

*Draft Until Approved*  
**Avila Beach Tourism Alliance**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, May 8, 2024  
Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort Boardroom

**Board Members Present:**

Dean Hutton, Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort  
Ken Kelly, Coastal Vacation Rentals  
Mindy Hunter, Avila Village Inn  
Christopher Oh, Avila Lighthouse Suites

**Others Present:**

John Sorgenfrei, TJA Advertising  
Claudia Torkelson, TJA Advertising (via Zoom)  
Rick Turton, TJA Advertising  
Katie Sturtevant, Avila Beach Golf Resort  
Christy Kasarjian, Central Coast Aquarium  
Geof Findley, Pale Kai Outrigger Club (via Zoom)  
Stephanie Rowe, ABTA administrator

**Board Members Absent:** None

**CBID:** Cheryl Cuming

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1. **Call to Order:** By board chair Dean Hutton at 10:07 am.
2. **Public Comment:** Christy Kasarjian, Executive Director of the Central Coast Aquarium introduced herself. She noted that she has reached her 1 year anniversary at the aquarium and has built a new energetic team. She looks forward to partnering with the Board.
3. **Consent Items:** A motion was made by Dean Hutton and seconded by Mindy Hunter to approve the April 10, 2024 minutes. With no further discussion, the minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.
4. **CBID Local Fund Area and Financials Update:** Cheryl gave an update for the past month.
  - a. Web traffic is going really well with users +38%/136K Y/Y and sessions +44%/158K Y/Y.
  - b. Email subscribers over 125,000 with open rate of 38% and Facebook fans over 114,000. Email database grew by 1,000 due to users downloading map. Survey indicated that 92% of people who downloaded map made the decision to make a road trip to Highway 1.
  - c. TOT/Assessment collections indicated that softness is decreasing. Avila Beach: Jan/Feb/March 2024 total collections of \$358,635 vs Jan/Feb/March 2023 total collections of \$334,764.
  - d. The 2024-2025 CBID budget is projected flat.
  - e. The CBID Year End Report will be presented to the Board of Supervisors on May 14. A copy is available on the Member site after May 14.
  - f. March STR Report: Countywide, March 2024 vs 2023 – Occupancy was at 63%, up 6.8%; ADR of \$165.48, up 1.5.
  - g. PR team hosted journalist whose article on Highway 1 was syndicated to 136 outlets with combined unique monthly visitors of 7.5M.
  - h. Avila Beach’s assessment collections were 19.10% of overall total contributions for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.
5. **Budget Update:** Stephanie reported that assessment collections in March totaled \$14,550. Available funds (including the carry-forward) total \$349,698. Funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed total \$231,225.

## 6. Committee Reports:

### a. **TJA Activity Report/Website Analytics Update – John Sorgenfrei, Claudia Torkelson, Rick Turton:**

John noted at the next meeting he will present an updated marketing/media plan for FY 2024-2025. The Board gave an update on their wine tasting pass promotion. Mindy noted that her property had used all 10 passes. Dean noted that they had used 2. The Board discussed overall alcohol consumption being down so that may be why the wine tasting passes are not as popular as first thought.

Claudia reported on social media activity in the last month. Total Facebook fans +1%/+162 fans to 81,542. Total Impressions -32%/-173,302 to 360,541 and engagements +6%/+979 to 17,300. Videos watched decreased -11%/-10,217 to 79,631 because the ad was not a video. She noted the top posts. Instagram gained +3%/+1,363 new followers for a total of 46,344, with impressions +154%/+369,927 for total 609,100 and engagements +151%/+8,887 for total 14,737. She noted the top Instagram posts, specifically a top performing reel for farmers' market that had 525k plays as of that morning and 7.4k likes. She also reported on the social ad spend which was a general Avila Beach reel with link to lodging specials: Reach 152,794; website visits 5,620; reel interactions 2,600 and the cost per website visit \$0.37. Chris asked if Claudia could report the monthly ad spend amount going forward. YouTube increased to 465,866 lifetime video views from 465,388; down to 481 from 569 monthly video views and up to 4.8 from 4.6 average monthly hours watched. She listed the top videos. The monthly blog was about Avila Farmers' Market season starting back on May 3 which was very popular. We are hosting an influencer @suzionthefirst from May 9-11. Suzi is bringing her dog and staying at Avila La Fonda. She has over 200k followers mainly from California with a high engagement rate.

Rick reported on the website activity for the month. The total visitor sessions were 31,447 for a 22% increase year-over-year. The Avila Farmers' Market had over 2,200 page views. There were 78% visitors on mobile devices. There were 3 referrals from Cycle Central Coast, 16 from SLO CAL, 90 from Visit CA, and 1,268 from SLO Coast Wine tasting pass.

## 7. Action/Discussion Items

- ### a. **2024 Pale Kai Outrigger Event Funding Application – Geof Findley, Pale Kaie sponsorship coordinator,**
- thanked the Board for the opportunity to present the funding application. Pale Kai Outrigger celebrates the end of racing season with an annual race/fun paddle event. It is an opportunity for Pale Kai and guest clubs up and down the California Coast and their families to join for a 5M fun paddle or 12M race, raffle, silent auction, and luau in Avila Beach. Funds raised from the event go towards promoting outrigger, new boats and maintaining existing boats, trailers, etc. The date of the event is September 21, 2024. Last year the Board funded the event for \$4,500, this year they are requesting \$5,500. The increase will fund more swag to promote the sponsors and to fund the Hawaiian entertainment. Last year, there were a total of 140 attendees, a 40% increase from the prior year, with 40 from out of town, a 30% increase from the prior year. They are hoping for a 30-40% increase in attendees. The event takes place on Saturday, but crews and boats need to arrive early that morning or the prior day ready to enter the water by 9am. Most teams from SoCal and NorCal will arrive the day before to set up. The day of the race is long, so teams usually stay the day of the race and return home on Sunday or even Monday. The breakdown of funds requested-\$5,500: \$300 for NorCal event flyers + \$400 for SoCal flyers + \$300 for Newtimes ads in Santa Barbara and Fresno + \$1,500 for Hawaiian entertainment + \$1,000 for Avila lodging credits to be used as part of event raffle + \$2,000 for event t-shirts promoting event/sponsors. Pale Kai will promote the event and sponsors on their website, Facebook pages, Instagram and newsletter to participants. John noted that TJA will promote the event to the public and is hoping to grow the event for more attendees.

**A motion was made by Chris Oh, and seconded by Dean Hutton, to approve \$5,500 to sponsor the Pale Kai Pecho Rock Outrigger Paddle to be held at Avila Beach on September 21, 2024. With no further discussion, the sponsorship was approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.**

- b. **2024 10C SLO Down Truck Show Marketing/Collateral & Swag Direction** – Dean gave an overview of the event the Board sponsored last month. The truck show will be held at the Avila Golf Resort on July 26-27, 2024. As part of the sponsorship benefits, a premium booth space is provided, and the Board is invited to include collateral and swag in a commemorative goodie box given to all participants. The Board agreed that since the organizer’s email database would be provided as part of the sponsorship benefits, manning a booth wasn’t necessary. Cheryl suggested offering the booth to either lodging partners or SLO Coast Wine Collective. Stephanie will check with SLO Coast Wine. The Board discussed what items to put in the goodie box. John asked if the Board wanted to include an Avila rack card, but Dean noted that people preferred digital information. Ken asked about the wine openers with our URL that we’ve passed out at Harvest on the Coast. Stephanie confirmed that she will work on ordering wine openers for the goodie boxes.

**A motion was made by Dean Hutton, and seconded by Chris Oh, to approve a maximum amount of \$2,000 for 1,000 wine openers to be included in the C10 SLO Down Truck Show goodie boxes to be held at the Avila Beach Golf Resort. With no further discussion, the sponsorship was accepted by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.**

- a. **Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget** – Stephanie reviewed the current 2023-2024 budget, projected carry forward and proposed 2024-2025 budget and allocations. She suggested the same allocations as last year for Events and Marketing and decreasing Administration and increasing Contingency as follows: Administration - 10% from 15%; Events - 15% (no change); Contingency - 25% from 20%; and Marketing - 50% (no change); Cheryl suggested creating a capital fund where each year a certain percentage of money is set aside for large projects. The Board agreed with the suggested budget allocations as proposed.

**A motion was made by Dean Hutton, and seconded by Chris Oh, to adopt the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 projected budget and allocations as proposed. With no further discussion, the budget was approved by a unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.**

- c. **Administrative Services Contract Renewal for Stephanie Rowe** – Stephanie reviewed her proposed 2-year Statement of Work and noted that there is no change to any of the compensation. Dean suggested a rate increase from the current \$32/hr. The Board discussed the increase and whether to wait for the second year. The Board decided to start the increase in the first year. Stephanie thanked the Board for their support.

**A motion was made by Dean Hutton, and seconded by Ken Kelly, to approve the administrative services contract renewal for Stephanie Rowe at the rate of \$33.50 per hour for a maximum of 60 hours per month for an annual amount of \$24,120 and total 2-year amount of \$48,240 effective July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026. With no further discussion, the renewal was approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.**

## **8. Future Agenda Items/New Business**

- a. Stewardship Travel for Good Update, Katie Sturtevant (June)
- b. Open Studio Art Tour, Jordan Chesnut and Summer Trushke (June)
- c. 2024-2025 LFA Imperative Proposal, Cheryl Cuming/TJA (June)
- d. Updated 2024-2025 TJA Marketing /Media Plan, John Sorgenfrei (June)
- e. Discuss whether to meet in July (June)
- f. C10 SLO Down Truck Show Follow-up Report (by September)
- g. Pale Kai Outrigger Event Follow-up Report (by November)

## **9. Closing Comments:**

- a. Chris noted that he would invite a representative from the Friends of Avila Pier to discuss their current fundraising campaign.

b. Dean noted that he would be on vacation for the June meeting, so Ken agreed to lead the meeting.

**10. Next ABTA Local Fund Area Board Meeting:**

Dates: **June 12, 2024**

Time: **10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

Location: **Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort - Boardroom**

**11. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am.