

SCT Board of Directors Board Meeting
 March 26, 2025 at 3:00pm
 Sonoma County Tourism Board Room
 400 Aviation Blvd Suite 500. Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Meeting Minutes- DRAFT

Members: ***Joe Bartolomei, Jennifer Buffo, Thera Buttaro, Margaret Grahame, Keo Hornbostel, Kirstyne Lange, Kirk Lok, Crista Luedtke, Brian Marchi, Brandon Mrkvicka, Tony Pace, Bert Rangel, Caroline Shaw, Tim Zahner, Scott Alonso, , Karim Ikrimah, Andrea Griffin***

Invitees: Ethan Brown, McCall Miller, Mary Roulades, Bill Arnone, Claudia Vecchio, Lori Angstadt, Kelly Bass Seibel, Jonny Westom, Frank Filice, Conrad Braganza, Jessica Quigley (recording secretary)

Public: None

Absent: ***Bert Rangel, Brandon Mrkvicka, Brian Marchi, Crista Luedtke, Kristyne Lange, Tony Pace***

Agenda Item/Issues	Information	Follow Up Action	Person Responsible	Date Due
Meeting Call to Order	Meeting commenced at 3:02pm	N/A	N/A	N/A
Roll Call	<i>Roll call taken for all members</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A
Public Comment	NA	N/A	N/A	N/A
Statement of Abstentions	None	N/A	N/A	N/A
Approval of Consent Items.	Motion: J. Bartolomei S: C. Shaw to approve the consent items- a) Approval of Agenda: March 26, 2025 b) Approval of BOD Minutes: February 26, 2025 c) Governance Committee Minutes- January 15, 2025 d) Finance & Legal Committee Minutes –February 24, 2025 e) Financials January 2025 Ayes –10 Nays – 0, Abstentions – 0 <i>K. Lok not yet present.</i>			

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Legal Report	B. Arnone updates the Board of Directors that he has most recently been working with C. Vecchio on a JPA for the Convention Center Project, renewing trademarks and proving Ethics Training.			
Tourism Insights and Performance Reports	Allie Norbdy, SCT's new Data Specialist makes her first presentation, providing the board an update on the current industry performance. Discussion around the decline in international travel and how the current geo political climate is affecting the industry.			
Convention Center Development Update & Updated Talking Points	Work continues on the convention center. We were stalled for almost a year trying to determine the "capital stack", but we're working to re-start this program. Kosmont has provided a draft MOU for consideration between the City of Santa Rosa, the County of Sonoma and Sonoma County Tourism. We believe this is a fine start, but the establishment of a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) would provide a more "official" agreement between the parties. We're still working on the JPA – Bill Arnone has provided a draft. Ethan will be discussing the project with County Counsel in the coming days. We are working to provide him with information that can help steer the discussion. Claudia and Jonny had a very productive conversation with Trammel Crow, the commercial development arm of CBRE. We are awaiting a proposal for development services from the San Francisco office of this nationally recognized company.			

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FY25-26 Budget & Annual report for the County	<p>Claudia continues to meet with Maraskeshia Smith, Santa Rosa City Manager, on this project. SCT will need to reenergize discussions with elected officials on the city and county levels to ensure noise from other projects doesn't replace the excitement about this project.</p> <p>L. Angstadt presents the FY 25-26 Budget to the Board of Directors.</p> <p>SCT FY25-26 Budget Commentary</p> <p>Revenue – total revenue up by 1.7% (162,629)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the current uncertainty with the economy and state of tourism both international and domestic and the latest STR forecast showing almost flat growth for the rest of 2025 and 2026, we left revenue mostly flat. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With the upcoming change in BIA collection for VRBO and AirBNB starting in July 2025, we added a slightly higher growth in BIA than TOT for the fiscal year ○ Other revenue decreased – no partnership revenue from Experiences program 			

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	<p>Expenses</p> <p>Advertising – Total expenses down 4.2% (-\$79,464)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FY24-25 we added \$200K from reserve funds for additional advertising. • Have shifted some funds in Marketing from Advertising to Content (digital engagement), reclassification of website maintenance expenses (new vendor in FY24-25) and adding new functionality in the website which will help with organic capture of the market <p>Client Events, FAM and Entertainment – Total expenses down 27.9% (-\$91,765)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Development shifting focus with programming spend from client events to some additional spend in travel and tradeshow with the team <p>Travel & Tradeshow – Total expenses up 2.4% (\$7,560)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Development shifting spending from client events to more targeted trade shows <p>Digital Engagement – Total expenses up 22.9% (\$121,138)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased spend on the website and reclassification of some expenses that were marked as advertising this year (new vendor) but are actually related to 			

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	<p style="margin-left: 40px;">maintenance (\$120K)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased content spend as part of marketing programming to support advertising campaigns • Decreasing photo and video spend to utilize existing resources to increase program spend in other areas <p>Organization Tools – total expenses down 7.7% (-\$5,340)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Development changing some of the sales tools they use utilize <p>Research – total expenses up 19.8% (\$40,124)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with the EDC again to share a Research fellow to help support our team – funds offset by decrease in Admin payroll due to combining 2 roles into one in FY24-25 <p>Event and Organization Sponsorship – total expenses up 25.7% (115,144)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added in funds for potential sponsorship opportunities with Superbowl (Feb 2026) and FIFA (June 2026) <p>Memberships – total expenses up 8.8% (\$5,806)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased memberships with some more luxury focused organizations and different group business 			

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	<p style="text-align: center;">sites</p> <p>Contract Services – total expenses down 22.6% (-\$166,484)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency fees split between Marketing and PR (prior 4 years has been combined as one flat rate in Marketing) • Changing Business Development structure to reduce contracted US rep to a full time staff member • Decreased design fees – higher fees in current year with “Wine Country for All of Us” and “This is Wine Country” – will be able to capitalize on existing design work to keep campaign going <p>Professional Development and Training – total expenses down 24.6% (-\$68,407)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel Trade discontinuing use of TravPro platform with new strategy for next year • Reduced spend on sales mixers to focus on other programming • Current fiscal year had additional funds for 20th celebration that are not necessary for FY25-26 • Decrease in PR training to focus on other programming such as Media Visits and trade shows <p>Destination Programming – total expenses down 20.4% (-</p>			

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	<p>\$160,264)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signature Experiences program done in FY24-25 – anticipating starting up a second round in June 2026 Wheel the World assessment in FY24-25 – ongoing annual expense much lower than onboarding and assessment costs <p>Payroll and Human Resources – total expenses up 7.1% (\$234,870)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shifting staffing in Business Development from a contracted position to a full time sales manager in market Multiple vacancies in FY24-25 – anticipating fully staffed for FY25-26 (Built in vacation time throughout the year to reduce overall payroll expense to more realistic level based on pattern of current time off requests and overall vacation liability) <p>Technology – total expenses flat to budget</p> <p>Office Supplies and Equipment – total expenses up 14.5% (\$7,734)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added funds to replace some office equipment that is under the capitalization threshold 			

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Annual Report for the County Paid Marketing Campaign Connected TV Spot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added funds in for mailings for possible BIA change campaign <p>Fees and Licenses – total expenses up 30.3% (44,170)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have built in funds for potential legal fees surrounding both convention center project and BIA changes <p>Facilities Expense – total expense relatively flat to budget</p> <p>Motion: T. Buttarro, Second: J. Buffo to approve the FY25-26 to be submitted to the County.</p> <p>Ayes-11 Nays-0 Abstain-0 <i>K. Lok has joined the meeting</i></p>			
	C. Vecchio reviews SCT's annual report to be submitted to the county with the Budget.			
	F. Filice introduces the 30 second tv commercial that the marketing teams has produced in house.			

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FY 25-26 Plan Development	C. Vecchio reviews FY25-26 plan and discusses the need for planning 1 year at a time vs 2, as the market is ever changing.			
National travel & Tourism Week Signature Experience Launch, Stars of the Industry & Rapid connections	<p>K. Bass Seibel reviews events for National Travel and Tourism Week.</p> <p>SCT will host an event to launch the Signature Experiences. Stars of the Industry Awards Night will take place on May 7th. Rapid Connections event will take place on May 8th, to help create connections with business partners and create potential partnerships.</p>			
Committee Items-FOR POSSIBLE ACTION	<p>Governance Committee: K. Hornbostel presents 3 committee applications. S. Alonso for Finance & Legal committee H. Simons for Business Development committee Ali Ward- Business Development Committee</p> <p>Motion: J. Bartolomei, Second: A. Griffen to accept the committee applications as presented.</p> <p>Ayes- 11, Nays-0, Abstain-0</p>			
Board Report	C. Vecchio reviews the Board Report with current updates on what the SCT team has been working on the last month.			

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	C. Vecchio encourages the board to review the “what’s new in Spring 2025” report put out by the PR team.			
Next Meeting	Annual Meeting, April 23, 2025 at 3pm at the SCT Board Room.	RSVP in BoardEffect	Members	3 days prior in BE; or 1 week prior if virtual for posting requirements
Adjourn	4:11pm			