

Hells Canyon Chamber of Commerce

Minutes for Meeting of June 2, 2020

Held online via Zoom conference video call • Halfway, Oregon • 1:05-2:55pm

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

Present: Pres. Becky Kaaen, Sec. Bill Schuhle, Treas. Lauri Bryan, Gail Kimberling, Kat Davis, Shelly Cutler, Lisa Steele, Brenda & Dustin Burns (Wild Bill's), Lisa Dawson (NOEDD), Timothy Bishop, Rachelle Robinette

Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were emailed to members and there were no additions or corrections offered.

Finance Report

Lauri presented the following figures:

Current Balance – \$4,233.76 with one outstanding bill from the HCJ in the amount of \$1,023.03 for our second “Open for Business!” insert, service directory listing, and web site maintenance for two months.

Becky will review the billing with Lauri.

Business

4th of July: Per Fair Board President Melody Huff, fireworks have been ordered and the 4th is happening! Pine Valley Lodge is almost fully booked for the 4th. Lauri suggested our possibly doing an online fundraiser to finance next year’s fireworks since the pie auction can’t happen this year. Sale of lighted wristbands is another possibility, though tough under the anticipated circumstances. We will need to get advertising out that fireworks are on and giving the parameters for attendance/watching.

Baker County Chamber Report: Shelly said that across the county, most businesses are open, most are successful, and most patrons are being respectful. Events are being canceled right and left. Depending on the Governor’s mandates, Miner’s Jubilee may or may not happen. Broncs and Bulls is waiting on Miner’s Jubilee. If these don’t happen, much of the rest of the summer’s events won’t happen either. If things don’t open up, the Chamber will likely be closed until September as well. In terms of informing interested/inbound visitors, businesses sharing their happenings on Facebook enables Sherry to share the information further through the Chamber’s page.

Timothy is doing his best to inform potential visitors and encourage them to recreate responsibly. Local Baker business “Go Wild America” is partnering with Cornucopia Lodge and Hells Canyon Adventures in bringing visitors to the area.

Northeast Oregon Economic Development District: NOEDD Director Lisa Dawson joined us from her home base in Joseph to share information on financial assistance sources currently available for businesses under the COVID-19 circumstances. First, though, she really encouraged all business owners to make sure that their listings on Google Maps, Bing, Yelp, Trip Advisor, etc., were up-to-date and reflected their businesses’ current status so that visitors passing through can see immediately on their phones who’s open, what hours, under what restrictions, etc.

Regarding financial assistance, Lisa pointed out that NOEDD has traditionally had loan programs as well as business planning classes. In our current COVID-19 circumstances, NOEDD has applications in with the State for grants that can then be re-granted to businesses suffering from the effects of the pandemic lockdowns. These funds are specifically targeted at businesses who have “fallen through the cracks” of the federal programs.

Conversation switched to “Is 39 Road open?” and Lisa said she didn’t know, recommending a Facebook Group called Tim’s Winter Road Report as a great resource for answering questions like this.

Becky asked what NOEDD does “when things are normal” and Lisa listed work with non-profits in areas of consulting, strategic planning, grant writing, and project development and with businesses, there’s a lot of work with single entrepreneurs looking to start a business or expand an existing business.



In response to a question from Becky about whether the cost of grant writing can be included in the funds being granted, Lisa said that generally “no.” Kat then shared that local non-profit United Community Partners (UCP) offers funding for grant writing.

Lisa said that NOEDD is contracting to administer the large block grants that are coming to our area for the fire station projects in Halfway and Richland, so she’ll be over our way on a regular basis as those progress.

Rush Hour Pizza: At this point, Rachelle Robinette joined the conversation and, at Becky’s urging, let us know that she is currently open 3pm-7pm seven days a week and sometime after June 10th, will be open 11am-7pm and will have soft-serve ice cream available in addition to pizza. Becky said maybe we could have an ice cream machine ribbon cutting!

Free Fishing: In hopes that it might bring folks to the area, Becky asked about the state’s upcoming “free fishing” this coming weekend where no license is required. Timothy said it is being promoted on Travel Baker County’s Facebook page, particularly in the Tri-Cities and Boise, and will likely draw a fair number of people to the area. [Becky will get that linked to the Chamber’s FB page.](#)

Richland Reservoir Parks: Becky listened in on the County’s online town hall meeting shortly after our last meeting and was pleased to hear that local police response to public violations of COVID-19 guidelines would be for educational purposes only. Gail said that the Richland parks have been open and full the last three weekends. The new park manager said the County has put, in and is maintaining, porta-potties in addition to the permanent restrooms, so the crowds are being handled pretty well. Bill inquired as to how the County was able to afford to re-open the parks and Gail said it was because they hired outside contractors to do the overseeing and the maintenance rather than having to pay a full-blown County Parks & Rec person with insurance, pension, etc.

Eagle Valley Day/Fly-in: Gail said that, even though Eagle Valley Day has been canceled, her family’s three-year-old tradition of hosting a small plane fly-in on their property in Eagle Valley is still on for June 19th & 20th. Pine-Eagle senior Grace Davis, whose senior project is raising funds to refurbish the school’s running track, will be selling raffle tickets for plane rides which are being donated by a number of the pilots. Tickets are available online via the school’s web site and [Gail will get info to Becky for posting on the Chamber web site as well.](#)

Wild Bill’s: Brenda from Wild Bill’s updated us on their progress toward re-opening. She’s having to deal with the State Lottery and the Oregon Liquor Control Commission and there are a lot of things that need to be put in place before re-opening. However, she wanted to reassure us that, contrary to some rumors that are going around, she will be re-opening just as soon as she can. Becky offered any help the Chamber might provide in terms of getting the word out when re-opening is imminent. Bill offered to announce the opening on the chalkboard as soon as a firm date is known.

The Village Fund: Kat said that the fund is growing exponentially, however there have been almost no applications from potential recipients. Gail, who is on the Village Fund Committee, said that they have had flyers printed up and sent out with school meals as a way of getting the word out. It was suggested that anonymous testimonials in the paper from recipients about what receiving the funds meant to them might be a good way to get the word out as well. It was clarified that the Village Fund was not restricted to COVID-19-related need, but was for any situation where an unexpected financial burden came about for which help could be crucial. Applications are available at the Richland Café and at the Cornucopia Coffee House in Halfway.

Cornucopia Lodge: Thursday through Sunday walk-in lunch is now available from 11-2 as well as dinner by reservation a day ahead with reservations for a total of at least six diners necessary for dinner to be served on any given evening.

Main Street Stage: Kat said that the Cornucopia Arts Council has not purchased event insurance for this year, so Main Street Stage concerts, the Clear Creek Music Festival, and Pine Fest will not be happening in 2020. Others wishing to use the Main Street Stage for events should submit a request to Lisa Steele at the Cornucopia Mountain office in the Three-Color Building and she will pass it along to the Moores. Event



insurance would be the responsibility of the applicant. Rush found that a State Farm homeowner's policy offered event insurance for \$25.

Timothy's Report: The County is hoping to move into Stage 2 re-opening, possibly as early as next week. So far things are going pretty well in Baker City with most folk respectful and compliant with restrictions. Travel marketing is aimed at folks in a 50-100 mi. radius.

COVID Culinary Olympics: Becky reported the good news that the Shorthorn has been so busy they've not had time to even think about the Olympics.

4th of July: Lauri said she/we will help with publicity as needed and we should include options for folks to financially support next year's celebration. An online campaign to that effect should be considered as well. A phone app for donating, as well as contacting our major donors directly, were also suggested. Lisa shared that the Wallowa Chamber raises fireworks funding via a raffle for a Hells Canyon boat trip with tickets priced at \$25. Becky got contact information in order to talk with them about their raffle.

Info Wayside: Bill said that he would pursue getting the pole signs repainted/refurbished as they are currently bordering on unreadable. He will also continue work on updating the kiosk brochure blowup signs. Timothy said that grant dollars may be available to help finance these projects. (Updating the handout brochure will be part of this whole project as well.)

Hells Canyon Logo Items: Becky reminded us that we are looking into pins, stickers, tattoos, etc., featuring our new "Hells Canyon" logo design.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations: Becky wondered if one of these was available in Halfway or Richland and if not, whether we should look into getting one(s) installed. No one knew of any or what the demand might be. In Baker, stations are available by the Visitor's Center (Tesla) and at the Truck Corral (generic). Timothy said that Oregon State Parks and the BLM are installing stations at parks and attractions such as the Interpretive Center. He also said that ODOT would likely be responsible for establishing stations in Richland and Halfway and he would look into what their plans might be.

Next Meeting: Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, August 4, 2020.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Schuhle, Secretary