



Santa Barbara Vintners Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, February 24, 2026 | 10am – 12pm

Roblar Winery & Vineyards

MEETING NOTES

IN ATTENDANCE: Pierre LaBarge, Steven Gerbac, Dan Glaeser (remote), Jason Djang, John H. Haan, Jr. (remote), Keith Saarloos, Kristina Caruso, Andrew Murray, Chase Carhartt, Brooke Christian, AJ Fairbanks, Denise Shurtleff, Kevin Gleason, Mike Testa, Karen Steinwachs

Call to Order

- Meeting called to order (10:03am)

Item 1: Approve Minutes

- Approve January 2026 Meeting Minutes
 - Motion: Kevin Gleason
 - Second: Keith Saarloos
 - Unanimous approval

Item 2: Public Comment

- David DeLaski from Solminer (public comment)

Item 3: Finances (Alison Laslett/Dan Glaeser)

- Standard financial reports – Balance Sheet, Statement of Activity
 - Revised budget for 2025-2026 based on reduced Wine BID income and FY shift to April 1 – March 31
 - Revised figures based on actual revenue collected from the BID
 - Budget has been reviewed by Finance Committee and reflects 10 months of actuals and 2 months of projections; revised budget will be presented to the County
 - Roughly \$1 million/year to use for marketing & PR
 - Alison will work with Marketing Committee on how to proceed with campaigns
- Chart of Accounts is being revised. Will be reflected on upcoming year's budget
 - Board asks how many wineries have not paid into the BID
 - 45-50 wineries unpaid according to staff

- HdL handles collections for a 40% fee, which is why they delayed two payment cycles before collecting
- Board asks if SBV staff can contact unpaid wineries
 - a. Staff reminds Board that the County of Santa Barbara holds the contract with HdL and SBV is not in a position to engage in any collections or payment process
 - b. County is working with HdL to get wineries to pay into the BID
 - c. HdL is contacting wineries about their payments, or lack thereof
 - d. Staff will discuss again with the County possible consequences of non-payment:
 - i. Typically, non-payers are taken to court and forced to pay
- SBV can also use another firm, i.e. private bookkeeping firm to execute BID & collect if HdL continues to underperform;
 - a. Staff can discuss a new collections company with the County in the upcoming year
- Brooke & Kevin are interested in contacting unpaid wineries to encourage participation in the BID via payments
 - a. Will coordinate with SBV staff
 - b. Are reminded again this cannot be any form of collections, but is instead a call from a peer to encourage participation in the District
- Highest percentage of money in budget is for marketing
 - a. Wineries are aware of this from Management District Plan
 - b. Any additional collections will go directly to marketing

ACTION: Pierre makes a motion to approve the revised budget

- Second: Kristina
- Unanimous approval

Item 4: CEO Update (Alison Laslett)

1. Brown Act
 - a. Board members to sign that they have reviewed and received the Brown Act policy
2. Board By Laws – updated copy for review
 - We are still learning our new structure and proceeding in good faith to prevent as many hiccups as possible
2. Japan 2026
 - a. Helping County with gifts since they do not have a budget for this and it is culturally important to the Japanese
 - Will involve our PR firm, as well as California Wine Institute’s PR Program
 - Reminder: Trip is paid from reserves
3. Annual Meeting Scheduling

- Since the new Wine Preserve year runs April 1 – March 31, aim for Annual Meeting in mid-May

Item 5: Progress Reports

i. Board – Steve Gerbac

- Upcoming open Board seats planning and discussion
- Five positions are terming off
- Will need to work on transition & onboarding
- Help with interviewing possible candidates

ii. Marketing – Kristina Caruso

1. Vintners Connect launch

- A good resource for district wineries, plus grower & business members
- Our goal is to route users there to see updated information
- Working on learning sessions for district wineries

2. Marketing strategy for FYI 26–27

- Will be determined based on budget
 - Want to make sure dollars are maximized
 - Always seeking more involvement from district wineries
 - Of course, will strive to maximize dollars
- Reminds board that PR is also part of Marketing
- Working on assets for marketing
 - Will consider multi-facing avenues such as airport advertising, hardcopy collateral, etc.

iii. Membership

1. Seminars

- b. Currently have seminars scheduled for February & May
- c. Two more seminars pending

2. Event Selection Policy

- d. Document approved by committee to ensure fairness in venue selections for events;

3. Trade/Wholesale Survey Results

- e. Conducted survey on the relationship of wholesale to DTC success:
 - i. Received 40 responses to survey
 - ii. Results show that wholesale benefits DTC sales
 - iii. Confirmed that all efforts must be made to increase DTC sales, which includes supporting some wholesale that has a direct benefit to DTC

iv. Events – Emily Byram

1. Mission Santa Barbara

- b. May 3-6, 2026
- c. 30 wineries participating

- d. 30 wine buyers attending is the goal amount
 - e. Mapping out locations & panels
 - f. Securing hotels
 - g. Will have a mix of CA and out of state buyers
 - h. Paid from SBV reserve funds, and supported by staff
- b. Foundation President Updates:
- i. Sponsorship opportunities and tickets for Golf Tournament
 - 5th year of the event
 - Hat sponsorship available
 - Rio Vista Chevrolet is sponsoring hole-in-one
 - Mechanics Bank sponsoring putting contest
 - Still have some wine sponsorships available
 - ii. Summer Soiree update
 - New event for Foundation this year
 - Alternative to the Wine Auction
 - More accessible, less formal
 - Bringing the event to the valley: Mattei's Tavern
 - Elevated walk-around tasting
 - Various sponsorships available (corporate, winery, etc.)
 - Hope to curate more small-events throughout the year to receive more regular donations
 - iii. Emily Byram – Wind Beneath Our Wings winner
 - Emily was nominated by members and won the award
 - She will be featured in a movie during the event

Item 6: Meeting Adjourned (Pierre LaBarge)

- i. 11:57am