

Hells Canyon Chamber of Commerce

Minutes for Meeting of February 2, 2021

Held at Halfway Lions Hall • 1:00-3:25pm

Financial commitments are highlighted in green, action items in blue.

Present: Pres. Becky Kaaen, Sec. Bill Schuhle, Treas. Lauri Bryan, Whitey Bloom, Gail Kimberling, Melody Huff, Timothy Bishop (via phone)

Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were used as an outline for this meeting.

Finance Report

The report shared by Lauri showed a current balance in our general fund of \$4,142.59 and in the fireworks fund of \$1,027.65.

Business

Snowmobile Poker Run: The event is happening on Feb. 14th – Valentine’s Day – this year and from recent Covid testing and numbers in the County, it looks like restaurants should be open for inside seating. Whitey said that lodging was full for Martin Luther King weekend and is now booked solid for Poker Run weekend, so the participation should be good. There’s currently almost 9’ of snow at Fish Lake and snowmobilers are checking the club’s Facebook page in large numbers to confirm conditions. He said that Bob Motley has opened up his Schneider Meadows property this year, so in addition to starting from the Clear Creek Sno-Park, snowmobilers can stage just north of Carson and get into the mountains through the Cornucopia area.

Whitey said the Forest Service has new funds available which can be used to expand and improve the Clear Creek Sno-Park – potentially including some summer picnicking facilities – and asked that the Chamber draw up a letter in support of that project, given the huge boost that snowmobilers give to the local economy during the winter.

Bill will create such a letter.

Becky asked about non-ethanol fuel for snowmobiles and was told that it’s available 24/7 at the Feed & Seed self-service pump and in Richland at Black Distributing, also self-service. She suggested that this information be made available on the Chamber web site.

Electric Car Charging Station(s): Once again we discussed how we might get this/these for our area. Idaho Power was mentioned. Also pointed out was the problem of maintenance should there be a malfunction.

Pine Valley Fair Association (PVFA): Fair Association President Melody Huff brought us up to speed on happenings at the Fairgrounds. This year will mark the 100th anniversary of the Baker County Fair & Panhandle Rodeo and plans are in the works for a big celebration in honor of the event. PVFA is also working on how to make the annual 4th of July celebration work given the current Covid situation.

She said their rodeo announcer suggested, for the 100th celebration, renting a JumboTron screen that could, prior to Fair weekend, offer a downtown display of the history of the valley/fair/rodeo as well as advertisements for local businesses. It would then be moved to the rodeo grounds where it would show a large screen display of the rodeo events as they occurred.

Melody said that a new source of funding for PVFA has been renting RV storage space inside the Pavilion in addition to the outside spaces that have been rented for years. She also mentioned that, before the virus put the kibosh on everything, they had discussed hosting a casino night as a fundraiser the evening prior to the Lions Crab Feed so that visitors who came the day before would have something to do.

Becky mentioned the lack of local events in April and May and wondered about a huge community yard sale at the Fairgrounds.

Valentine Hearts Report: Becky said that we sell 62 sides of 31 hearts and there’s demand for more, but we have “no room at the inn.” Melody said she thought there were plenty of folks who would be happy to have their hearts along the road in front of the Fairgrounds. This opportunity will be explored.



HCCC Website: Becky said the web site is doing really well, passing out a graph of “hits” throughout the year showing a huge spike right before Poker Run so apparently a lot of snowmobilers were checking things out – possibly lodging, possibly the webcam for snow coverage.

Wild Bill's Wall Murals: Becky had not yet spoken with anyone in Vale, but had researched their mural project which was started in 1992 in celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Oregon Trail. She is curious to know if their three-mile “mural walk” has noticeably increased visitor numbers. Apparently Bend considered a mural project, but balked at opening the can of worms that is “mural” vs. “business advertising”. If we should proceed with such a project, the consensus was that we’d like realistic historical images vs. more caricature/cartoon images. Becky asked Melody to, at the next PVFA meeting, bring up the possibility of one or more banner-type murals being attached to building(s) at the Fairgrounds and ask for suggestions of which surfaces might be best for out-of-the-blaring-sun orientation for longevity.

Timothy Bishop's Report: Timothy let us know that as far as TLT (Transient Lodging Tax) grants go, we should let him know what we have in mind and he will work out the best mix of funding sources (Travel Oregon, Eastern Oregon Visitors Association, TLT, etc.) available and appropriate to the project. Priority is given to high-impact heads-in-beds ventures. For Travel Oregon grant application purposes, small grants are for up-to-\$20,000 (10% match) and medium-size grants are for \$20,000 to \$100,000 (25% match).

Timothy requested of us that we keep him informed as events are planned to happen “for sure” and to provide the best contact information for the person(s) heading up those events. Melody said the Hells Canyon Jr. Rodeo is planning to hold this year’s event on the last weekend in June.

Timothy also told us about an Oregon Festival & Events Conference ZOOM webinar coming up March 5th & 6th and for which he’d like to offer a couple of scholarships (worth \$99 each) to folks in Halfway to participate.

Whitey asked if the annual sportsman’s show in Boise was happening this year. Timothy said yes, the first week in March, but for any number of reasons, most Covid-related, he would not be going himself nor did he feel comfortable subjecting volunteers to that arena.

Next Meeting: Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, April 6, 2021.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Schuhle, Secretary