

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (TBID) ADVISORY BOARD
MONDAY, APRIL 25, 2022, 3:30 PM
ARROYO GRANDE CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM BOARD ROOM
300 EAST BRANCH STREET, ARROYO GRANDE**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:34 pm by Board Chair Sean Dasmann.

2. ROLL CALL AND FLAG SALUTE

Board members present: Sean Dasmann, Yvette Eagles and Myraline Morris Whitaker. Prior to the start of this meeting, new Board member Myraline Morris Whitaker took her oath to serve on the TBID Board.

Board member April Schirmer was absent.

City representatives present: Mayor Caren Ray Russom, City Manager Whitney McDonald, Director of Administrative Services Nicole Valentine, and Accounting Manager Lynda Horejsi.

Chamber representatives present: Interim CEO Nicole Moore and Marketing/Tourism Coordinator Holly Leighton.

Verdin Marketing staff present: Partner & VP of Client Services Ashlee Akers and Account Manager Natalie Bovee.

Member of the public present: Gaea Powell

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Member of the public Gaea Powell asked if Visit Arroyo Grande ever had a billboard off Highway 101 to encourage drivers to get off the freeway. Verdin Marketing Partner & VP of Client Services Ashlee Akers stated Verdin uses the "hub-and-spoke" approach. Verdin Marketing Account Manager Natalie Bovee stated billboards are not measurable with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 28, 2022 REGULAR BOARD MEETING AND THE MARCH 28, 2022 SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Action: Board member Yvette Eagles made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2022 Regular Board meeting and the March 28, 2022 Special Board Meeting. Board member Sean Dasmann seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

5. REVIEW AND FILE FINANCIAL STATUS REPORTS JULY 2021 THROUGH MARCH 2022 WITH REVENUE RECEIVED FOR TBID PAYMENTS FROM JULY 2021 THROUGH FEBRUARY 2022

City of Arroyo Grande Director of Administrative Services Nicole Valentine presented the financials. \$136,000 was budgeted for TBID income for fiscal year 2021-2022 and \$183,000 has already been collected.

Action: Board member Yvette Eagles made a motion to approve the financials. Board member Sean Dasmann seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

6. RECEIVE QUARTERLY MARKETING UPDATE FROM VERDIN MARKETING

Verdin Marketing Partner & VP of Client Services Ashlee Akers discussed the 2021-2024 strategic plan and reviewed Destinations Analysts' key findings about travels trends and sentiments. The current travel trend is towards shorter, closer-to-home, carefully planned trips.

March marketing activities were discussed including enewsletter, social media, public relations content submissions, and Visit SLO CAL's "local expert" customer training initiative to keep hotel front desk staff informed. The Visit Arroyo Grande open rate for emails is 38.7% compared to the industry goal of 20%. A new tactic was introduced that tracked 3,624 visitors to our destination from paid media.

There is a 62% increase in TOT in the third quarter as measured year over year. The goal is to hit 2019 numbers in the STAR report. 2019 lodging occupancy numbers have already been surpassed. The STAR report for Arroyo Grande includes nearby regions. Cathy at Visit SLO CAL stated many hotels in Arroyo Grande participate in the STAR report as Arroyo Grande hotels need to pay into it to be included.

Verdin Marketing will present their annual report to City Council on April 26. Verdin Marketing will provide a quarterly marketing report to the TBID Board moving forward since regular Board meetings are six times a year now instead of monthly.

Visit SLO CAL wants a countywide calendar to incorporate into Arroyo Grande destination and feed into the Visit Arroyo Grande website. Ashlee stated all event submissions should go through South County Chambers of Commerce.

7. DISCUSS METRICS TO MEASURE SUCCESS OF VISIT ARROYO GRANDE MARKETING EFFORTS

Verdin Marketing Partner & VP of Client Services Ashlee Akers stated the \$67,500 paid media budget includes programmatic video, Google AdWords, Facebook and Instagram boosted posts, a print ad in the South County Visitor Guide, and a print ad in Sunset Magazine (through Central Coast Tourism Council). Success can be measured through clicks, visits, and conversions. There is \$9,000 left in the marketing fund for May and June.

Board member Yvette Eagles suggested the enewsletter come out quarterly, or every other month instead of monthly. The enewsletter is a \$1,000/month investment. Owned media, such as email marketing, is measured by open rate, clicks, and number of subscribers. The enewsletter pushes people towards the Visit Arroyo Grande website since there is no blog. Social media is measured by engagement. All metrics are vetted by industry representatives.

Ashlee Akers stated the TBID Board should include a website redesign in the fiscal year 2022-2023 budget. Verdin Marketing has refreshed the website, but needs new functionality.

8. REVIEW PROCESS FOR APPROVING NEW APPLICANTS TO THE AGTBID BOARD

The review process is based on the City Council handbook. The Council is ultimately the decision maker. City Manager Whitney McDonald stated nine board members are allowed on the TBID Board, and it is preferred to be lodging property owners and managers. City Manager McDonald stated board applications are not reviewed by the TBID Board. The City Council retains that discretion.

9. DISCUSS PROCESS FOR REVIEW OF PROPOSALS FOR TOURISM MARKETING SERVICES

City Manager Whitney McDonald stated the TBID Board could review the tourism marketing presentations in May and invite City Council to attend.

10. BOARD MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

None.

11. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

None.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 5:17 pm by Board Chair Sean Dasmann.

Approved by Board on _____

**MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (TBID) ADVISORY BOARD
MONDAY, MAY 23, 2022, 3:30 PM
ARROYO GRANDE CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM BOARD ROOM
300 EAST BRANCH STREET, ARROYO GRANDE**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:32 pm by Board Chair Sean Dasmann.

2. ROLL CALL AND FLAG SALUTE

Board members present: Sean Dasmann, Yvette Eagles and April Schirmer.

Board member Myraline Morris Whitaker was absent.

City representatives present: Mayor Caren Ray Russom, City Manager Whitney McDonald, Director of Administrative Services Nicole Valentine, and Deputy City Clerk/Communications Coordinator Sarah Lansburgh.

Chamber representatives present: Interim CEO Nicole Moore and Marketing/Tourism Coordinator Holly Leighton.

Member of the public present: Gaea Powell

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

4. CONSIDERATION OF THE PRELIMINARY Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget for the Arroyo Grande Tourism Business Improvement District

Chamber Interim CEO Nicole Moore presented the preliminary budget. Since TBID assessments have increased, the budget was increased accordingly. The advertising fund increased from \$166,500 to \$225,000.

Action: Board member April Schirmer made a motion to approve the preliminary budget. Board member Yvette Eagles seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

5. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS FOR MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS, WEBSITE MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA SERVICES

An onboarding meeting will be required for the marketing firm chosen to understand the TBID Board's expectations. The Board discussed proposals from the five firms that submitted and suggested Madison Strategies & Kassandra Maher Marketing and Verdin Marketing for the Visit Arroyo Grande tourism marketing contract. The other three firms were considered a "no."

City Manager Whitney McDonald requested a marketing firm recommendation from the TBID Board for the June 14 City Council meeting ideally as the meeting on June 28 may not have a quorum.

Mayor Caren Ray Russom stated the TBID Board could put forth the two marketing firms' names (Madison Strategies & Kassandra Maher Marketing versus Verdin Marketing) and let City Council decide. Both firms would be invited to present at the City Council meeting.

The Board requested to schedule an additional special meeting for May 31, 2022 at 3:30pm for the two firms to present to the TBID Board. Each firm would get 10-15 minutes to present their proposals and answer follow-up questions from the Board.

The City confirmed they could have a staff member present for the additional special meeting.

Action: None

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6. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 5:07 pm by Board Chair Sean Dasmann.

Approved by Board on _____

**MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (TBID) ADVISORY BOARD
TUESDAY, MAY 31, 2022, 3:30 PM
ARROYO GRANDE CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM BOARD ROOM
300 EAST BRANCH STREET, ARROYO GRANDE**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm by Board Chair Sean Dasmann.

2. ROLL CALL AND FLAG SALUTE

Board members present: Sean Dasmann, Yvette Eagles, April Schirmer and Myraline Morris Whitaker

City representatives present: Assistant City Manager/Director of Public Works Bill Robeson

Chamber representatives present: Interim CEO Nicole Moore and Marketing/Tourism Coordinator Holly Leighton

Verdin Marketing staff present (via Zoom): President/Chief Strategy Officer Mary Verdin, Partner & VP of Client Services Ashlee Akers, Account Manager Natalie Bovee, and Creative Director Megan Conduct.

Madison Strategies & Cassandra Maher Marketing staff present (via Zoom): Digital Marketing & Strategy Consultant Corinne Madison and Marketing/Business/Social Media Consultant Cassandra "Kassie" Maher.

Member of the public present: Gaea Powell

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

4. PRESENTATIONS FROM MADISON STRATEGIES & KASSANDRA MAHER MARKETING AND VERDIN MARKETING FOR TOURISM MARKETING SERVICES

Both firms presented to the TBID Board via Zoom and shared slides. Madison Strategies & Cassandra Maher Marketing presented first and then Verdin Marketing presented second. Neither of the opposing firms were present for the other firm's presentation. The TBID Board discussed both firms after their Zoom sessions ended.

Board members April Schirmer and Yvette Eagles were in favor of the presentation by Madison Strategies & Cassandra Maher Marketing due to the eagerness for the account due to its larger size, that they would be able to dedicate their time to the Arroyo Grande TBID account as their premiere client, their new creativity, and their lower per hour consultation fee.

Board members Sean Dasmann and Myraline Morris Whitaker were in favor of the presentation by the Verdin Marketing team due to their continued success with the current account, connections with other local tourism entities in including Visit California and Visit SLOCAL, local office, and years of experience with other destination management organizations.

Action: Board member April Schirmer made a motion to recommend Madison Strategies & Cassandra Maher Marketing as the marketing firm to represent Visit Arroyo Grande for fiscal year 2022-2023. Board member Yvette Eagles seconded the motion.

Board members Myraline Morris Whitaker and Sean Dasmann opposed the motion.

With no majority vote from the Board, there was no recommendation to the City Council. The decision to select a marketing firm will be forwarded to City Council at the regular meeting on June 14, 2022.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 5:24 pm by Board Chair Sean Dasmann.

Approved by Board on _____