

**VISIT COLORADO SPRINGS (VCOS)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Tuesday, June 17, 2025**

Minutes

Board Members in Attendance:

Michell Talarico, Chair
Megan Leatham, Vice-Chair
Marisa Wigglesworth, Treasurer
Ed Okvath, Secretary
Dani Bolling
Curtis Bova
Scott Flexman
Jen Furda
Christina Haywood
Rob Henderson
Crystal LaTier
Wendy McHenry
Lisa Neener
Jenny Sherman
Torie Giffin
Dave Leinweber
Alex Kovaks
Dan LeClerc

Board Members Absent:

Dr. Cary Snow

VCOS Staff:

Doug Price
April Perez
Peggy Manter
Melissa Williams
Alexea Veneracion
Gabby Moore

Special Guests:

Carly Vaughn, Orange 142
Brenton Maddox, Orange 142

Chair Welcome & Update – Michelle Talarico

- Meeting is called to order at 7:58am. Michelle wished Doug a happy belated birthday. Michelle asked for a motion of acceptance of the board minutes from May. The motion was made by Marisa Wigglesworth and seconded by Scott Flexman to accept the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Orange 142 Presentation – Brenton Maddox and Carly Vaughn

- Brenton gave an overview of Orange 142 and their background and current role with Visit Colorado Springs and other regional partners. Carly discussed message alignment and process optimizations across destination clients. Brenton presented on optimized management fees, including cutting management fees in half, down to 7.5%, for 2025. Carly reviewed targeting strategies, such as leveraging data from Visit Colorado Springs, Google Analytics and regional travel trends. Some recent new targeting opportunities include increasing focus on Arizona and Illinois markets and new inbound flight destinations in 2025.
- Dani Bolling asked if the list of states was the people visiting Colorado Springs the most – Carly responded that the list was from 2024 and used credit card data from Rove Marketing to show which states have the most visitors to Colorado Springs.
- Michelle Talarico asked how often data is looked at – Brenton responded that for every campaign, data is evaluated.
- Carly showed 2025 year-to-date performance with impressions, clicks and average click through rate. Brenton discussed the collaboration with Tempest to ensure improvement in paid search web traffic (increased by 42%). Carly reviewed what's changing in 2025, primarily how AI is causing changes and creating new opportunities for growth. Brenton explained Generative Engine Optimization, which ranks things differently than traditional

Search Engine Optimization. It's changing the way people find and interact with information on your website – causing things like no-click searches. Adjusting KPIs over the next few years will be important.

President/CEO Update – Doug Price

- Doug introduced the Destination Master Plan Strategic Road Map and played the overview video. The printed strategic road map documents were handed out.
- Doug discussed the Commitment to Building a Welcoming Destination and the 10 responses that were received – 8 very positive and supportive and 2 questioning ones. Alexea discussed the changes on VisitCOS.com for destination inclusion and the commitment to building a welcoming destination.
- Doug deferred to Dave Leinweber to discuss City Council's stance. Dave discussed City Council's perspective on welcoming everyone.
- Doug told the board about Dina's return to Colorado Springs and her rehiring. She now has a new role as Director of Sales. He also introduced Gabby Moore as Visit Colorado Springs' summer intern.
- Doug informed the group on hosting a Jack & Jill Foundation family this week, a partnership the organization expresses great excitement about.

Financial Update – April Perez, Director of Finance and Marisa Wigglesworth, Treasurer

- Marisa brought up the 990 tax form and the process behind it. She discussed how our tax form accomplishes the things a board should look for; however, there is one best practice we don't have in place: a gift policy. Doug has sought out a template for this and will work on getting it added to the employee manual. Michelle called for a motion to approve the form. The motion was made by Dan LeClerc and seconded by Jenny Sherman to approve the 990. The motion passed unanimously.
- April reviewed the month of April financials with the group. The general ledger amount now matches the bank reconciliation. She states financials are progressing great against what we budgeted for this year.
- Doug discussed the Clean & Safe program and our investment commitment to it. Christy Long and her team will be training program ambassadors are informed about the area and learn how to best communicate with visitors. Pat Rigdon, the program lead, would like to have more ambassadors on board in the coming months. Jen Furda discussed the importance of having a Clean & Safe downtown, and how there is enough funding to get started July 1. There is confidence it will be an effective, important program.


Wrap-Up – Doug Price and Michelle Talarico

- Michelle reminded everyone that the Colorado Springs Western Street Breakfast is coming up tomorrow morning. She noted her observation that downtown seems busier than normal. Jenny said June so far is on par with a typical year, being slightly down in traffic rather than up. The group noted that the Tejon Street construction is impacting various festivals and parade routes.
- **Roundtable**
 - Dan LeClerc – Ent has a big merger coming up with Wings Credit Union. It will be undergoing a name change this year.
 - Crystal LaTier – Commissioner Cami Brenner officially resigned on June 10 and remains the CEO of Pikes Peak United Way. Her County Commissioner seat is open – there will be an election in November to fill the seat.
 - Ed Okvath – SpringHill Suites is having a good year. They are excited about the Clean & Safe program, as safety is a complaint they get the most.
 - Christina Haywood – Busy season is here. The Foundation and Visitor Center are celebrating their 30-year anniversary. Many programs and events are happening every day.
 - Torie Giffin – Today is Torie's 9-year anniversary in business. She expresses pride in the team and the success of the lodge. She shares personal news of her son's illness. She is planning his celebration of life at Weidner Field and welcomes everyone to stay on the lookout for that information.
 - Scott Flexman – U.S. Senior Open starts in a few days. There is a plan in place for getting people in and out. Penrose Room has its soft opening on July 15. On July 27, it will open up for

individual guests, but it will be a slow roll out. Waiting on final approval from City on Par 3 golf course – it will likely open later in 2026. In negotiations with U.S. Senior Open to host the event again in 2031.

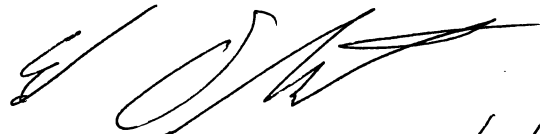
- Rob Henderson – May 2, 2026 is the next National Space Day. 2026 Space Symposium coming next April.
 - Megan Leatham – Sports Corp events are going well. There is a partnership with the Colorado Springs Philharmonic for the 4th of July celebration. Pikes Peak Center celebration is moving to Ford Amphitheater this year. Pikes Peak International Hill Climb is this week. Fan Fest has shifted one block south downtown. Warrior Games is coming up over 14 days in July. Rocky Mountain State Games, Cycle to the Summit, Labor Day Lift Off all coming soon.
 - Dave Leinweber – Angler's Covey had explosive growth in 2024, sales are down in 2025 from that year. Pikes Peak Outdoor Recreation Alliance has a region-wide plan (OPPI) with the Governor's buy in. The five land managers of Pikes Peak have agreed on the solutions, looking at Colorado Parks and Wildlife to take over in the future. The new City Council is going well.
 - Jen Furda – Fall enrollment might be up 1%, which is good in the scheme of higher education. UCCS is dipping its toe in the water of building an on-campus hotel and conference space. Western Street Breakfast is happening in the same spot as usual. 150/250 – Beards Bonnets and Brews part two coming to Rock Ledge Ranch on August 1, 2026.
 - Alex Kovacs – First international flight to Cancun took off on June 7. Need help making the route a success. Executive agreement with CSU to build a sub-station at the business park.
 - Jenny Sherman – Pikes Peak Restaurant Association has Taste of Pikes Peak coming July 17 – this year there will be options for VIPs.
 - Wendy McHenry – Having a weird year. Group business is good, leisure side has been tricky.
 - Lisa Neener – USAFA graduation was freezing but went well overall. Welcoming the class of 2029 in June. Hosmer Visitor Center is coming along. Closed still to the general public – need DoD card.
 - Dani Bolling – Launched Source Colorado Springs last month. Goal is to raise national profile through earned media.
 - Curtis Bova – Hotel was booked and busy for USAFA graduation and other upcoming events. Market is being influenced by the cuts in government travel. Working on a feature about opening the hotel and the impact on the destination.
 - Marisa Wigglesworth – Huge U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Museum Festival coming up in July to align with the Hall of Fame induction.
- Michelle thanked everyone for all of their hard work and time. The meeting adjourned at 9:33am. The next meeting is September 9.

Submitted:



Peggy Menter
Executive Assistant

Verified:



Ed Okvath
Board Secretary

9/9/25

