

Highway 1 Tourism Alliance Board of Directors Meeting Minutes | April 22, 2026 | Cambria Pines Lodge

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Aaron Graves at 2:19 PM.

Roll Call

Members Present: Aaron Graves, Gary Setting, Mike Hanchett, Melissa Kurry, Bram Winter

Members Absent: Laila Kollmann

Staff Present: Cheryl Cuming, CAO; Tessa Cornejo, County Liaison

Guests: Emily Brown (Civitas, via Zoom); Lori Keller (Momentum Strategies); Molly Cano (SLO CAL)

Quorum

A quorum was established with five members present.

Public Comment

CAO Cuming spoke briefly about State Senate Bill 1318. The bill would remove the ability of the Coastal Commission to intervene when local governments attempt to ban or restrict short-term rentals.

Gary Setting shared that his wife had never been up the coastal Highway 1 route so they went and she loved it.

Information Items

- Upcoming Events: Members were reminded of the next meetings scheduled for May 27 and June 24.
- Marketing: The March roll-up report was shared, along with details of the Time Magazine article marketing uses throughout 2026 for no additional budget which includes a blog with Google landing page, Meta and display ads, plus video overlays. The paid media stats included low CPE on video, efficient Meta conversions, and more qualified traffic.
- Financials: The March financials were reviewed. Of note was the revenue is \$20,056 under budget and expenses paid are \$52,848 under budget. Total available funds are \$428,791. Noted was a 7.32% increase in collections over the prior year for January - March, attributed to the highway reopening. In January, San Simeon was up 37.88%.
- Partner Updates: Molly Cano shared highlights of Visit SLO CAL's business development and marketing plans for the upcoming fiscal year. The Highway 1 reopening efforts were coordinated with See Monterey, and Visit California who also has a H1 film in the works.

Presentations

Lori Keller presented the marketing initiative for the 2026-2027 year. Included were the partnership with Visit SLO CAL, which combines their macro demand efforts with H1TA's precision intent for strategic alignment. Of note was the Video-First Strategy, which has a higher initial cost, but in testing demonstrated an estimated 90% lower CPE and 25% increase in overall conversions. It is the most efficient for engagement and has boosted performance across the funnel. Other noted metrics were the email database over 149k, which is the highest in the county; 15.9M Google impressions coming from one of the most content-rich websites in the region; and social engagements of 147K, which was up 49%. Results have demonstrated the value of a sustained, strategic marketing investment.

Consent Items

- Approval of March Board Minutes, Financials. Motion: To approve the minutes of the prior meeting and financials. Moved by: Gary Setting; Seconded by: Melissa Kurry; Bram Winter abstained. Motion carries.

Action Items (each topic will allow for Board Discussion, followed by Public Comment)

- Annual Meeting: Motion to: Confirm Brown Act compliance and board officers for the 2026 year as Chair Aaron Graves, Vice Chair Melissa Kurry, and Secretary/Treasurer as Mikel Hanchett; one board seat is open. Moved by: Bram Winter; Seconded by: Melissa Kurry. Motion carries.
- FY 26 27 County Contract Renewal: Motion to accept the contract renewal with same terms as last year between County of San Luis Obispo and Highway 1 Tourism Alliance. Moved by: Mike Hanchett; Seconded by: Bram Winter. Motion carries. Aaron signed the contract and it was given to Tessa Cornejo.
- 1989 Renewal & 1994 Formation: The Resolution of Intention received Board of Supervisors approval at their April 7 meeting.

Furthermore, Emily Brown reviewed the Management District Plan updates requested by County staff, and the H1TA board agreed to retain the district name as suggested by the Steering Committee, Highway 1 Tourism Marketing District.

Motion to: Accept edits to the Management District Plan as presented. Moved by: Mike Hanchett; Seconded by: Melissa Kurry. Motion carries.

Lastly, Emily reviewed the petition drive strategy and confirmed that we are awaiting confirmation from the County on accepting digital signatures, as well as the providing the weighted percentage which would be share only with Civitas under a Nondisclosure Agreement.

- FY 26 27 Contract Renewals: Motion to renew the “BID Bunch” contracts for FY 2026 2027 for Vingage Consulting, Cheryl Rowe, TJA Advertising, Connect Accounting, CrowdRiff, Beacon Solutions, Jaime Lewis, Vinvibe, Katie Sturtevant, Kempler Consulting, K2 Public Relations, Momentum Strategies Group, Lori Ritchey LLC, Orange22, and Sunshine & Bourbon as presented. Moved by: Bram Winter; Seconded by: Gary Setting. Motion carries.

Motion to renew the Cambria Tourism Board administrative contract for FY 2026 2027 as presented for Jill Jackson. Moved by: Bram Winter; Seconded by: Mike Hanchett. Motion carries.

Motion to renew the Avila Beach Tourism Alliance administrative contract for FY 2026 2027 as presented for Stephanie Rowe. Moved by: Melissa Kurry; Seconded by: Mike Hanchett. Motion carries.

Motion to renew the for FY 2026 2027 professional services contracts as presented for Civitas Advisors, Glenn Burdette, HUB International Insurance and Visit SLO CAL (office space). Moved by: Bram Winter; Seconded by: Gary Setting. Motion carries.

- FY 26 27 Budget: The budget with projected expenses at \$1.472M was presented with no year-over-year change to the projected assessment, and an investment of 2.28% of the carryforward to meet expenses. Motion to approve the budget as presented. Moved by: Mike Hanchett; Seconded by: Bram Winter. Motion carries.

- Code of Civility: The current code used by San Luis Obispo County was shared. Mike suggested reviewing at the beginning of each meeting based on the topics to be discussed. Molly Cano also shared her experience as she was employed at the City when the code was adopted. It was suggested that a recess should be taken if any of our local fund area meeting's public comments are out of order. Motion to: Adopt the current San Luis Obispo County Code of Civility. Moved by: Bram Winter; Seconded by: Gary Setting. Motion carries.

- Local Fund Area Applications
 - None

Future Agenda Items

- SEO and AI (May)
- Investment policy

Closing Comments

None

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, motion to adjourn moved by: Gary Setting; Seconded by: Mike Hanchett. Motion carries. Chair Graves adjourned the meeting at 4:11 PM.