

**LWBID / LODI WINERY ALLIANCE MEETING MINUTES**  
**February 18, 2026**

The Lodi Winery Alliance met at 10:00 am on Wednesday, February 18, at the Lodi Winegrape Commission office, 2545 W. Turner Rd., Lodi, CA.

**1. Call to Order & Roll Call**

Meeting called to order at 10:04 pm.

**Board Members Present:** Steve Carson, Tom Hoffman, Kyle Lerner, Faryn Schatz, Natalie Scotto, Sarah Spenker, Jeremy Trettevik, Jacob Woodworth, Wes Rhea

**Public present:** Nick Kerns, Calivines, Liz Bokisch, Bokisch Vineyards

**Staff Present:** Stuart Spencer, Jenny Heitman, Allison Champion

A Quorum was established.

**2. Approval of January February 3, 2026 Minutes**

Motion: Approve minutes as presented

Motion by: Hoffman/Woodworth

Result: Motion carried

**3. Public Comment on Items Appearing on Agenda**

No public comment.

**4. Organizational Setup**

**Bylaws & Nonprofit Status**

Bylaws have been adopted and submitted. The organization is awaiting confirmation of nonprofit status from the state.

**Bank Accounts**

Stuart Spencer has been in contact with F&M Bank to establish a bank account. Setup is pending finalization of state documents and nonprofit status confirmation.

**Insurance**

Spencer has reached out to a broker with extensive winery association insurance experience to begin the process of obtaining coverage. No update expected until further along in formation.

## **Policy Working Group**

The board discussed the need to establish key foundational policies. Stuart Spencer proposed forming a small, unofficial working group — not a formal committee — to work through the following:

- Policies for elections
- Financial controls (two-signature requirement on checks over \$500)
- Record keeping and public transparency
- Commission-to-BID contract and service agreement

Proposed working group members: Stuart Spencer, Bob Colarossi, Kyle Lerner. Working groups are unofficial, carry no decision-making authority, and serve to advance discussion at a smaller group level. All decisions will be brought back to the full board for review and approval.

## **5. Assessment Collections**

### **HdL Onboarding**

A JotForm was distributed to wineries approximately one week prior to collect business information required by HdL to set up the online payment portal. As of the meeting date, a number of wineries had not yet submitted their information. Until this information is returned to HdL, those wineries cannot be set up in the portal.

- Staff will send a follow-up email directly to outstanding wineries
- Target: submit completed spreadsheet to HdL by end of the following week
- Some inactive or inactive-apparent wineries on the list will be noted accordingly

Once HdL receives the spreadsheet, they will set up the portal and reach out to individual wineries to complete onboarding. The county contract structure requires that HdL contract with the county, and the county contract with the LWBID — HdL cannot contract directly with a private entity.

## **6. Strategic Direction / Planning**

Stuart Spencer distributed the strategic planning document developed by the winery community in 2021/22, facilitated by consultant Stacey Jacobs of Terra Strategies (Paso Robles). The document reflects community-wide input, winery owner interviews, and a survey process, and resulted in four strategic priorities — including the creation of a sustainable funding model, which led directly to the formation of the BID.

The board discussed the document as a foundational reference, noting that the strategic pillars identified through that process — Visibility & Outreach, Events, and Education — remain relevant today.

**Strategic Planning Process** The board discussed whether to engage a consultant to facilitate a formal strategic planning process or proceed with existing documentation and internal discussion. Considerations included:

- The volume of existing strategic documentation across multiple plans
- The need to align the full board around clear objectives before launching committees
- The risk of a volunteer-driven organization getting pulled in too many directions simultaneously
- Concerns about optics of spending assessment dollars on a consultant before delivering visible member outcomes

The group agreed that a formal strategic planning engagement is worth exploring in the next 6-12 months, once the organizational foundation is in place. In the near term, the board agreed to form small, informal working groups to advance both administrative and marketing-related work in parallel.

**No Reservations Campaign** Stuart Spencer raised the No Reservations campaign as a potential near-term focus area once assessment funds begin flowing. Spencer suggested forming a small, unofficial working group of three to four board members to review existing campaign materials, identify short-term action items, and begin thinking toward a longer-term marketing strategy — without formal committee status or spending authority at this stage.

**Communication with Membership** The board discussed the importance of regular, transparent communication with assessed wineries. Spencer recommended a minimum of monthly updates from the board to the membership. Multiple board members noted that member wineries had expressed concern during BID formation about assessment funds being absorbed into Commission operations without visible, separate benefit. Clear, consistent communication is essential to building trust.

**Organizational Priorities vs. Marketing Activity** Several board members raised the tension between the urgency to show member wineries tangible action and the reality that the organization still lacks basic infrastructure — including a bank account, chart of accounts, insurance, budget, and contracted accounting services. Spencer emphasized that the organization must first establish these building blocks before committing to marketing expenditures. Marketing planning can begin in working groups on a volunteer basis, with no funds committed until the organizational foundation is in place. Assessment funds are not expected until approximately April 2026.

## 7. Branding & Communications

**Lodi Winery Alliance Identity** Jenny Heitman has been tasked with developing a logo mark for the Lodi Winery Alliance for use primarily in internal communications and organizational identification. Kyle Lerner will follow up with Jenny directly.

**Communication Channels** In the near term, LWBID communications will continue through the Lodi Wine Commission's existing email infrastructure, with Lodi Winery Alliance branding incorporated as it becomes available. The board discussed the potential value of registering a separate domain (e.g., lodiwineryalliance.com) to protect the name and enable branded communications in the future. Stuart Spencer will look into domain registration through the Commission's GoDaddy account.

**Social Media** The board discussed whether the Lodi Winery Alliance should establish its own social media presence or operate under the existing Lodi Wine social channels. Spencer noted that these messages are complementary — Lodi Wine social is oriented toward regional brand building, while BID marketing will be more tactical, focused on driving customers to member wineries. A separate BID channel may not be necessary in the near term. A marketing working group will be better positioned to make a recommendation once formed.

**Lodi Wine Website** Spencer flagged the upcoming lodiwine.com migration from WineDirect to a new platform (Commerce7 for e-commerce, WordPress for content) with an April 1, 2026 target. The board discussed this migration as an opportunity to evaluate the consumer-facing site from a winery perspective and consider whether a separate member-facing internal site is needed.

## **8. Wine & Chocolate Weekend Debrief**

The board discussed the recently concluded Wine & Chocolate Weekend (February 14-15, 2026). Key observations:

- Saturday attendance was strong, with new and diverse visitors consistent with current industry priorities around broadening the consumer base
- Sunday participation and energy were described as weaker than prior years by multiple board members
- Overall ticket sales were approximately 10% below the prior year
- Fewer wineries participated than in previous years, which was visible to consumers and generated visitor questions about regional participation
- Some long-standing staff-level concerns about the event format were acknowledged

Spencer noted that Wine & Chocolate Weekend has historically driven new visitors to Lodi and served a meaningful marketing function, and cautioned against stepping away from the event without a clear alternative. The negativity from non-participating wineries needs to be addressed through deeper engagement.

The board discussed whether a brief survey should be sent to wineries to gauge sentiment and gather input on the event's future. Spencer noted that any survey should ideally be tied to a strategic planning process. No final decision was made; the topic will be revisited as the marketing working group is established.

Wes Rhea noted that from a lodging perspective, Wine & Chocolate Weekend consistently drives incremental overnight stays independent of Valentine's Day, and expressed support for the event continuing — potentially on a different weekend if the Valentine's timing proves problematic for participating wineries.

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## **9. Public Comment on Items Not Appearing on the Agenda**

No public comment.

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## **10. Agenda Items for Future Meetings**

- Policy working group report: elections policy, financial controls, record keeping
- Commission-to-BID management services agreement
- No Reservations working group recommendations
- Budget development once assessment collections begin
- Website migration update and consumer-facing site planning
- Marketing Committee formation and structure
- Wine & Chocolate Weekend survey and future event planning

## **12. Next Meeting Date**

**Full Board Meeting:** Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 10:00 AM

## **13. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 11:37AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart Spencer  
On behalf of Sarah Spenker  
Secretary

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