

Visit the Santa Ynez Valley Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

May 14, 2026

The Landsby, 9:00 a.m.

Call to Order

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

Room Introductions

Introductions were made.

Board Members Present

Linda Johansen, Greer Araujo, Stormie Strickland, Will Henry, Kathleen Cochran (via phone)

Board Members Absent

Jim Flagg, Jeff Hartman, Camden Wirick, Josh Lujan

Staff Present

Shelby Sim, Danielle Laudon Ruse, Brenda Ball

Public Present

Anna Ferguson, Candice Libera, Bent Olsen, Gretchen Baldwin, Pam Roberts, Michael Edward, Katie Folk

Financial Report

Shelby Sim presented a review of recent financials.

Action Item

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – April 9, 2026

Will Henry motioned to approve the minutes. Stormie Strickland seconded. All in favor.
Motion carried.

Staff Report

Shelby Sim provided the staff report, including:

- **California Cup Recap**
 - **One West Tourism Alliance Leadership Summit (June 22–24)**
 - Visit the Santa Ynez Valley will host the summit.
 - Attendees will stay at Hotel Corque and participate in activities throughout the Santa Ynez Valley.
 - **Taste of the Santa Ynez Valley 2026 Update**
 - Event dates: October 1–4, 2026
 - Tickets are expected to go on sale in June.
 - **Staff Update**
 - Due to budget constraints, the organization was unable to retain the Director of Sales position and Cynthia Gonzalez has departed the organization.
 - **Board Elections**
 - **Upcoming Travel**
 - IPW, Fort Lauderdale, May 17–22 (Danielle Laudon Ruse and Shelby Sim)
 - **April Activity Report**
-

Marketing Update

Danielle Laudon Ruse provided an overview of 2026 marketing initiatives, public relations efforts, website updates and social media performance.

Old Business & New Business

No old or new business was discussed.

Board Comments

Greer Araujo

April closed strongly for Fess Parker. May and June weekend business is looking positive. The winery is introducing additional midweek programming to help drive visitation, including a dinner event with Third Window Brewing.

Stormie Strickland

Business remains strong at Hotel Corque and The Hadsten. The properties recently hosted participants for the Wine Country Half Marathon. Weekend occupancy remains strong. The Marriott transition has been completed, and a new POS system is scheduled for implementation in Q1.

Will Henry

Pico is performing very well and is ahead of last year's pace. Los Alamos continues to see strong visitation. Will is currently spending significant time in the vineyard during the growing season.

Brenda Ball

The website continues to grow and perform well. Members have done an excellent job submitting events. A new venue-related tagging feature has been added to improve searchability and user experience.

Danielle Laudon Ruse

Shared that a new wine varietal filter is being added to the website. Danielle also highlighted the organization's ongoing partnership with DVA Advertising & PR to coordinate customized itineraries for visiting journalists and content creators. She recently worked with DVA to facilitate a visit to Lumen Wines for a content creator.

Kathleen Cochran

Shared that Alisal Ranch was recently named to a "Best Hotels in the World" list. It is one of only a small number of properties recognized in the Americas and the only guest ranch included.

Linda Johansen

Thanked everyone for attending. She noted that new board positions will take effect July 1, and acknowledged that Jim Flagg will be terming off the board this year. Linda expressed pride in the organization's accomplishments and appreciation for both staff and board members' dedication and leadership.

Linda thanked The Landsby for hosting the meeting.

Adjournment

Linda Johansen adjourned the meeting at **9:30 a.m.**

Next Meeting

June 11, 2026

9:00 a.m.

The Landsby

Minutes Prepared by Danielle Laudon Ruse, Vice President & Chief Marketing Officer

Approved by Stormie Strickland, Secretary