



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

August 10, 2023

753 South Main Street, Angels Camp, CA and
Via Zoom Video Conference 8:30 am

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 AM by Morgan Gace.

Board Members Present: Morgan Gace, Sarah Lundsford, Kathy Collins, Susan Weatherby, Tana Howard, Katie Abresch, Amber Sprock, Betsy Uttley, Jeff Stai

Absent Members: Bonnie Randall, Mary Jane Genochio

CVB Staff Present: Martin Huberty, Jessica Johnson

Advisors Present: Jamie Andriola, Calaveras County Representative; Rebecca Callen, City of Angels Camp

1. **Approval of July 2023 Meeting Minutes:** Kathy C. motioned to approve. Susan W. second. All approved. None Opposed. None abstained.
2. **Approval of July 2023 financial reports:** Susan W. motioned to approve the financial reports. Amber S. seconded. All approved. None Opposed. None abstained.
3. **Domo Madden Media Website Report:** Jamie A. trained with Collin at Placer AI to use the tool for county purposes. Placer AI is really helping the CVB focus on who and where to market the county. Placer AI is used to track visitors' traffic – where people come from, where they go after they leave a county attraction or business. Martin is tracking 10 locations a month and changing the tracked locations each month. SEO marketing shows only 2744 clicks and the same time as last year there were over 6000 clicks on the website. Sarah L. noted that Google and other social media sites changed their algorithms so that may be one of the reasons for the sudden decline. Martin said he will investigate that to see if something can be changed to boost visitors back to the website. Morgan stated that social media should be a big driver to the website. Visitation numbers to the county, however, are still very strong. The Visitors Center saw over 1600 visitors and fielded over 200 calls in July – holding steady for the year. The presumption is that people are coming back to the area who have visited the area already and know the area a little better. Morgan asked what is being looked at on the website and what is not getting little or no attention – where are the clicks coming from? Current marketing is to new visitors and outdoor adventure seekers as opposed to people who have already visited the area. Molly Blaisdell from Hook Line and Thinker presented the marketing strategy for the upcoming

year. HLT took the event calendar to focus on social media promoting the events. They will also try to coincide the social media posts with each week's blog. HLT will be reaching out to the media with press releases monthly rather than quarterly. Press releases will include events or attractions of special interest and following the editorial calendar. The current Back to Nature campaign theme for summer is Be Iconic. These campaigns and contests increase social media interaction, and the photos populate the calendar and website blogs. History may be the theme for 2024, and HLT and Martin will discuss the slogan for the campaign. Morgan G. stated she would like to see a stronger organic presence on social media. Tana H. has lots of ideas and experience with social media and would like to help where she can. Molly said the focus has been to increase engagement with non-locals and to focus on positive and encouraging engagement. The CVB marketing committee feels it is important to capture Calaveras' "pioneer spirit" in our storytelling. Molly feels the CVB ambassadors will be important to represent the entire county and include the voice of local business owners.

4. **New Business:**

- A. Final Board Approved Budget:** Morgan G. motioned to increase the CVB wages line-item amount by \$6,000 and to approve the 2023/2024 CVB budget. Kathy C. seconded. All were in favor. None opposed. Sarah L. abstained. Martin stated that none of the increases in wages will be given to the Director's salary, but he will use it to increase staff wages or use it for Christmas bonuses for the staff.
- B. Strategic Planning Session:** Martin will email three dates to see what date most of the board can attend. The CVB has one day rented already through the Avery Hotel. Susan W. motioned appointing Jeff Stai of Twisted Oak to the CVB board. Tana Howard seconded. All were in favor. None opposed. None abstained.

5. **Old Business**

- A. County end of Year Financial Review:** The CVB has a new MOU with Calaveras County. Morgan will be submitting a letter and end-of-year numbers with a list of current board members and a list of goals the CVB has accomplished and plans to accomplish. Also, she will include strategies to help organizations promote their events.
- B. Grants for Local Organizations:** The CVB has started giving local organizations grants to help market their events. So far, the CVB has given to Lumberjack Day, BMX Racing Event at the county fairgrounds, the Calaveras Grape Stomp, and The Vow wedding event.
- C. PO System:** The new Square POS system is up and running at the Angels Camp and Murphys locations. The CVB is expanding the gift shop in Murphys with the help of Staria Stine.
- D. Mountain Bike Influencer Trip:** Martin is still working with HLT to organize the trip.
- E. Guide Update:** Martin has invited past guide participants to get together at the Angels Camp Museum to showcase the 2024 Visitors Guide. Advertising opportunities now include double-page ads, full page ads, and half-page ads. Martin requested the board attend.
- F. Museum Update:** The Museum has three grant applications in process right now. The Angels Camp Museum Foundation has one through CCF for the Foundry Exhibit, The Old Timers Museum has a grant application in for an Albert Michelson Exhibit at the Angels Camp Museum, and the Calaveras Film Commission has a grant application in for Tales

of Calaveras: Part Two. The lights in the Carriage House and Pole Barn are still waiting to be scheduled.

Martin spoke with KCRA who offered the advertising opportunity “Take Over Days” where organizations can “take over” KCRA’s homepage. The goal is to target zip codes, and Martin will investigate which zip codes to best market. Martin asked everyone to look at www.weekendsherpa.com, a travel influencer website. It’s expensive, however it is very well done, and it would be great to host them in Calaveras. Jorge and Michelle – travel influencers from Los Angeles with over 100K followers and focus on outdoor adventure will be touring Calaveras. Martin wants the CVB to attend the Yosemite Planning meeting because we are a gateway to Yosemite. Martin purchased another print ad in the National Geographic UK magazine, and it was only \$2,000 rather than \$4,000 this time. Mitchell and Bryan with JLL, a hotels and hospitality company that looks at stewardship of travel has been hired by Visit California to look at the Gold Country and how to have sustainable travel in the future. JLL is a strategic advisory and asset management company.

6. Board Members Updates

Susan Weatherby: Hotel Lege is in full swing with renovations and under new ownership. They are putting lots of effort into cleaning up and renovating. All the rooms will have new, individual bathrooms. They are hoping to open the bar in two weeks. Lumberjack Day is in October in West Point. The Scramble in Wilseyville is November 18th and 19th. A new hotel is coming to San Andras. Susan met with Visit California’s rep, Christin. Susan would like them to highlight the Tahoe to Calaveras routes. Chamber Leadership Program mixer will be at 4th Wall Entertainment for a sneak preview of The Seven Year Itch. September 22nd is the State of the County breakfast. The Chamber is looking for a full-time CEO, and Susan’s last day as interim is the end of August.

Kathy Collins: Real estate trends for June show the mid-price is \$459K which is down 34% from last year. Three to four months of unsold inventory, mostly in Copperopolis, Arnold, and Valley Springs. Angels and Murphys are stagnant because there isn’t much inventory available. Concerts and weddings are what keep the Airbnbs mostly booked.

Jamie Andriola: No updates currently. Busy with final county budget and other projects.

Katie Abresch: Launching the Sierra Lodestar via YouTube. Carissa, the new owner of the Calaveras Enterprise, is holding a fundraiser to benefit HeadStart. Carissa hopes to help non-profits in the community and strongly support Calaveras. This fall, Enterprise will celebrate 60 years of being the Calaveras newspaper.

Morgan Gace: Looking forward to meeting everyone in person at the next meeting or at the strategic planning meeting.

Amber Sprock: The summer season is winding down and all of the last children’s events are done. Lots of weddings this summer and fall, and already scheduling next year’s weddings. Interpretive Master Plan is a guide for educational elements and how to go forward regarding facilities use and maintenance. It will take about a year to complete. Fire restrictions in the park are now in place at walk-in sites that are remote. South Grove Rim Road is closed due to biomass removal. SF Gate article regarding Big Trees and Highway 45

corridor compares us to Tahoe and Yosemite. The food trailer is opening this weekend after a successful soft opening last weekend.

Rebecca Callen (City of Angels Camp): Not Present

Sarah Lundsford: CCTV is still working on the oral history projects with Manzanita Writers Press. At the end of the project there will be 50-60 interviews of long-time Calaveras residents. Most interviews are from the northern and western parts of the county but would like to have more voices from the Highway 4 corridor.

Aaron James: Everything on Highway 4 is open and all campgrounds are open. Deer Valley Trail is not quite open, but probably will open this week. Jessica will work to get Aaron an email to utilize Placer AI.

Tana Howard: Tana had to leave the meeting for a previous engagement and was not available to give an update.

Bonnie Randall: Not Present

Jeff Stai: Twisted Oak's Crush Dinner is going to be held at the end of September at the Murphys Hotel. The Day of River of Dead Skulls at Alchemy will be in November at Day of the Dead.

Meeting adjourned : Meeting adjourned at 10:02 AM. Next meeting will be September 14, 2023, 8:30 AM at 753 South Main Street, Angels Camp, CA 95222 or via Zoom Video Conference.