

To: Chamber Board Members
Re: Minutes for 2/11/16 Board Meeting

I. Call to Order: 7:30 AM by Jim MacGillivray, President

The meeting was held in the Fellowship Hall of the Cimarron United Methodist Church.

In Attendance: Jim MacGillivray, Tracy Boyce, Vicky Harper, Marianne MacGillivray, Chris McGuinness, Rick Parker and Candee Rinde. We missed Kevin Dowling. A quorum is present with all but one in attendance.

II. Approval of Minutes from Jan. 14th meeting: Marianne M. made 1st motion to approve minutes and Rick P. made 2nd motion to approve. Minutes approved with one correction. Marianne M. will take the corrected, approved Minutes to International Bank to arrange for a new signature card for both Chamber accounts with all “voting” members of the Chamber Board authorized to sign checks. Kevin Dowling has declined to participate.

III. Treasurer’s Report: Jim M. presented report, distributing the current spreadsheet 2015-2016 Budget Report (attached) as a guide. The Chamber is faced with serious financial challenges based on this report. Exploring potential Income remaining for the fiscal year, we discussed fundraising opportunities, Lodgers’ Tax potential income and outstanding Membership dues. Tracy B. briefly described the history of Mule Days/Cimarron Days/Wild West Days over the years – we had previously decided as a Board not to continue with this summertime event at this time for multiple reasons: vendors were mostly out-of-towners and many local businesses did not benefit, with the hours of planning and effort by the organizing committee, few dollars were actually made to benefit the Chamber and the event was traditionally held when the town was already full of visitors, few of whom participated in the weekend festival. We did have a good return on a Raffle fundraiser summer before last, but have no plans in motion yet for this year. Ideas were discussed.

The Lodgers’ Tax Board authorized the Chamber to receive \$14,400 for this fiscal year – we have received \$14,700 to date in response to our requests for reimbursements, and have depleted our capped amount 5 months before the end of our operating year. With the beginning of an active Lodgers’ Tax Board this year, we will likely be competing next year with other non-profit organizations promoting Cimarron - potentially more applicants for the same amount of LT dollars. Jim M. recently met with Mindy at the Village who said that after 1 year (from collection), unused LT dollars could be returned to the Village’s general operating fund. Tracy B. responded that the state statute states LT dollars must be spent within 2 years from collection. Jim asked the Board, should we ask the Village for more LT monies, beyond our Service Agreement? This was discussed but without resolution.

The biggest Income potential remaining in our Budget is Membership Dues, but Vicky H., our Membership Chair, indicated that she has received negative feedback from current and renewing members, most complaints tied to the Village. Others have expressed disappointment with the new dues structure – one fee for all. A couple of new, significant businesses in town could help – the Corner P-66 Gas/Mini-Mart (which just opened) and Family Dollar (soon to be under construction). We can also make a plea to our current members to help and solicit our primary businesses for additional contributions/donations.

Candee reported on the Expense side that our Insurance premium has gone up 25% this year, with renewal coming up in March. Other expenses related to Visitor Center operations are relatively fixed: copier contract, utilities, phone, etc.. Our Bulk Mailing permit (fee due soon) is used by a few member businesses and these claim this is one main reason that they retain Chamber membership.

Our financial obligations have also grown with the recent discovery of our lapsed non-profit status. To hire Piper Bookkeeping (Piper) to prepare our delinquent IRS 990 forms (proposed fee of \$150 x 6 years) and pay the fee for reinstatement (\$850), preparing the IRS 1024 form on our own, an additional \$1,750

in expenses will tip our balance sheet further, since these were not accounted for in our yearly budget. Note that Judy Piper has offered a pay-over-time arrangement to help us, but the IRS reinstatement fee would be due upon filing. We either need our non-profit status reinstated or file/pay back taxes for a “for-profit” corporation, a situation which is not in our best interest. The Board all agreed to seek non-profit status, hiring Piper as outlined here, and authorized Jim M. to contact Judy to proceed. Sharon Smith is helping us tremendously by gathering and organizing past records in our office files to pass to Judy for this effort.

We discussed further how to adjust the Chamber operations to make up for our budget shortfalls and raise money to pay the IRS fees. Jim stated that our monthly repayment to Explore the Arts should be suspended temporarily, though we will continue to pay the Village debt. The Board voted to suspend ETA payments until July 1st – Chris M. made 1st motion and Marianne M. made 2nd motion, all approved. Motion carried. Jim M. also suggested that \$1,000 grant monies from CS Cattle Company Foundation (last year) were received for VC maintenance, and have been absorbed for operation expenses, another indication that our expenses outweigh our income. Tracy B. suggested evaluating Visitor Center data to cut down hours during our Winter Season when fewer visitors need assistance and fewer members need services. Currently, the open hours are Wed through Sat, 10 – 4. Vicky H. made 1st motion to reduce hours of the VC and Marianne M. made 2nd motion, all approved. Motion carried to reduce Visitor Center hours to Wed through Sat, 10 – 1, effective now through May 15th. We collectively expressed our regrets to Candee R. who will have 12 fewer paid hours per week.

IV. Old Business

a. Cowboy Sign Report – Marianne M. will write a thank-you letter to the CS Cattle Company Foundation for the \$650 grant given to the Chamber for the refurbishment of the sign. This money will pay for the cost of materials. The \$1,500 artist fees proposed by Melinda Marlowe will be covered by another Foundation contribution that the Maverick Club will handle for us – this is being arranged by Jim M.. The “Cowboy” will be removed and Melinda will begin work this month. We briefly discussed the use of slogans on the sign (our current Chamber logo “Where The West is Still Wild” vs. the logo used on signs entering Cimarron, “Where the Rockies Meet the Plains” – Marianne discussed how this sign is intended to be an informational orientation to Cimarron, illustrated in bold graphics, would include a place for Event Banners, but would not include a slogan, since this is included on all Welcome to Cimarron signs.

b. Community Roundtable – future: Jim M. asked whether we should continue with this open forum community discussion group. We discussed that this serves an important function as the “Voice of the Community” without an agenda or set format and its name may be more suited as the “Cimarron Pride Committee.” Chris M. agreed to lead this group forward, organizing a 15 minute structured activity or subject for the community group to address. We discussed scheduling and where to advertise (church bulletins, laundromat, etc.) – Chris will coordinate this with Candee. We will continue to hold ribbon cuttings on Thursday evenings just after work hours.

V. Executive Secretary’s Report – Candee Rindee

Candee asked us all to support this evening’s ribbon cutting at the Hot Spot Café. She is also working with the Mini-Mart on their Grand Opening in April – we will do a ribbon-cutting at the same time. She reported renewing the Century Link phone/internet contract (2 year commitment) with a savings of \$45 per month. The outdoor display/brochure rack door is still broken – Rick P. agreed to look at getting this repaired and will coordinate with Candee.

VI. New Business

a. Open Treasurer’s Position – Kevin Dowling had been elected our Treasurer at January’s meeting but will not be able to serve in this capacity until our non-profit status is restored under the IRS. Jim M. agreed to serve as our interim Treasurer during this period. Vicky H. made 1st motion to accept his offer and Chris M. made 2nd motion, all approved. The Board voted Jim MacGillivray our interim Treasurer.

b. Open Board Member Position – Tracy B. was appointed to fill Steve Nelson’s position on the Board, which expired at the end of 2015. She is continuing on the Board as the Past-President, a non-voting position. Jim M. has asked Tracy if she would agree to serve in a voting capacity, to fill the one vacant slot on the Board. We value her knowledge and experience with the Chamber and the Village of Cimarron over the years, and consider this an asset to the current Chamber Board. We asked Tracy if she would be willing to take the remainder of Barbara Graham’s voting slot, expiring at the end of 2016, and she agreed. Rick P. made 1st motion and Chris M. made 2nd motion to approve this appointment – all approved. She indicated that she does not have the time to serve as an Officer since she is out of town frequently, now residing in Colorado, and declined to participate as a signer for the bank accounts.

c. Team Reports

Visitor Center Operations – Marianne M.

Marianne is working with Candee to clean up/update the VC operations manual and develop a calendar driven “task” list so that planning time is allowed for and critical items are not missed (filing CRS/IRS forms, Grant requests, etc.). The current book does well at describing “hard skills,” but our intent is to improve our “soft skills” in dealing with the public and our members. Personal contact and effective, individualized support of our businesses could increase our member retention/renewal.

Visitor Center Building – Rick P.

Candee has prepared a Building Maintenance List – Rick will follow-up and make contacts for necessary repairs as required.

Membership – Vicky H.

Vicky spoke of the need for the Chamber to demonstrate value to our businesses – we will work on a list of what the Chamber does for the business community.

Economic Development – Jim M.

Jim read the Economic Development Ordinance (red-lined version) to the Board, enumerating the responsibilities that the previous Board of Directors had agreed to perform on behalf of the Village. He pointed out that there are many tasks involved and no resources to carry them through meaningfully. This list includes creating a Land/Building Inventory that will interface with the New Mexico Economic Development website with links on the web for Commercial Developers to access. To pursue Grants on behalf of the community, as tasked in the ordinance, we would have to create a 501 3(c) sister organization with separate accounts and bookkeeping. Our Board could serve for both. Jim concluded by asking the Board some pressing questions about our future as an organization.

- Do we need to be a Chamber of Commerce?
- Do we need to be an advocate for our business members?
- Do we need to be a Tourist Bureau? Operate a Visitor Center?
- Should our organization go forward in the capacity of facilitating Economic Development?

Jim reported meeting with Tim Hagaman, Local Economic Development State Representative, to discuss our economic development role. They plan to go to Las Vegas, NM in the near future to meet with the NM State Highway Department, exploring extent of highway right-of-ways and highway signage. We would like to get a larger Visitor Center Sign and move our Welcome signs closer to the roads for increased visibility.

Events – unassigned

We began to discuss the July 4th Parade, an event that we have organized in the recent past. We expend \$100 for prize money for the “Best Floats” entered. Jim M. approached Victoria F. of the Cimarron Art Gallery to ask if she could help with this event. Candee will also ask Kelly C. (Vallerie Vickers daughter) who ran this event as a volunteer for the Chamber last year.

Marketing - unassigned

Candee suggested that the Taos News is offering a free 1 page ad for the Cimarron Chamber in the Taos Summer Guide if enough Cimarron area businesses advertise in the local section. We have done this in past years and will continue to discuss.

d. Candidate Forum – Vicky H.

All is set for Saturday’s event – Gayanne Jeffers will moderate. Only one candidate will not be present. Vicky H. will welcome all those attending and will introduce the moderator and candidates. All thanked Vicky for her hard work to make this event come together – providing an important service to our community.

e. Candidate Postings on Chamber Website – We discussed and agreed that this will be offered to all Village Council candidates and we will include a disclaimer that states the Chamber does not endorse any individual candidate. The decision to participate is up to the candidate. The election is scheduled for March 1st.

f. Summer Volunteers for VC – will discuss more next month, but all agreed to ask potentially interested individuals who have expressed interest or volunteered in the past.

VII. Other Items/Announcements

Schedule of upcoming Board Meetings/Chamber Functions:

Ribbon Cutting for The Hot Spot is scheduled for this evening, February 11th at 5:15PM.

The Candidate Forum is scheduled for Saturday, February 13th at 10AM, Parish Hall, followed by a Public Hearing.

The Community Roundtable for February is canceled.

The regular Village Council Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 17th at 6:00PM.

Village elections are scheduled for Tuesday, March 1st.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 10th at 7:30 AM, St. James Hotel.

Vicky H. made motion to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM by Jim M.

Respectfully submitted: Marianne MacGillivray, Secretary of the Chamber Board

March 6, 2016