

# HCCC

HOTCHKISS COMMUNITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

promoting business & quality of life

## **Membership Meeting August 30, 2017 - Wheeler Room, Memorial Hall**

**Roll Call.** Board Members Present: Nathan Sponseller, Katherine Colwell, Sue Whittlesey, Bill Long, Tracy Ihnot, Robbie Winne. Absent: Lynda Cannon. Community Members Present: Kimberly Klouser, Lisa Delaney, Mitch Swanda.

**Call to Order.** President Sponseller called the meeting to order at 8:06 am.

### **Approval of Minutes.**

Sponseller has been filling in as stand-in Recording Secretary during Ihnot's maternity leave. June and July minutes were sent to the board via email prior to the meeting. Suggested changes had been made prior to the meeting. Long moved, and Winne seconded, acceptance of the June and July minutes as presented. All were in favor.

### **Treasurer's Report.**

With Whittlesey out of town until just prior to the meeting, no Treasurer's Report was provided for August. Sponseller mentioned that Mary Hockenbery had contacted him and noted that with the Town fronting the \$803.54 cost for downtown flowers and soils for 2017, the Chamber's commitment to cover half the costs, up to a maximum of \$500, came to \$401.77. No invoice was submitted to the Chamber and Sponseller will contact Hockenbery for the invoice.

### **Communication Secretary's Report.**

Colwell reported that the Constant Contact program used for distributing the weekly e-newsletter, is becoming more and more unwieldy. This, in combination with a new requirement for the Chamber to periodically promote Constant Contact to our members (in exchange for use of a free version of the program), has led Colwell to speculate that the Chamber may want to consider switching to the Mail Chimp program by the end of this year. Colwell is familiar with Mail Chimp.

Colwell noted that Colorado.com is offering a free listing page for Chambers, and that Sponseller will work on getting this page set up, using photos provided by Colwell.

Colwell noted that the Chamber is currently using an AT&T long distance calling card to facilitate long distance calls. The cost of this card is funded by a donation from TDS Telecom, in the form of Visa Gift Cards. She feels that calling cards will be phased out in the future and that the Chamber may need to look at procuring a cell phone for Chamber use. The remaining gift cards provided by TDS could be used towards the cost of a cell phone. Further discussion on this matter will take place following additional research.

Colwell reported that she and Whittlesey had attended a series of training classes funded by a grant through the Colorado Tourism Office (and administered through the Creative Coalition). This training was focused on improving website SEO (search engine optimization). Both agreed that the classes were very

valuable and Colwell made the recommended SEO improvements. She noted that in our business directory we need to try to provide business descriptions that are about 100 words each, and reflect key words used on the website associated with the business in question – this helps with SEO. Some discussion was had about adjusting our membership application to request this 100 word description from members.

### **Presentations/Introductions:**

Kimberly Klouser from the Delta County School District Internship Program was on hand to present details of the School District's new Internship program. Klouser reported that in the past each high school had its own program, but there was not a lot of consistency in what was offered. The new program is district-wide and centralized in its administration. The two types of programs offered to students and local businesses are: 1) *Work Study*, where a student is paid to learn the ropes in a possible future career. 2) *Internship*, which is unpaid, and helps a student exchange work for a valuable learning experience. Both tracks are intended to help students identify if a potential career track is, in fact, one that they feel might be suitable, before actually starting down a work or educational path. Internships can be in academic or trade related fields. Klouser noted that the program is looking both for sponsors and for advisory board members. The Chamber will help promote this to members through our e-newsletter.

### **Old Business.**

**Signage update.** Sponseller noted that Colorado Sign Studio had contacted him to say that the sign board replacement should be ready to pick up by the end of this week (September 1). Long offered to pick this up when completed. Long mentioned that he has done some research on solar powered spot lights for the town entrance sign boards. He found an option that might work. After discussion, it was agreed to spend up to \$60 for two lights.

**Downtown walking map:** Sponseller reported that he met with graphic designer, Andrea Lecos, regarding a re-make of the downtown walking map. Sponseller has collected data to be included on the map and will get this organized and over to Lecos shortly. The Colorado Tourism Office grant money, which will pay a portion of the cost, is being administered by the North Fork Valley Creative Coalition and will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis. Deadline for supporting invoices is by the end of September, and Sponseller will ask Lecos to provide a bill by that point regardless of whether work is completed, so the Chamber does not miss reimbursement deadline.

**Dining and Lodging Guide Updates:** Hotchkiss and Crawford Chambers have updated their portion of the Dining guide. Paonia is working on their updates. No lodging guide updates have been completed.

**Facilities Resource List Project:** Sponseller noted that Lara Noel, who has been assigned this project, has not yet completed the project and was employed full time in July, making a completion date hard to nail down. Sponseller asked how the board wanted to approach this. It was agreed that Noel will work on pulling together all collected information and this will be evaluated to see whether we should make collected information available, or wait until a further stage of completion to make the information public.

**Postcards:** The post card, with the image of the mountains in the background and the coal train in the foreground, was re-printed in a quantity of 500. These are stored in our Visitor Center storage area and distributed to local retailers for sale. The Chamber's cost is .29 cents each and the Board agreed to continue the policy of selling to retailers 3/\$1.

**Policy for Special Projects Account:** At the July meeting, the Board voted on a policy of keeping a \$6,000 balance in the Special Projects Account as a fall back for emergency needs, and that no money could be moved from the account without Board approval. It was later determined that a “Policy”, according to the By-laws, cannot be set outside of member approval, at the annual meeting. The Board discussed making the \$6,000 balance in the Special Projects Account a “practice” for the time being, and drafting wording for a Policy question to the membership at the Annual Meeting. Whittlesey made the motion, Colwell seconded, and all were in favor.

## **New Business.**

**Annual Meeting:** The Board discussed the date, time and location of the 2017 annual meeting. It was agreed to select Wednesday, November 8, from 5:30-7pm. We will try to reserve the Doc Maloney House at the Hotchkiss Fairgrounds as the location for the event. Whittlesey suggested contacting Mark Roeber, Delta County Commissioner, about offering a brief overview at the event of issues of interest to the Hotchkiss community. The Chamber will contact Julie at Taco Hut regarding catering food for the event.

**North Fork Ambulance Association Membership:** Kathy Steckel, Director of the North Fork Ambulance Association, contacted Sponseller with a request. She indicated that should the Chamber be a business member of the Association, then all Chamber business members would be eligible for a \$10 discount on their business memberships with the North Fork Ambulance Association. The cost of membership to the Chamber would be \$100. Discussion ensued about how to handle this request in light of the fact that the Chamber has a practice of not joining other non-profit organizations. It was decided that the fact that the Chamber would use this as a supplement to its own insurance coverage would make this a different scenario—one that not only provided a benefit to our members, but also provide ambulance insurance coverage for Chamber functions. The Board agreed to join NFAA, and to offer the reduced cost benefit to members as a benefit of membership. Whittlesey made the motion, Winne seconded, and all were in favor.

**Mobile Stage:** Sponseller reported that he had requested use of the Delta Chamber of Commerce mobile stage for the Farm to Fiddle event, and that the request was readily granted because we are a Chamber of Commerce. Whittlesey noted that previous contacts about that stage had not resulted in an agreement to allow for usage, and so she had done some preliminary research on having a mobile stage fabricated. Robbie LeValley, County Administrator, had encouraged Whittlesey to come up with a proposal for consideration by the County. Several ideas were floated, including contacting Welfeldt Construction of Delta, regional trailer dealers, WeatherPort, and the Delta Montrose Technical College’s welding program, as well as sponsors to fund the project. This will be investigated further.

**Chamber Privacy Policy:** Colwell reported that in her meetings on SEO, the Chamber was encouraged to have a formal privacy policy adopted and posted on the Chamber websites. The purpose of this policy is to announce how the Chamber uses emails collected from the public via the websites. A motion was made by Colwell to have a policy adopted. Whittlesey seconded, and all present were in agreement. Sponseller agreed to draft a policy for consideration, and to be discussed at the September meeting. Any agreed upon policy would then need to be adopted by the membership at the Annual Meeting.

## **Committee Reports.**

**Outreach Committee.** Ihnot and Sponseller confirmed that the final batch of prepared welcome bags had been delivered to the Town Hall in early August, and that the Town has not yet contacted the Chamber to report that a new stock was needed. Ihnot noted that her son, Finley, volunteers to help put together the bags.

**Farm to Fiddle Report.** Cannon was not present to give a wrap up report, but it was reported that the event was broadly considered to be a success.

**Non-agenda items.**

It was reported that the Delta County Library District is looking for board members to represent both Crawford and Delta. The Chamber will promote this need in the e-newsletter.

**Next Membership Meeting.** Meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 27 at 8am in The Wheeler Room.

**Adjournment.** Meeting was adjourned by Sponseller at 10:10 am

Minutes respectfully submitted,

Nathan Sponseller, President