

Hells Canyon Chamber of Commerce

Minutes for Meeting of June 4, 2019

Held at Pine Valley Lodge • Halfway, Oregon • 1:00-2:10pm

Present: V.P. Tami Waldron, Sec. Bill Schuhle, Whitey Bloom, Lisa Steele, Kat Davis, Timothy Bishop.

Minutes of Last Meeting

Those present had read the emailed minutes from our April meeting and they were approved as emailed.

Finance Report

Treasurer Lauri was absent, so there was no finance report.

Old Business

4th of July: Tami indicated that The Wasteland Kings were still good to go as planned. She said that Lauri handles lining up pies for the auction and Mib Daley as auctioneer. Tami will talk with the Jr. Rodeo about helping out again as they did so fabulously last year.

Bill said that a local fireworks shooter had been licensed to do the “big ones” and Tami said all we needed to do is confirm that they have been ordered.

Small Business Trainings: Kat shared that United Community Partners (UCP) will be discussing covering the cost of transportation and lodging for presenters to come to Halfway if there is enough interest in trainings in areas such as customer service, effective meetings, etc., possibly in October to avoid otherwise busy seasons. She asked us to gauge the possible interest level. Bill said that he personally could use some tips on retail sales to be applied at his volunteer job at Halfway Whimsical and that other volunteers there could likely use some help as well.

Kat mentioned the value of coordinating community events to avoid conflicts and adjusting business hours to better serve a target clientele as possible strategies for business improvement. It was suggested the revival of a flyer for businesses and their employees, similar to one that existed years ago, could be a good thing. It told the story of how Halfway got its name, how to get to different destinations, etc., helping employees to know how to answer those questions. Timothy suggested that the Chamber do a survey of its members to see where interests for training might lie and said that a commitment of 8-10 people would make it worthwhile bringing a training to Halfway. Kat said she could get together a list of possible trainings that could be offered and Bill, as Chamber secretary, could send them out to members with a query as to possible subjects of interest.

New Business

Pine Valley Water Quality Concerns: Bill, as a member of a group of citizens concerned about the planned spraying of RoundUp and other herbicides on the area on the West Wall above Carson that was clear-cut last summer under the auspices of Hancock Timber Management, indicated that there is to be a public meeting tomorrow evening at 6:30 at the High School library to share more information with folks interested the subject.

MainStreet Stage: Bill was asked about upcoming events on the Stage and said the first was to be Caleb Klauder and Reeb Willms at 7:00pm this coming Friday. We also learned that the Baker County Sheriff's Office will be holding a “movies in the park” event (with snow-cone machine) at the Stage on Tuesday, July 13th. (In an unrelated event, the S.O. will be offering a prescription drug take-back service here in Halfway in the near future.)

Tami's Update: Regarding phone calls she receives for information on the area, a common question is about when 39 Road will be open. She would like to be able to, in her recorded message, refer people to the Chamber web site for that information. Cindy will be contacted to see if that can be done.

New Businesses in Town: Rachelle Robinette is planning to open a take-and-bake pizza place in the former Dry Creek Bakery space in the Three-Color Building. Also in that building, in the space vacated by Hells Canyon Realty, Roberta Bryan is opening a gift shop.

Whitey shared a rumor that a four-man Sno-Cat repair business is considering moving to Halfway.

Timothy's Baker County Update: Timothy is wrapping up a very busy year as president of the Eastern Oregon Visitors Association (EOVA). He will be bringing the new president out our way before too long.

Serious Base Camp Baker budget cuts (\$40,000 out of last year's alone) have been necessitated by the precipitous drop in transient lodging tax revenues occasioned by the still-ongoing renovation of the Sunridge Inn. They will be focusing their remaining resources primarily on collaboration with the larger, regional tourism marketing organizations as well as digital media advertising, particularly in the Treasure Valley/Boise area. Another area for investment of limited funds is in digital asset creation, particularly video assets, one of which will be focused on the arts in Baker City. Shooting for that will be the week after Labor Day and could dove-tail nicely with some video shooting for which PineFest has some budget this year. There's also a possibility of getting the creator and host of the web site ExploreOregon.com to come out and experience what Baker County has to offer. The county's offerings will continue to be presented at Outdoor Expo in Boise, but other trade shows are likely on the chopping block for the time being.

TributeFest in Baker is on again this year.

ORLA (the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association) will be building a network of hospitality trainers around the state and will be active in our area as well.

"Basecamp Baker" is in the process of re-branding itself at "Travel Baker County" for easier understandability on the part of the vacationing public.

Timothy asked about rumors of great things happening in Cornucopia with the Moores' marketing of snow cat tours, expanded mountain biking trails, etc. Nothing yet confirmable according to Lisa, the Moores' office manager for Cornucopia Mountain. Bill mentioned a really nice write-up in the recent Baker County Chamber newsletter about Sarah Artley, co-manager with her husband, of the Cornucopia Lodge & Pack Station. Lisa did say that the old pack station is being replaced with a new one, along with new crew quarters, and that it is a good-sized project.

"Creating Memories" Pan Fishing Tournament: Tami said that this event, almost canceled due to only seven participants last year, had 52 people show up this year! Timothy said he got some great pictures as well.

PineFest: With a great new logo, new tag line, and an incredible lineup of performers, PineFest is set for its best year yet this year.

Halfway Feed & Seed Upgrade: It was pointed out that the Feed & Seed is moving their gas station operation to the property across Main St. where the old truck weigh station used to be.

Halfway Market & Mercantile: Latest word is that the re-build should be completed by sometime in September.

Valley History Tour: Bill shared that the Pine Valley Community Museum is chartering the Community Connection bus in order to hold an "in-house" bus tour of the Valley this coming Friday. Old-timers Harley Derrick and Daryl Robertson will be on board to share their knowledge and recollections of days gone by and to help point out the location of former schoolhouses as well as the current and past locations of houses moved to the valley from Cornucopia after the mines shut down.

Next Meeting: Our next meeting will be on August 6th, 1:00pm at the Pine Valley Lodge.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Schuhle, Secretary