

Minutes of the Meeting of the Creston Valley Chamber of Commerce

August 17, 2017-08-17

1. Call to Order and Members in Attendance

President Mark W. called the meeting to order at 12:02pm. Members in attendance include; Mark Wolfe, Mark Saunders, Megan McKendry, Bob Johnson, Brain Lawrence, Kim Garety, Ralph Vigna, Joanna Wilson, Chamber Manager Vern Gorham and Town Of Creston liaison Karen Unruh.

2. President's Report

- a) Mark W. discussed the meeting on Monday, August 14th with the Town of Creston's Mayor Ron Toyota, Town Manager Lou Varela and Councillor Karen Unruh. The Chamber executive was present, along with Chamber Manager Vern Gorham and board member, Bob Johnson. The meeting was an opportunity to reconnect and facilitate the plan to move forward with open communication, while discussing the correlation of activities of both sides. Mayor Toyota discussed 7 current projects in which the Chamber could collaborate. The current status and progress of the Wayfinding project was discussed. There was an arrangement made to initiate document sharing for various projects, including the Wayfinding project that Bob J. has been instrumental in over the past years.
- b) Mark W. explained that the Arduino/Robotics workshop held in the basement for 3 days last week by Jenny Tyler, for 4 children ages 8 to 11, was a success. There is talk of continuing with longer sessions in the fall. The workshop was the first step in building a foundation for creating an accessible and useful space in the basement of the Chamber building. Vern G. indicated the intention to apply for grants and funding for a feasibility study of the basement maker space when available. Kim G. provided that the College of the Rockies would consider use of such a maker space as applicable to courses or programs offered through the College.
- c) The new Chamber of Commerce website is live. Mark W. described the process of repatriating the URL and bringing the website in-house to allow for regular and immediate updates. The website is clean and functional, and content and information rich. It was requested that all board members have their bios submitted to Vern with a headshot for the website. Brian L. volunteered to take headshots of board members following the next Board Meeting. The Facebook page is also live and will be used to share information secondary and complementary to the website. It was requested that all members share the page and invite their contacts to follow the Chamber on Facebook.
- d) Mark W. mentioned that when the current renovations are completed the Chamber will be hosting a Grand Opening as an opportunity to reacquaint members and introduce the new reconfigured space. Vern G. suggested a date in September to coincide with introducing the events we have planned for October. Mark S., who has undertaken the renovation project, expressed a concern that the planned renovations may not be completed as the flooring still needs to be installed, the interior door hung and finishings installed. Megan M. offered to attempt to vet out a contractor to install the flooring. Possible dates will be discussed again as the renovations are closer to completion.

3. Vice-President Report

- a) Mark S. discussed the updates on the draft of the constitution. The current draft is available to all board members for review. All concerns, comments and suggestions are welcome and should be submitted by Sunday night for discussion at the executive meeting on Monday, August 21st.

- b) The renovations are coming along, with the newest developments being the blue accent wall which will display the Chamber logo. The kiosk window still needs to be built, and the interior door and finishings need to be purchased. In addition, the tile needs to be installed. The initial 1 room renovation budget of \$3000 has been surpassed, but the result will be 2 completed rooms. Upon completion, the kiosk window will be staffed by members on a volunteer basis to allow the Chamber Manager to have the time to network with local business persons.

4. Chamber Manager Report

- a) Vern G. touched on the current financials. After starting the year with what was essentially a zero balance, the Chamber accounts are holding even with the additional expenses not accounted for with the last budget. Funds are starting to come in from table registrations for the upcoming Fall Trade Show.
- b) The Fall Trade Show is open for registrations. There are 51 table spaces, with 2 reserved for the Chamber, and currently there are 8+ tables booked. Chamber volunteers will be needed to man the tables on event day.
- c) Vern G. mentioned that when time allows him to get out and speak with business owners, he is finding success. Mark S. suggested group membership discussion meetings over coffee as a way to streamline his time and it is something Vern will consider for the future. The Chamber currently stands at approximately 150 members, with the largest membership ever being 215. It is the hope of the Chamber Manager that we will end the year with 175+ members.
- d) The possibilities of an Empty Building Tour were discussed. This is an initiative that operates in conjunction with the local real estate agencies and is timed to coincide with a large community event, such as Blossom festival. It is an opportunity to show the towns empty buildings to potential business persons in the hopes of filling those empty spaces. The feasibility of such a project will be discussed further at a later date.

5. Actionable Items

- a) The Grand Fondo is in the planning stages, with a 2 year timeline and expected event date in the third or fourth week of September, 2019. There will be multiple committees involved in the planning and execution of this event. Vern G. and Merv Hutchinson, the president of Creston's Cycling Club are working together with organizers from Cranbrook on initial planning. The possibility to collaborate with the Trail Society in the future was mentioned. Merv H. will be mapping out the potential course. Joanna W. motioned for Merv H. to receive a free 1 year personal membership to the Chamber, seconded by Mark S., none opposed. Motion was carried.
- b) Mark W. mentioned that all plans to utilize the basement space are contingent on a clean-up project to remove clutter and accumulated items. It was suggested that the project could start with a sorting session on Monday, August 21st at 10:30am, following the executive meeting. With another session to follow on Thursday, August 24th at 9am. Vern G. will send out a request to members for assistance at those times.

6. Other/New Business

- a) Clarification was provided by Vern G. and Mark W., that based on an earlier decision by the board to accept email votes on important items in absence of a quorum, all current board members have been ratified on approval by unanimous consent.

- b) Vern G. brought attention to the upcoming Small Business summit to be held in Vancouver and mentioned that the info will be linked on the Chamber website.
- c) The Columbia Basin Trust has funding available for a part-time position, for 1 to 15 hours per week, for which Vern will apply on behalf of the Chamber.
- d) Mark W. indicated the footwork has been done for 2 upcoming workshops for Chamber members. The first is a crime prevention workshop in conjunction with the RCMP; the second is a fire extinguisher training workshop in conjunction with the Creston Fire Department.
- e) Mark W. initiated a discussion regarding the possible increase of the existing mortgage, of which approximately \$27,000 remains, to provide some funds for various priority projects. Some of these expenses could include signage for the outside of the building, a building maintenance fund, and start-up costs of the basement development. A committee was struck, including Ralph V., Mark S., and Mark W., to put together a comprehensive list of costs of priority items to present to a financial advisor. Mark W. called for a motion for Vern G. to initiate an investigation into the feasibility and effect of securing funds off the building, whether by increasing the mortgage or taking a line of credit on the collateral. So moved by Brian L., seconded by Joanna, none opposed. Motion was carried.

7. President Mark W. called the meeting adjourned at 1:16pm.