

VISIT COLORADO SPRINGS (VCOS)  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Tuesday, January 20, 2026

Minutes

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Michelle Talarico, Chair  
Megan Leatham, Vice-Chair  
Marisa Wigglesworth, Treasurer  
Ed Okvath, Secretary  
Dani Bolling  
Curtis Bova  
Scott Flexman  
Torie Giffin  
Christina Haywood  
Alex Kovaks  
Dan Leclerc  
David Leinweber  
Dave Namesnik  
Lisa Neener  
Dr. Cary Snow  
Samantha Wood

**Board Members Absent:**

Jen Furda  
Crystal LaTier  
Wendy McHenry

**VCOS Staff:**

Doug Price  
Amy Long  
Peggy Manter  
April Perez  
Alexea Veneracion  
Melissa Williams  
Dina Worthen  
Kim Griffis  
Nate Morrill

**Chair - Michelle Talarico**

- The meeting was called to order at 8:03am. Michelle welcomed all to a new and exciting year.
- Michelle then asked the board for a motion to approve the minutes from the December meeting. The motion was made by Marisa Wigglesworth and seconded by Scott Flexman to accept the minutes as presented (with one update on spelling), and the motion passed unanimously. Michelle then welcomed Samantha and Dave to their first official board meeting.
- She did not have any update on SearchWide Global but would have one in February as she is reaching out to Mike Gamble soon.
- She recommends that we add executive sessions quarterly and include the CEO search among the topics. She asked the board to send her any ideas they have for additional sessions.
- All members to complete and sign the conflict-of-interest form.

**Special Guest – Margaret Dolan, CEO PP Community Foundation - Report on Our Spacious Skies project**

- The Spacious Skies project has completed Phase 1 with the goal of uncovering the values and priorities of our residents as they work to shape the regional strategies for El Paso and Teller Counties. Margaret updated the board on the results of the survey in detail using a presentation that will be shared with the board. The next step is Phase 2, working together to generate ideas, solutions and actions that will advance our shared values and priorities.

**President/CEO – Doug Price**

- Doug shared the results of our annual employee engagement survey. He focused on the 3-year trends since SavvionHQ (formerly HR Branches) began to do the survey. As in years past, our results indicate an overall happy staff with a good balance in tenure and strong trust in leadership. The new CEO will benefit from a satisfied

workforce. He shared that Visit COS won 4<sup>th</sup> place in the small business category in the Gazette's Best Workplace competition.

- Destination Master Plan update: Doug said the shared spreadsheet tracks all imperatives, tasks and group and the working group met on January 13.
- #1 Imperative is securing additional funding (increase LART) but the current mood is tepid on getting the measure on the ballot. Doug thinks the spring of 2027 is the soonest we could see that happen. Doug is back on the LART committee as Cheryl termed out. Jamie Fabos has resigned so there is a lot in flux with LART leadership for the City.
- #2 Imperative is increasing overnight visitation, and we shifted advertising dollars to a winter campaign, and we will be able to see results in March.
- #3 Imperative is increasing length of stay and in response we are creating itineraries (that will eventually be turned into packages), deals that encourage conferences and promotion. May 15 is the planned opening of the USAFA Visitor Center.
- Nate Morrill, our Account Clerk, is leaving us in March to move to Chicago. He will be missed.
- Melissa provided an update on the mural. The plaque honoring Dr. Hamilton will be put up soon and we are planning a media event for the unveiling soon. April discussed the office reconfiguration. We are converting the copy room into a shared office space (Melissa and Alexea) and using a portion of our kitchen to house the multifunction copiers, postage machine and other tools. The job is nearly done, and it looks great. This will provide good working space for the marketing and comms department.
- Doug provided an update on our former tenant, Desert Harvest, which vacated the space in November, leaving after year 1 of a 7-year lease. We have hired the law firm Sparks-Wilson to represent us and will work to come to a settlement. The space is clean and ready to rent.

#### Financial Update – Marisa Wigglesworth and April Perez

- Marisa updated the group on the most recent FinComm meeting. The committee is delineating a policy on the use of the opportunity fund. For 2026, 18% of the opportunity fund is being allocated to the budget and this is too high a percentage to maintain long-term. She said they will present a policy by the end of Q1.
- April went through the financials and stated that everything is tracking as expected. She reported the board voted to approve a donation of \$110K to the PPORA Peak Exceptionalism Project (the Sports Corp, Chamber and El Pomar also donated). Doug reported that PPORA was granted \$2.5M by the state and that Becky Leinweber will present at the February board meeting.
- April corrected the date the 2026 audit, which will start March 16, not February 24.

#### Wrap-up – Michelle Talarico

- Michele went around the room to get board member updates and thanked all who attended the joint Board/Staff Happy Hour at The Brit Pub with the Sports Corp. Doug thinks it should be a yearly event. Doug pointed out the Annual Business meeting is scheduled for March 5 at Cheyenne Mountain Resort.
- Michelle adjourned the meeting at 9:39 am.

Submitted:



Peggy Manter

Executive Assistant

2/23/2026

Verified:



Ed Okvath

Board Secretary

2/23/2026