

**LWBID / LODI WINERY ALLIANCE MEETING MINUTES**  
**April 15, 2026**

The Lodi Winery Alliance met at 10:00 am on Wednesday, April 15, at the Lodi Winegrape Commission office, 2545 W. Turner Rd., Lodi, CA.

**1. Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 10:04 am.

**2. Roll Call**

**Board Members Present:** Steve Carson, Bob Colarossi, Tom Hoffman, Kyle Lerner, Faryn Schatz, Sarah Spenker Pratt, Jacob Woodworth

**Public present:** Nicholas Kerns, Calivirgin

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

A Quorum was established.

**3. Approval of March 18, 2026 Minutes**

Motion: Approve minutes as presented

Motion by: Hoffman/Lerner

Result: Motion carried

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

No public comment.

**5. Strategic Direction & Planning**

Spencer reported that the organizational subgroup has continued its conversation with Stacie Jacobs of Solterra Strategies regarding a facilitated strategic planning process, and that the consultant has shared a preliminary proposal.

Board members who reviewed the proposal felt that it moved a few steps ahead of where the board is today, appearing to assume that the 2022 strategic planning effort completed under the Commission umbrella would serve as the starting point for this new organization.

Because the current board was not collectively part of that earlier work, members agreed that the planning effort should begin from a shared foundation rather than build directly on prior conclusions.

Board discussion emphasized a preference for engaging a facilitator rather than a consultant who prescribes outcomes, and for building in meaningful opportunities for broader winery community input through surveys and one-on-one conversations with key stakeholders.

Members also noted the value of leveraging new alignment with Visit Lodi, the Chamber of Commerce, and the City to coordinate a more unified regional approach than was possible in previous planning cycles. Several members observed that the journey of working through a strategic plan together is as important as the resulting document, and that the process itself should help clarify measures of success and create a framework the organization can share with the winery community.

The anticipated cost range is approximately \$15,000 to \$20,000. The subgroup will reconvene with the consultant to refine the scope, then bring a revised proposal back to the full board for consideration. Members were encouraged to give thought in the interim to mission, vision, and top organizational priorities so the process runs efficiently when it begins. No action was taken at this meeting.

## **6. Organizational Setup**

### **Bank Accounts**

The bank accounts are now fully set up. The \$20,000 contribution check from LAVA has been received and will be deposited.

### **Nonprofit Status**

Application for nonprofit status is in progress.

### **Insurance**

Insurance paperwork remains in progress.

### **Commission-to-BID Management Services Agreement**

The organizing subgroup will work jointly with Commission staff to define the scope of services and associated budget for a management services agreement between the Commission and the LWA. Once drafted, the agreement will be presented to both boards for approval.

## **7. Assessment Collections**

### **HdL Portal Status**

HdL is collecting first-quarter assessments during April, with payments due by the end of the month. HdL will remit funds to the LWA in mid-May.

Several wineries have reported difficulty locating their entity setup emails from HdL, which were sent to the first email address listed on each winery's contact form. In a number of cases this was a generic "info@" or "hello@" address rather than a primary contact. Staff is following up this week and will include a reminder in the newsletter with the relevant subject line and guidance on updating contact information.

Late fees and fines apply after a 30-day window, but the board retains the ability to waive them. Members agreed that during the first few quarters, fees should generally be waived for wineries working through technical or administrative issues in good faith, while fees for wineries that are simply unresponsive would not be waived.

### **County Contract**

The county has not yet signed the agreement with HdL, which is required before HdL can remit funds to the LWA. Staff changes in the county risk management office have contributed to the delay. Staff is in regular contact with the county and expects resolution soon.

### **Voluntary Participation Policy**

Barsetti Vineyards, an LWA member located outside the district boundaries, has expressed interest in participating voluntarily and has begun working with staff on setup.

The board discussed the need for a formalized voluntary participation agreement that clearly defines responsibilities and benefits on both sides, and that can be extended to similar wineries in the future. Staff will draft a policy for board review at a future meeting. No action was taken.

## **8. Communications & Newsletter**

### **Newsletter**

The new LWA-branded newsletter is launched and receiving positive feedback. The current open rate is approximately 20%. Staff noted that the existing list includes former tasting room employees and outdated contacts, which weighs down the open rate. List cleanup is on staff's to-do list and will tie in with the HdL entity setup process and the strategic planning outreach work. Segmenting the list so that future communications can be targeted to specific roles (owners, tasting room managers, compliance contacts) was also identified as a priority.

### **Wine Trail Map: Inclusion Parameters**

The board held extended discussion on which wineries should appear on the printed Wine Trail Map. The existing criteria have been a Type 02 winery license and participation in the assessment.

Discussion focused on gray-area scenarios in which a Type 02 winery resides at another facility or pours under a separate Type 42 license at a venue such as Woodbridge Uncorked. Similar questions could arise at other emerging tasting models, including Domo.

Board members voiced a shared principle that those contributing to the BID should receive the primary benefit and that the organization should not subsidize promotion for non-participating entities. At the same time, several members emphasized the value of inclusivity and of providing a clear path for additional wineries to join in good standing.

Given the timeline to print the map for the upcoming season, and the fact that affected wineries have not yet been notified of any potential change in status, the board elected to print the map as previously configured and to develop a more defined inclusion policy in the coming months, ahead of the next print run.

Motion: Print the Wine Trail Map with all wineries previously listed, with the exception of Sacramento County wineries that have not indicated a willingness to participate voluntarily; continue to include Barsetti Vineyards.

Motion by: Lerner/Hoffman

Result: Motion carried.

Wine Trail Map inclusion policy will return as an agenda item at a future meeting for further development.

### **Website Migration**

Staff reported continued progress on the lodiwine.com migration with 5forests as the proposed developer. The work is organized as a two-step process: first, migrating off the WineDirect platform onto WordPress using a script to move existing content at a reasonable cost; second, evaluating and refining the site to better serve visitor-facing needs, including more prominent placement of No Reservations content.

The board discussed adding a small, easily discoverable section of the website — likely linked from the footer — for LWA agendas, minutes, and governance documentation. This would satisfy Brown Act noticing and transparency requirements without competing with the consumer-facing presentation. In the interim, agendas continue to be posted on lodigrowers.com.

Discussion also touched on longer-term coordination with Visit Lodi, the Chamber, and the City around consistent regional branding, event listings, and integrated promotion of wineries, restaurants, and lodging. These items were noted as future conversations that may align with the strategic planning process.

## **9. Committees**

### **Marketing Committee: Formalization and Appointment**

The board reviewed bylaws language on committees. Committee members are not required to be BID members, providing flexibility to include non-member participants such as

representatives from Visit Lodi, while the majority of members are expected to be from within the LWA. Brown Act noticing will apply to committee meetings once the committee is seated.

Motion: Formalize the LWA Marketing Committee with a membership of seven to nine members, three to four of whom shall be board members.

Motion made by Hoffman/Spencer Pratt

Result: Motion carried.

The existing marketing subgroup will develop a recommended slate of committee members, including committee chair and non-board appointees, and bring it to the May meeting for board appointment. Board members were invited to submit names and suggestions to the subgroup in the meantime.

### **Education**

The board briefly discussed whether education activities should fold into the Marketing Committee or stand alone. No formal action was taken; education may continue as an informal effort for now and be spun into a dedicated committee in the future as the scope of work grows.

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

No public comment.

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

Marketing Committee appointment, Wine Trail Map inclusion policy, voluntary participation policy, strategic planning proposal update, and management services agreement.

### **12. Next Meeting Date**

**Full Board Meeting:** Wednesday, May 20, 2026 at 10:00 AM

### **13. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 11:52AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart Spencer  
On behalf of Sarah Spenker Pratt  
Secretary

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