

Hells Canyon Chamber of Commerce

Minutes for meeting of April 4, 2017

Pine Valley Lodge • Halfway, Oregon • 1:00-2:50pm

Action items are highlighted in blue.

Present: Pres. Ron Hunter, V.P. Tami Waldron, Treas. Lauri Bryan, Sec. Bill Schuhle, Becky Kaaen, Whitey Bloom, Rick & Amy Lord, Timothy Bishop, Shelly Powell, and guests Shelly Cutler (Baker County C of C), Penny Sabin (Cornucopia Arts Council), Celinda Miller (Halfway Community Improvement Project), and Halfway Mayor Sheila Farwell.

Finance Report

Lauri apologized for no printed report as her printer was on the blink, but indicated that the Valentine Hearts Project netted about \$3,000 for our coffers this year. Thanks were offered to Whitey for all his help and to all who painted hearts, including Audrene Simpson, returning to the project after a several-year absence. Lauri also indicated that Snake River PCS is not charging us for hosting the new web cam atop their pole, a savings of \$75/mo. over our previous service. The new camera is up and functioning, only awaiting a link to our web site. **Ron will see about retrieving the old camera and modem from the bank building.**

Old Business

Snowmobile Club/Fireworks: Whitey presented a \$500 reimbursement check from the snowmobile club for the “up front” money provided by the Chamber for this year’s Poker Run. He also said that a trailer had been obtained to be fitted as a fireworks shooting platform, but that it needed re-decking at a maximum cost of \$350. We voted to act as a backup source for those funds should no one else step forward to foot the bill. **Whitey will be doing the work and will charge the materials to our account if need be.**

MainStreet Stage: Penny Sabin attended the meeting on behalf of CAC to see what was happening with the Stage. We really didn’t have any concrete information to give other than that the Chamber cannot get insurance in order to put on their own events, so Stage events will need to be put on by organizations who can get insurance as CAC did last summer and for which we were most grateful. The first CAC-planned event for this season is a “Year of the Yuke” presentation on June 16th for which Becky has already created a Facebook event. She urged us, any time we create a FB event, to include tags to overnight lodging. Should someone want to book, say, a wedding in the park, they would need to contact the Moores as that is now their property. **Becky will contact them regarding increased use of the Stage this summer by the Clear Creek Music Festival. Shelly will talk with the Moores about a joint meeting with the Arts Council and representative(s) of the Stage to work out the details of coordinating the MainStreet Stage this summer.**

HCCC Visitor Brochure: Bill passed out for review and discussion copies of his most recent proof on the new brochure. Several needed additions were noted and the scope of distribution was greatly expanded from the original intent with Timothy offering financial assistance with printing an initial run of 5,000 to be distributed in Baker City and mailed to intending Baker County visitors in addition to being distributed in Pine Valley. In the spirit of remembering what makes Halfway Halfway, it was also decided to go with a more matte look for the brochure rather than glossy, even though a bit more expensive. **Bill will provide Timothy with a printed proof of the brochure and a quote for printing 5,000 for presentation to Baker County Tourism.**

Summer Events Poster: We have talked about a poster listing summer events so that businesses will know what’s coming up and can plan accordingly. After some discussion, it was agreed that **a periodic flyer with updated information distributed to possibly-affected businesses would be more appropriate than a public poster. Becky and Bill will work on this.** It will always include a note that the listings are subject to change and to check the HCCC web site for the most current information. A smart phone-scannable QR code might be included as well.

New Business

Petunia Project: Celinda Miller, current coordinator of the Halfway Community Improvement Project (aka “The Petunia Project”), came to the meeting to let us know that she could no longer continue in that position, was seeking

someone to take over responsibility for the project, and was wondering if the Chamber might be interested. There did not appear to be any immediate interest in the group present, but it was suggested that Celinda might contact the Pine Eagle United Youth Fund and the 4-H Club to see if something could be worked out. Chamber members who think of someone who might want to take on the coordinatorship can contact Celinda at 742-6499 or celindamiller@mail.com.

Solar Eclipse Planning: Timothy shared with us that Oregon is expecting 1,000,000 visitors to the state for the Monday, August 21st event, with approximately 50,000 of those visitors coming to Baker County. Planning for this huge influx is massive and ongoing. Marketing-wise, we hope to get folks to come early and stay late, increasing the economic impact and ameliorating anticipated traffic problems. Baker County Tourism will be talking with business shortly about recommended planning, especially urging restaurants to offer grab-and-go menu items. Web sites that have important information for eclipse planning are: on Facebook, search "Eclipse 2017 Baker County"; BaseCampBaker.com/eclipse; VisitBaker.com/2017-total-eclipse; TravelOregon.com/eclipse.

We can help by offering special events during that weekend and making them known to Timothy for promotion. Special eclipse viewing glasses will be available at all branches of the Baker County Library system and will also be provided free of charge by Baker County Tourism to outlying communities as available. There will be no attempt to collect lodging tax from one-time renters of rooms, homes, pasture camping spaces, etc. Folks doing such rentals are encouraged to list them on the Baker County Tourism web site and also to contact Holly Kerns with Baker County Planning (hkerns@bakercounty.org) so that in case of emergency, e.g., a grass or forest fire, areas where people are camped will be known and they can be notified of any danger.

Area porta-potty suppliers have already been tapped out with Tri-Cities being the nearest with any available for eclipse weekend. We will need to look into coordinating (and providing directions/signage to) all available rest room facilities – at the Lions Hall, school buildings, fairgrounds, etc. Sheila has already talked to U.S. Bank about making sure their ATM won't run out of money during the eclipse or the following weekends of Fair and Pine Fest.

Ron expressed concern that the Gas Buddy app refuses to list any of our outlets in Richland, Halfway, or Oxbow, so online it appears that this area is a fuel desert. This is truly unfortunate. On the positive side, Timothy said that all web sites he's associated with make a point of making fuel availability known to potential visitors.

Halfway's Pole-mounted Christmas Lights: Sheila inquired as to our satisfaction with the lighted stars that she and her husband made and which replaced live Christmas trees on our light poles this past holiday season. Everyone was very happy with them. She said that if they can get power to the poles, they'd like to make an additional 10-12 stars to light Main St. all the way out to the high school and E. Record St. to the cemetery. Becky moved, and Bill seconded, that we budget up to \$300 to pay for materials for these additional lights. Passed unanimously. Our thanks to Sheila and Denny for their beautiful work.

Pine Fest Award: Timothy congratulated us on the fact that at this year's Oregon Festivals & Events Conference, Pine Fest was named the "Best Music Festival in Oregon"!

Year of the Yuke: The Pine Eagle Education Foundation and the Cornucopia Arts Council are co-sponsoring a "Year of the Yuke" in Halfway with the first event being a movie to be shown in May.

Dates for upcoming area events were discussed as well as whether to have our next meeting at the Hells Canyon Inn as had originally been planned for this meeting. This seemed to be agreeable to all. That meeting will be June 6th and will need to include some serious eclipse planning as our following meeting will be August 1st, only three weeks before the eclipse.

Shelly was asked about The Main Place Hotel which is up and running with rooms priced at \$45, \$55, and \$65. Reservations can be made through the pvlodge.com web site by clicking on the Main Place tab.

The meeting was concluded at 2:50pm and an after-meeting work session was held to get annual membership appeal letters into the mail.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Schuhle, Secretary