

Hells Canyon Chamber of Commerce

Minutes for Meeting of April 14, 2020

Held online via Zoom conference video call • Halfway, Oregon • 1:10-3:30pm

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

“MSA” indicates “moved, seconded, and approved.”

Present: Pres. Becky Kaaen, Sec. Bill Schuhle, Treas. Lauri Bryan, Brandie Lincoln, Michelle Wilson, Jacqueline Lutz, Shelly Cutler & Diane Wroe, Kat Davis, Gail Kimberling, Timothy Bishop.

Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were emailed to members and unanimously approved at this meeting.

Finance Report

Lauri will clarify with the Pine Valley Fair Association that proceeds from the 4th of July pie auction are to be used exclusively for fireworks. She will also type up and email us a finance report which was not available at meeting time.

Introductions

Becky Kaaen: HCCC President, retired educator

Shelly Cutler & Diane Wroe: Baker County Chamber of Commerce/Visitors Center

Kat Davis: United Community Partners, Pine Fest

Brandie Lincoln: Hells Canyon Adventures

Gail Kimberling: Hells Canyon Journal

Michelle Wilson: co-owner of Cornucopia Coffee House

Lauri Bryan: HCCC Treasurer, co-owner of Old Pine Market

Jacqueline West: co-owner, Richland Café

Bill Schuhle: HCCC Secretary, owner of Bill Schuhle Printing & Design

Timothy Bishop: Travel Baker County/County Covid-19 Recovery Team

Business

Travel Baker County: Timothy said that TBC is looking at a 40% reduction in revenue for this year, so is having to totally restructure their operation to focus on economic recovery following the Covid-19 lockdown. Very few travelers are coming though the area and lodging is seriously down. One adjustment being made is getting more information relevant to locals onto the TBC Facebook page (*Travel Baker County*) while still providing items of interest to the much larger out-of-the-area fan base. TBC also recently launched a “support local non-profits” campaign as these organizations will be an important part of the shutdown recovery process. There’s also been regular sharing of local history and historic photos on the FB page. Oregon Trail/Interpretive Center materials are being produced, particularly for homeschooling parents. Working with local artists to produce art-oriented materials/lessons is also happening on FB. Local Baker County business Hello Medio has been instrumental in producing these offerings. Becky mentioned that Elkhorn Media has 45,000 followers on FB and will post public service announcements for free.

Timothy directed us to www.bakercountycovid19.com for up-to-date information on the county’s response to the pandemic and resources available to businesses and individuals.

In addition, The Trailhead in downtown Baker and Quail Ridge Golf Course are sponsoring a “support local” campaign to publicize what businesses are open and with what parameters in place. He asked that HCCC be the information-gathering entity for our area, providing up-to-date information for folks traveling out our way. Gail said she is working on something similar for publication in the HCJ, so will be calling all area businesses in the next week. Becky said the Chamber was looking to publish something similar, so **she will work with the HCJ on that. Later in the meeting it was MSA to spend up to \$500 for a separate insert in the paper** advertising that “The Panhandle is Open for Business” and containing the spreadsheet of business statuses.

Old Pine Market: Lauri said that in support of area businesses which have had to close due to Covid-19 restrictions, Old Pine is offering to serve as an outlet for the sale of gift certificates to those businesses as a way of providing them with needed income while closed and to be redeemed once they re-open. Participating businesses so far are Wild Bill’s and the Cornucopia Lodge. She asked that Chamber members contact closed businesses to ask them if they’d like to participate. Helpful for Old Pine would be to be provided with an envelope containing the certificates along



with a log sheet for them to record the certificate number and the name of the purchaser. Funds from the sales could be picked up at any time. The program will be advertised on Old Pine's FB page and at the registers, but Lauri asks that the individual business owners also advertise the availability of their certificates at Old Pine. Shelly Cutler said that if an electronic version of the information could be sent to her, she'd get it posted in her online venues.

Domestic Violence: Becky asked if anyone had heard anything about domestic violence issues from organizations who deal with this as stressful times such as these can trigger more problems in that area. Shelly said she had not heard anything in Baker.

Upcoming Scheduled Events: Events on the horizon include Eagle Valley Day, the Hells Canyon Jr. Rodeo, Baker City Cycling Classic, Clear Creek Music Festival, 4th of July Celebration (Brady Goss will be performing again this year), Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally, Miner's Jubilee, Baker County Fair & Panhandle Rodeo, and Pine Fest.

Kat said that Pine Fest is currently in a holding pattern awaiting further developments.

Lions Crab Feed (that didn't happen): Bill said that the club was not yet advertising ticket refunds, but had received, so far, less than a dozen requests. Should it become possible to hold the feed yet this year, there is discussion of making it an outdoor event with vendor booths and also scheduling it for the same weekend as a Sumpter Flea Market, giving attendees more than one reason to come to the area that weekend. Timothy said that would mean Memorial Day weekend, the 4th of July, or Labor Day weekend.

Hells Canyon Adventures: Brandie said that at the moment, it's terrifying. Phones have stopped ringing completely. They are legal to operate, but without supporting restaurants, lodging, etc., they're pretty much at a loss. So far, no one with reservations after Memorial Day has canceled, but those reservations are not enough to get them through. She asked Timothy if he thought the videos they planned to put together explaining their intended distancing and other safety measures were worth pursuing and he said yes.

Cornucopia Coffee House: Michelle said that they are pretty much a to-go business anyway, so limiting their clientele in that way hasn't been a huge deal.

Eagle Cap Nursery: Now open for business seven days a week with social distancing in place.

Outsiders Coming to the Valley: Shelly Cutler is working closely with the county Health Department to make sure that when messaging goes out regarding visitors coming in, it will be based on good information regarding safety.

Assistance Available: Shelly Cutler made sure we were aware of the \$10,000 grants and even larger loans, plus payroll protection funds, that are available to businesses and non-profits through a very simple application process on the federal Small Business Administration web site. Questions can be directed to Shelly at 541-216-0907 or to Baker County Small Business Development.

Valentine Hearts: Becky reported that income from the hearts so far is \$2,305 with \$105 still to be paid.

Bidding on Operation of the Baker County Visitors Center: Becky attended the Commissioners meeting where this was discussed and found they thought it was all happening to quickly without coming to them through proper channels. A decision on any change was postponed until October and would go into effect in December.

The Village Fund: Kat shared that folks who didn't really need the \$1,200 stimulus check from the Feds had come to UCP to see if they might sponsor a project of taking that money and seeing that it was appropriately distributed to folks in the community that were more in need. UCP is going to do this and there will be an article in the HCJ very soon.

Next Meeting: Our next meeting will be on May 5, 2020, 1:00pm via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Schuhle, Secretary