



**VISALIA CONVENTION AND VISITORS' BUREAU
MINUTES FROM MAY 11, 2022 BOARD MEETING
HELD AT CITY ADMIN OFFICE**

Meeting was called to order by Board Chair John Oneto at 9:04 am

Present: Aaron Hensley, Amy King, Anil Chagan, Bob McKellar, John Oneto, Rick Feder, Robert Lee, Steven Torres, Steve Nelsen, Katy Young

Excused: Carrie Groover, Samantha Rummage Mathias, Roger Hurick

Absent: Brett Taylor, Michael Seward

Others Present: Nick Mascia

Staff: Nellie Freeborn, Suzanne Bianco, Devon DeMello

Public Comment: None

Information Item: Able Industries presentation will be postponed until June 2022 meeting. Cost for Executive Director recruitment will be shared equally with the TMD.

Consent Items:

Robert Lee motioned to approve all consent items in one motion. This was seconded by Bob McKellar. Motioned carried.

Action Items:

- a. Bob McKellar motioned to authorize staff to underwrite \$10,000.00 annually for two-year term for the Tourism Economics Symphony Reporting Platform to be paid to the Visalia Tourism Marketing District in the amount of \$10,000.00 for the budget year 2022 and \$10,000.00 in budget year 2023 for a total of \$20,000.00. Robert Lee seconded. Motion carried.
- b. It was recommended by the Executive Committee to increase Certified Autism Center underwriting expense by \$6,000.00 for a total of \$31,000.00 versus the original approved expense of \$25,000.00. Katie motioned for this with the stipulation that participating companies also contribute financially toward their certification. It was seconded by Rick. Motioned carried. Nellie noted that CAC renewal expenses should be included in the 2023 budget. Steve and Bob both expressed concern about this expense.

Staff Activity Reports:

Executive Director Overview: Nellie noted the following items:

- Sensory backpacks are available for participating businesses to pick up. Businesses are asked to add noise cancelling headsets (adult and child sizes) to the backpacks. Estimated cost for headsets is \$20.
- Nellie reviewed her work flow leading up to her departure:
 - a. Discussed Meetings + Convention e-proposal, microsites, local referrals and community impact
 - b. Citywide Shuttle brochure under development and should be ready in the coming weeks.
 - c. CAC Developments:
 - i. Farmer Bob's World hosted local school group
 - ii. CAC road trip will be featured in Visit CA Road trips magazine
 - iii. Planning a media influencer trip, such as Julia, the character from Sesame Street
 - iv. Thank you to businesses who participated in the Light it up Blue event.
 - d. Online website is live

e. Art Trail Map is in development

f. 360 Imagery: should be complete in early June for use by Conventions and tourism. The tool can be utilized for site visits with the itinerary plugged into program. ETA: June

g. Symphony Platform should be going live soon.

Tourism Update provided by Suzanne

- YTD website users are up 40% over last month with top non-USA countries: Canada, Mexico, and India.
- In-office visitors increased 75% over last month, which includes international visitors from 6 different countries.
- Our partnership with Brand USA/ HSVC is live with our Cities Page now active.
- Social media: Growth in number of followers across all platforms but still lagging engagement. Current ad running for the Go Native event.
- Stories picked up (16) by media include autism and return of Sequoia Shuttle.
- Updates provided on regional partnerships including MML, STC.
- May and June will see an increase in the number of media FAM visits.
- NJF has had great success with story placement.

Convention Sales: Nellie provided an update on convention sales activities in May. Files not completed will be handed over to Devon.

Committees:

Tourism committee: Next meeting is May 18 at 4:00 at the CVB office.

Convention committee: On pause for now.

Good of the Order:

- Nellie thanked the board for their support the past 5 years and all wished her well in her new ventures.
- Steve requested that a change in the by-laws be discussed at the next meeting, specifically a change so that the Exec Director report to executive board, not the entire board.

Next Meeting: June 8, 2022, 9:00 a.m. at Visalia City Administrative Office – Board Room, 220 N. Santa Fe Street

Adjourned: Meeting adjourned at 9:54 am

Respectfully submitted by: Suzanne Bianco