

**Visit the Santa Ynez Valley Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
**March 19, 2026**  
**The Landsby, 9:00 a.m.**

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**Call to Order**

Linda Johansen called the meeting to order at **8:56 a.m.**

Linda shared that she would be leaving early to attend a nonprofit event for SYV People Helping People, which she helped organize and fundraise.

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**Room Introductions**

Led by Linda Johansen.

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**Board Members Present**

Linda Johansen, Kristopher McLaughlin, Camden Wirick, Greer Araujo, Stormie Strickland

**Board Members Absent**

Jeff Hartman, Jim Flagg, Kathleen Cochran, Will Henry

**Staff Present**

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

**Public Present**

Don Connor, Spencer Shull, Jennifer Robertson, Megan Friend, Charles Tiedemann, Adrienne Rule, Brian McLaughlin, Gretchen Baldwin, Candice Libera, Josh Jujan, Anna Ferguson

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**Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items**

None

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**Financial Report**

**Kristopher McLaughlin** presented a review of recent financials.

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## **Action Items**

### **Open Officer Positions**

- **Vice Chairman Appointment – Greer Araujo**  
Linda motioned to appoint Greer as Vice Chairman. Kristopher seconded. All in favor. Approved.
  - **Treasurer Appointment – Camden Wirick**  
Linda motioned to appoint Camden as Treasurer. Stormie seconded. All in favor. Approved.
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### **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes**

- **January 8, 2026**  
Kristopher motioned to approve. Greer seconded. All in favor. Approved.
  - **February 12, 2026**  
Stormie motioned to approve. Kristopher seconded. All in favor. Approved.
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### **Staff Report**

- **Billboard Update:** Progress continues; pending approval from the City of Buellton.
- **Women Winemakers & Culinarrians Foundation:** \$3,500 grant awarded.
- **Midweek Membership Club Update**
- **Visit California Outlook Forum Recap**
- **Wine Donations:**
  - 2 cases each to Solvang & Buellton Chambers
  - 5 cases to Solvang Festival Theater
  - 4 cases to Santa Barbara Channel Keepers
- **One West Tourism Alliance Leadership Summit:** June 22 – 24
- **Upcoming Travel:**

- GoWest Summit, March 30 – April 3, Las Vegas (Cynthia)
  - **February Activity Report**
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### **Marketing Update**

**Danielle Laudon Ruse** reviewed media strategy, social channels, website updates, and advertising campaigns. She shared we were selected by Visit California for a Creators Content Co-Op and will be scheduling 8 video shoots to be completed by June 2026.

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### **Sales Update**

**Cynthia Gonzalez** provided the following updates:

- **Midweek Promotion:** 48 qualifying requests to date, with the majority for March; strong guest feedback and engagement.
  - **GoWest Summit:** 34 appointments scheduled to date.
  - **IPW:** Appointment requests underway for May.
  - **Tradeshow Form:** Finalizing a standardized form for tour operators, meeting planners, and trade partners.
  - **Wedding Leads:** Ongoing responses and follow-up.
  - **Website Audits:** Monthly audits to ensure all partners are accurately listed.
  - **Wedding & Events Vendor Guide:** Ongoing updates.
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### **Old Business & New Business**

#### **New Business:**

Kristopher McLaughlin announced this would be his final board meeting. He shared that he and Brian McLaughlin will be stepping away from The Landsby and The Genevieve to travel. After 17 years in the industry and 11 years with The Landsby, he expressed gratitude and noted the bittersweet nature of his departure.

Linda Johansen thanked Kristopher and Brian for their significant contributions to the community and expressed appreciation for their leadership and partnership.

Shelby Sim echoed appreciation and gratitude for their impact and friendship.

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## **Board Comments**

### **Stormie Strickland:**

March has been busy; preparing for the summer season.

### **Greer Araujo:**

Happy to be back from maternity leave. Q1 was slower, but March has seen an increase in last-minute bookings.

### **Kristopher McLaughlin:**

Q1 performance has been strong and pacing ahead. Updates at The Victor include restructuring, new activations, added firepits, and enhanced lighting. A midweek smashburger promotion has been well received. Business overall is strong heading into event season.

### **Camden Wirick:**

Thanked the board for the opportunity to serve as Treasurer. Q1 has been soft, but Q2 is looking strong. Teams are currently transitioning systems.

### **Danielle Laudon Ruse:**

Expressed sincere gratitude to Kristopher for his leadership and contributions.

### **Cynthia Gonzalez:**

Echoed appreciation for Kristopher and wished him and Brian well. Noted that the midweek promotion has provided valuable opportunities to connect with local hotel teams.

### **Brenda Ball:**

Congratulated Kristopher and shared appreciation for his leadership. Provided an update on HubSpot implementation, noting improved efficiency, including automated invoicing.

### **Shelby Sim:**

Recognized Brenda's work on HubSpot and its impact on operations. Thanked Danielle for her work with Visit California and Cynthia for taking on additional responsibilities. Expressed gratitude to Kristopher and welcomed Camden into the Treasurer role. Thanked Linda for her leadership and support.

### **Linda Johansen:**

Acknowledged the strength and dedication of the board and staff. Highlighted the organization's success in elevating the Santa Ynez Valley as a destination. Thanked Shelby for his leadership and the City of Solvang for its partnership. Expressed appreciation to The Landsby for hosting.

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**Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at **9:37 a.m.**

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**Next Meeting**

**April 9, 2026 | 9:00 a.m. | The Landsby**

Prepared by Danielle Laudon Ruse, Vice President & CMO

Approved by Stormie Strickland, Secretary