates on Small Boutique Meetings and upcoming trade shows, focusing on attracting small group business to the region.
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Old Business & New Business

New Business:

- Shelby announced that Jonathan Rosenson has sold the Mirabelle Inn and *First & Oak* will be closing. Jonathan has stepped down from the board and sends his regards. The organization will plan a farewell reception in his honor next month, and a new Solvang hotelier representative will be appointed.
 - **TBID Discussion:** Jim shared that during RFP season, government contracts are refusing TBID assessment fees, labeling them as “resort fees.” Civitas will be contacted to clarify state and federal contract rules. Government contracts currently represent 30% of Hampton Inn’s business, posing a challenge for TBID compliance.
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Board Comments

Danielle Laudon Ruse:

Thanked the board and team for their support during her maternity leave. Excited to be back and to continue moving several projects forward.

Cynthia Gonzalez:

Shared enthusiasm for meeting planners’ growing interest in the region and the success in positioning SYV as more than just a wine destination.

Jim Flagg:

Hampton Inn occupancy remains strong. He encouraged hoteliers to maintain rate integrity.

Stormie Strickland:

Corque and Hadsten hotels saw a strong September and October. Expecting a slight dip in early November before the holiday season.

Kathleen Cochran:

September exceeded expectations; Q3 closed strong. End-of-year business pacing ahead of last year, with slightly lower occupancy but higher ADR.

Will Henry:

Busy harvest season nearing completion. Lumen is stable despite challenges in the broader wine market. Hosting frequent events and vineyard tours to attract guests to Los Alamos.

Jeff Hartman:

Highline Adventure Park saw growth in September and October over last year. Experimenting successfully with new marketing channels—Meta ads paused, but traffic increased through TikTok and ChatGPT referrals. Planning the first *Turkey Trek* community event on Thanksgiving morning (8–10 a.m.).

Shelby Sim:

Shared that he and Will are performing in *Miracle on Bell Street*, a dinner theater production by LATG.org on December 12–14. Expressed pride in the success of *Taste of the Santa Ynez Valley* and thanked the community for its support.

Jim Flagg (continued):

Noted changes in booking patterns—Saturday demand remains high, while Fridays have softened slightly.

Greer Araujo:

Reported strong business at Fess Parker Wine Country Inn, bolstered by *Taste* and *Day in the Country*. Appreciated the board's support of Los Olivos Chamber events. Announced she is expecting her baby soon and likely won't attend next month's meeting.

Linda Johansen:

Thanked Greer for joining virtually and congratulated her on the upcoming birth. Expressed gratitude to The Landsby for hosting and to the public for attending. Thanked Danielle for returning, Cynthia for her continued efforts, and Shelby for his leadership. Acknowledged Jonathan's service to the board and shared plans for a farewell celebration.

Adjournment

Linda Johansen adjourned the meeting at 9:52 a.m.

Next Meeting: November 13, 2025, at 9:00 a.m., The Landsby

Minutes Prepared by:

Danielle Laudon Ruse

Vice President & Chief Marketing Officer