

# Hells Canyon Chamber of Commerce

## Minutes for Meeting of December 5, 2017

Held at Quilts Plus • Halfway, Oregon • 1:05-2:25pm

Action items are highlighted in blue, financial commitments in green.

“MSA” indicates “moved, seconded, approved”

**Present:** Treas. Lauri Bryan, Sec. Bill Schuhle, Roberta Bryan, Whitey Bloom, Timothy Bishop, Shelly Powell, Shelly Cutler, Kat Davis, Patsy Mitchell, and guests Bill Harvey (County Commission Chair) and Richland Mayor Dick Pedersen. Pres. Ron Hunter has moved from the area and V.P. Tami Waldron had other commitments, so Lauri Bryan presided.

### Minutes of Last Meeting

Bill had emailed out copies of the October minutes. It was MSA that they be accepted as presented with one minor addition.

### Finance Report

The finance report was passed out and Lauri explained that the charges she has seen on our bill for years that she thought were for lights somewhere in town, actually turned out to be an ‘inactive premise’ charge for some unoccupied building in Halfway. She has seen to it that this will not be occurring in the future. She will also be deactivating our US Bank card reader account until the next active season when it will be needed, saving us \$10/mo. The report was MSA as presented.

### Old Business

**MainStreet Stage:** Bill indicated that he had been able to put a coat of sealer on the Stage before the weather got too cold, so it should be in good shape for the winter. He also told us that all of the Stage’s sensitive sound equipment had been moved from the unheated Rock Bottom Building storage into his apartment for the winter and is being transported from there to Wild Bill’s for the approximately monthly open mic nights that he and June McKenzie are co-hosting and for which they very much appreciate the use of the sound equipment.

### New Business

**Transient Lodging Tax:** County Commission Chair Bill Harvey had come to Halfway to let us know more about the TLT and how we benefit – and can benefit – from it. He encouraged anyone in Halfway/Pine Valley to put on events which would draw tourists and could, therefore, apply for and receive financial assistance from TLT funds via the grant application process. He suggested that interested persons attend the TLT Committee’s monthly meetings in Baker City. When he indicated the fund is in pretty good shape, Bill S. asked if the eclipse tourist traffic had helped and Bill H. said not really as most potential overnight tourists were scared off by the hype and ended up driving from some distance and leaving the same day. Bill H. was asked about the application process and he said to call the Courthouse and talk to Shelly to get the paperwork. Shelly Cutler said there is also an application on the Baker Chamber’s web site and recommended getting any application in at least a month before the meeting that would decide on the application. Grant applications generally run from \$500-\$20,000. The tax is not a County tax, but is specifically a tax on the use of lodging facilities and all funds collected are required to be use in the promotion of the area to generate more tourist traffic. Timothy emphasized that even if specific grants aren’t approved, major promotion of the area is still going on continuously on a statewide basis to the benefit of all our local towns and areas. The state levies a 1.8% tax on tourist beds and the local tax is 7% for a total of 8.8% collected on each transaction.

Kat suggested that maybe the TLT group could do a bit of ‘self-marketing’ by producing some information/info-graphics that would make known to the public and interested entities just how the TLT dollars are invested to produce benefits to area businesses. She also asked if the TLT tax applies to Air BnB’s and the answer was yes. Timothy said that every couple of months he does an online search of local areas to see what vacation rentals and Air BnB’s are being advertised. Notices of liability for collecting the tax are then sent to entities not currently doing so.

Patsy and Dick mentioned that the City of Richland’s web site is finally up and running, though no exact address was available. A Goggle search should turn it up.

**Baker County Chamber News:** BCCC Executive Director Shelly Cutler shared that the Chamber’s annual awards banquet is coming up January 27th and urged anyone aware of folks doing notable work in the various award categories listed in their recent newsletter and worthy of public recognition to please nominate those folks for the appropriate award(s). Applications are available on the BCCC web site. There area also a couple of empty seats coming up on the BCCC board,

so anyone interested in serving there should let Shelly know. Information for articles concerning businesses in the Halfway/Richland area for future editions of the BCCC monthly newsletter would be welcome as well.

Timothy also has two seats available on the Marketing Committee. He indicated, too, that a new, comprehensive tourism marketing strategic plan will soon be in the works and will include attention to the attractions unique to individual areas of the county in addition to the county in general. They anticipate several local input meetings to be held in the various areas as part of the process.

**PVFA/Junior Rodeo Discussions:** The anticipated representatives from these organizations couldn't make it to the meeting, so these discussions will have to take place another time. They were to include the possibility of our assisting the PVFA in their marketing efforts and the potential dissolution of the Junior Rodeo in the near future if more involvement and support are not forthcoming. Lauri encouraged anyone interested to attend the group's meeting this evening at Lions Hall to meet the potential new board and express support for the Junior Rodeo.

**Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall:** United Community Partners (UCP) president Kat Davis offered an update on this project, saying that the Friends of the Pine Valley Fair (FPVF) group, which was formed to raise funds for the Exhibit Hall reconstruction project, had recently (and much more quickly than anticipated), received their applied-for status as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. This obviated the need for UCP to be involved as fiscal sponsor for the project, so at their recent meeting, the UCP board voted to turn over the nearly \$50,000 already raised to FPVF while remaining available to assist with organizational issues and getting the FPVF up to speed as a 501(c)(3). She said that, given the current underutilization of the Fairgrounds as an event venue, HCCC members may be interested in attending future planning meetings for the Exhibit Hall which will include discussion of greatly expanding Fairground use.

**Snowmobile Club:** Whitey reported that new, updated trail maps have been printed and he will soon be distributing them to businesses around town. **He asked about funding for any necessary paint, etc., that might be needed in January for touching up/updating the February valentines. There was unanimous agreement that we would cover that.**

This year's town Christmas tree was donated by a resident from their property across Record St. from City Hall, cut by the Snowmobile Club, and transported by Reggie with City maintenance and his JCB, and placed in front of the Three-Color Building. Electricity for the lights is being provided by HCCC via an outlet on the MainStreet Stage.

**Last Meeting's Action Items:** Lauri already reported on the 'mystery' Idaho Power charge. Bill will be meeting with Wix Covey soon to inspect the welcome sign with an eye to re-painting it. Richland Mayor Dick Pedersen explained that the \$500 dues payment for the Richland City Council was a gift from Mike Lattin of Eagle Telephone to the City of Richland for the purpose, went into the Richland treasury, and was supposed to be paid from on a yearly basis until it was gone. **It still remains to be determined what happened to that money since Lauri said she has never seen a payment from Richland during her tenure as HCCC treasurer.** There was, however, all-around praise for Mike Lattin and his generosity as Whitey let us know that Mike purchased all the flags that the Snowmobile Club puts up around town for the 4th of July as well as some replacement back-stock. Bill H. said that Mike also recently spearheaded the establishment of a wildlife emergency winter feeding program in conjunction with Oregon Fish & Wildlife, Pine Valley Ranch, and Idaho Power.

**Brochure Participation Discussion:** Bill S. reported a conversation with Kathryn Moore in which she expressed a strong opinion that our visitor's guide brochure should only list Chamber member businesses. Bill thought there might be a middle ground between free listings for non-members and a requirement for full Chamber membership in order to be listed. Patsy suggested mailing currently listed non-Chamber members a copy of the brochure with a letter explaining that their listing was complimentary this year, but if they'd like to be listed in the future there will be a charge (to be determined). There was general agreement that this was a really good idea. There was discussion of quantities printed and Timothy said the 5,000 we did this first go-round would probably last 12-18 months. Since \$500 from TLT were provided to help with our first print run, he did express concern that, should we limit business listings to Chamber members only, the piece would then have to be considered a Chamber membership directory and consequently no longer eligible for those co-op marketing dollars from TLT which are earmarked for promoting all of Baker County inclusively. If all were listed, but Chamber members exclusively got to include a web site in their listing, that would still fly as being a visitor brochure eligible for co-op support.

Our next meeting will be on February 6th, 1:00pm at Quilts Plus.

Meeting adjourned at 2:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bill Schuhle, Secretary