

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (TBID) ADVISORY BOARD
MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2021, 3:30 PM
SOUTH COUNTY CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE BOARD ROOM
800 WEST BRANCH STREET, ARROYO GRANDE, CA

In compliance with the State and County Shelter at Home Orders due to the coronavirus pandemic, and as allowed by the Governor's Executive Order N-29-20, which allows for a deviation of teleconference rules required by the Ralph M. Brown Act, this meeting was held by teleconference.

1. **Call to order.** The meeting was called to order at 3:32 p.m. by Board Chair Greg Steinberger.
2. **Roll call and flag salute.** Board members present via teleconference were Greg Steinberger, April Schirmer, Vivian Krug, and Yvette Eagles.

City representatives present via teleconference: Mayor Caren Ray Russom, City Manager Whitney McDonald, Accounting Manager Nicole Valentine, and Director of Legislative & Information Services/City Clerk Jessica Matson. Chamber staff present via teleconference: President/CEO Jocelyn Brennan and Marketing/Tourism Coordinator Holly Leighton. Verdin Marketing staff present via teleconference: Partner & VP of Client Services Ashlee Akers. Visit SLO CAL representative present via teleconference: Partner Engagement Manager Ashley Mastako. Member of the public present via teleconference: Agrarian Hotel General Manager Sean Dasmann.

3. **Public Comment.** Agrarian Hotel General Manager Sean Dasmann re-introduced himself. Visit SLO CAL Partner Engagement Manager Ashley Mastako gave a marketing update of tourism at the county level. She said people are ready to travel again. Visit SLO CAL is filming a video of Hearst Castle and redesigning their website. The Spartan race is confirmed for November. Visit SLO CAL is planning a marketing retreat in April.

4. **Approval of Minutes of the February 22, 2021 Regular Board Meeting**

Action: Board member April Schirmer made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2021 regular board meeting. Board member Greg Steinberger seconded the motion. Board member Vivian Krug abstained from the vote because she was absent at the meeting. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

5. **Receive and File the Financial Reports for the Period Ending January 31, 2021.** Accounting Manager Nicole Valentine said TOT continues to trend lower than previous years but is still doing well in general. STVRs report quarterly instead of monthly so the numbers are higher on end-of-quarter months. Assessments collected are approximately \$103K although budgeted at \$100K for FY 2020-21. The ending balance will be higher than budgeted. This year's budget was very conservative, and the year's financials are going much better than anticipated.

Action: Board member Vivian Krug made a motion to approve the financial reports for the period ending January 31, 2021. Board member April Schirmer seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

6. **Consider and Approve a Recommendation to Amend the AGTBID Advisory Board Bylaws Changing the Regular Board Meeting Schedule from Monthly to Six Meetings a Year.** Board member Yvette Eagles suggested monthly reports from Verdin Marketing to stay in communication. Verdin Marketing Partner & VP of Client Services Ashlee Akers said they would continue to provide their stat summaries and social media calendar updates. Mayor Caren Ray Russom said this Board was never intended to meet monthly, but was needed originally to organize the AGTBID.

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Action: Board member Vivian Krug made a motion to recommend amending the AGTBID Advisory Board Bylaws changing the regular board meeting schedule from monthly to six meetings a year. Board member April Schirmer seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

- 7. Review and Approve the FY 2020-21 Annual Report.** Verdin Marketing Partner & VP of Client Services Ashlee Akers reviewed the stats from July 2020 through February 2021, the fall 2020 campaign, three personas, and the spring 2021 campaign. She said the Visit California Outlook Forum directives include outdoor family experience as a tourism goal. Verdin Marketing is working on a video to represent Arroyo Grande at the California Welcome Center. The Visit Arroyo Grande email marketing list is growing organically. Most names were collected at the Strawberry Festival in 2019. She said our Visit Arroyo Grande website needs an overhaul to increase SEO. Blog content will help SEO, too, in addition to the recent itineraries that were created. We can track results from the Visit SLO CAL lodging reports and the Star report.

Action: Board member Greg Steinberger made a motion to approve the FY 2020-21 Annual Report. Board member Vivian Krug seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

- 8. Receive Monthly Marketing Update.** Verdin Marketing Partner & VP of Client Services Ashlee Akers presented their monthly reports. Most website traffic is coming from L.A. Fresno/Visalia and L.A. are top origin markets from the Visit SLO CAL lodging report. Instagram is outpacing Facebook in popularity, and it skews younger than Facebook. We currently have 1,068 email subscribers, and we need to encourage people to sign up through social media. Ashlee shared the key takeaways from the virtual Visit California Outlook Forum in February: Travelers will spend less time travel planning and are likely to do last-minute trips. Last-minute cancellations are common. Touchless pay is preferred. Consumers are no longer showing sensitivity to wearing or not wearing of masks in imagery or promotional videos. Revenge spending is evident: Travel enthusiasts are planning post-pandemic vacations and workcations.
- 9. Board Member Communications.** Board member Vivian Krug asked how the Coastal Commission decision will affect our tourism marketing plan. Chamber President/CEO Jocelyn Brennan said she is working with Visit SLO CAL to do an economic impact study and feasibility study. Vivian also asked about the possibility of more ecotourism. In reference to the South County Historical Society, Vivian said the barn and schoolhouse will reopen on Easter Sunday from 1-3 pm but won't be open for regular hours. She said the Visit Arroyo Grande website shows that museums are open so we need to change that information. Board member Greg Steinberger asked for a second opinion on our website efficiency. Chamber President/CEO Jocelyn Brennan said she would send him an SEO report. The Board discussed adding an agenda item for the next AGTBID meeting to discuss various ways to evaluate Verdin Marketing's efforts in tourism marketing for our destination.

- 10. Staff Communications.** None.

- 11. Adjournment.** Meeting was adjourned at 5:16 pm.

Approved by Board on 04-26-2021