

County of Tarrant
City of Grapevine
State of Texas

MINUTES

The Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau Board of Directors met in Regular Session on Thursday, September 18, 2025 at 8:00 a.m. at the Stephen W. Stinson Boardroom of the Grapevine Convention and Visitors Bureau, 636 S. Main Street, Grapevine, Texas with the following persons in attendance:

Joe Szymaszek	Chairman
Mark Terpening	Vice Chairman
Cynthia Blankenship	Board Member
Iain Scouller	Board Member
Jeff Babcock	Board Member
Fabien Goury	Board Member
Mike Oakley	Alternate Board Member
Kim Farbisz	Alternate Board Member

Absent: Chuck Pacioni

Constituting a quorum, with the following liaisons and staff members present:

Leon Leal	Council Liaison
Sue Wykes	Chamber Representative
Paul W. McCallum	Executive Director
Leigh Lyons	Assistant Executive Director
C.J. Gardner	Website Manager
Becky Roberson	Executive Assistant

CALL TO ORDER

Board Chairman, Joe Szymaszek, called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Chairman Szymaszek acknowledged a letter to the board from outgoing board member, Debi Meek.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made to approve the minutes from the August 21, 2025 meeting.

Motion: Mike Oakley

Second: Mark Terpening

Ayes: Szymaszek, Terpening, Blankenship, Scouller, Babcock, Goury, Oakley

Nayes: None

Approved: 7 - 0

SALES AND MARKETING REPORT

Executive Director McCallum reported on recent sales missions and trade shows.

National Sales Manager, Connie Ash, attended Connect Marketplace, a reverse trade show and a networking opportunity between meeting planners from association, corporate, diversity, RTO and sports segments. Ms. Ash participated in the corporate track and had one-on-one appointments with twenty-nine prospective planners. She returned with five future opportunities that reach well into 2028.

National Sales Manager, Tanja Nichols, attended the Maritz Activate Trade Show on August 26, 27 and 28. Maritz is a third-party planning organization, and this trade show is set up as a reverse trade show and a networking opportunity for Maritz planners and partner suppliers. The purpose of Activate is connection, commerce and education. Activate is an inclusive trade show where suppliers are included with the planners in all the activations and networking. There were more than 300 Maritz team members, 185 first-time attendees and 356 supplier partners. Ms. Nichols had fifteen appointments and participated in education sessions. She returned with two future opportunities, one for 2028 and another for 2029, with a combined total of 7,730 room nights.

Director of Leisure and International Sales, Heather Egan, attended the American Cup International in Billings, Montana and Cody, Wyoming August 24 – 28. This is an invitation-only event for tour operators and industry professionals. Ms. Egan used this event to market Grapevine to multiple tour operators.

Assistant Director, Leigh Lyons, reviewed the targeted marketing campaign developed to drive summer business to Grapevine and gave a brief update on the results of the boosted summer push in digital and broadcast television. She reported that the Smith Travel Report for July showed an upward spike in sales tax. Hoteliers responded by lowering the daily rate slightly which resulted in higher occupancy and therefore higher sales tax revenues.

Ms. Lyons gave a brief update on the 39th Annual GrapeFest. She reported that the feedback from the theme of The Grape Gatsby had been overwhelmingly positive and that collateral will be presented at the upcoming International Festivals & Events Association annual gathering and the Texas Festivals & Events Association annual conference.

One of the newest activations for GrapeFest was the Skip the Line QR code. This allowed guests to scan the code and purchase admission without standing in line. More than 1,100 guests utilized the code. The top five markets that utilized the code were Dallas, Odessa,

Arlington, Chicago and Detroit. There were a handful of scans from California, Canada, Brazil, Germany, Switzerland and beyond.

Ms. Lyons shared recent social media posts which covered a variety of events and presented a report of August coverage. Combined posts from Facebook and Instagram had 1.64 million impressions with a reach of 642,558 and engagement of 18,123. She explained that impressions are the number of times that a post is viewed and shared that the same post can be viewed by the same individual more than once. The reach is the number of people that see a post and the engagement is people that like, comment or share a post. YouTube posts had more than 1,200 total views. The Visit Grapevine website showed more than 185,000 users visited the website and had more than 550,000 page views for August. The top viewed pages were the home landing page, GrapeFest, Santa's North Pole Express and the Events Calendar.

The Communications team sent out several press releases with a focus on GrapeFest but also addressing happenings in Grapevine. Family-friendly activations within GrapeFest were highlighted as well as GrapeFest entertainment. Updates within Champagne Terrace, such as the Florence door were showcased. GrapeFest was awarded #7 in the USA Today's Reader's Choice of 10 Best Wine Festivals in the country. There was a release highlighting the September Roundup of Events and one release that shared the Fall lineup of musical acts for Grapevine Main LIVE! Concert series.

Italian CarFest was publicized in the Texas Coop Power magazine. Stellini was showcased in the magazine, Southlake Style. GrapeFest was featured in Budget Travel and Dallas Voice. Bubble Planet had coverage in Culture Map Fort Worth and Dig World was on KLIF. A recent media fam resulted in an article in the Saturday Evening Post featuring Bonnie and Cylde's history at Grapevine's Bermuda Gold & Silver.

Ms. Lyons presented an update of the Grapevine Marketing Committee. Invitations were sent out to hoteliers, attractions and Historic District representatives and to date there are nineteen confirmed participants. Committee Chair, Jeff Babcock, expressed his gratitude for those that had committed to participating. The initial meeting is scheduled for September 24, and the second in-person meeting is set for October 15. It was explained that there would be time to review data from each meeting with the final 2026 Marketing Plan being distributed to the Committee in early December.

ONGOING BUSINESS

After thanking the many sponsors and board members for their contributions of time spent serving throughout the festival, Director McCallum reported on the 39th Annual GrapeFest. He shared the co-chairs for next year's festival. He then stated that GrapeFest had proved to be a very successful event. Director McCallum reported that a reduction in prices and

addition of ticketing options at specific activations like the International Wine Experience, had been welcomed by festival attendees. Board member, Iain Scouller, reported that the four tasting option had been very popular and that many guests chose to purchase a second tasting card. People's Choice Wine Tasting Classic featured thirty-four Texas wineries. The ten sessions were well attended with many at capacity. The reduction of VIP parking, coupled with opening some side streets, allowed guests to have greater parking options and was well received by the public. Security enhancements were also reviewed. Board Member Goury stated that the rearrangement of gates was an improvement over previous festivals.

The theme, The Grape Gatsby, was a huge success. The theme was highlighted at various activations throughout the festival grounds. One example, the Florence Door at Champagne Terrace, proved to be a popular photo op where guests waited in line not only to receive their drink but to capture the moment with a video. Some festival guests came dressed in 1920s style apparel and the festival tee shirt sold out.

Two wine tasting classes led by GrapeFest Co-Chair, Lisa Pacioni, were sold out experiences. Ms. Pacioni taught a class focused on reisling wine and titled, Reislings Around the World in 80 Minutes, and a second class focused on wine spritzers. The two Barossa Master Classes also sold out. Ruby Stobart with Barossa Australia led the initial class on Thursday and Mark Rashap with Elderton Wines led the second class on Sunday.

There was a brief overview of the sister cities that visited during GrapeFest. Director McCallum thanked the board members for their participation with the numerous Sales Fams and Sister City activities. Council Member Leal reiterated the thanks and stressed the importance of the Sister City Program. Chairman Szymaszek expressed his satisfaction of the entertainment chosen for the main stage. He stated that the talented musicians were engaging as they entertained the crowds. Board Member Blankenship stated that the increased security and police visibility was both important and effective. Director McCallum concluded the report on GrapeFest by sharing that admissions were up 18% from last year. Overall beverage sales were up as well. Vendors reported that sales were steady throughout the festival.

Director McCallum reported that a live Christmas tree had been located in Oregon. It was 62 feet tall, 21 feet wide and had a 22 inch in diameter trunk. The tree would be harvested by helicopter, loaded on a flat bed semi-truck and was scheduled to arrive mid-November. Again, this year, the tree will be showcased at Peace Plaza. Decorating would begin immediately and would likely take a couple of days. To account for the height of the tree, additional lights and ornaments would be needed.

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman, Joe Szymaszek, introduced the Board Calendar. Meeting dates for the upcoming fiscal year were presented and it was noted that there were no proposed meetings for March or July. It was shared that the December meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, December 9, 2025.

HOTELS/ATTRACTIONS/ACTIVITIES

Representing the Grapevine Chamber of Commerce, Sue Wykes, recognized that Grapevine’s festivals offered a great benefit to participating civic organizations and supported important historic preservation efforts. She reported that the Chamber had a successful festival. She reported on the upcoming luncheon, mixer and golf tournament.

Assistant Director, Leigh Lyons, reported on various happenings in Grapevine. DART Silver Line is scheduled to open on October 25 and will offer complimentary rides all day. The Silver Line will run twenty-six miles and will connect Plano, Richardson, Carrollton, Coppell and Grapevine to Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. Landmark Coffee opened August 30 and specializes in craft coffees and cold brews. Cici’s Pizza opened in Grapevine Towne Center on September 8.

Chairman Szymaszek and Board Member Scouller gave brief updates on Meow Wolf and the expected opening date of Bubble Planet at Grapevine Mills. Director McCallum announced the dates for the 40th Annual GrapeFest were set for September 17, 18, 19 and 20, 2026.

ADJOURNMENT

Board Chairman Szymaszek called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 a.m.

Motion: Mark Terpening

Second: Cynthia Blankenship

Ayes: Szymaszek, Terpening, Blankenship, Scouller, Babcock, Goury, Oakley

Nayes: None

Approved: 7 - 0

ATTEST:



Becky Roberson

Executive Assistant

APPROVED:



Joe Szymaszek

Chairman