

**Sweet Home Chamber of Commerce  
Board Meeting Minutes  
July 15, 2021  
5:30 - 7:00 pm**

**Attendees:**

George Medellin - President  
Christy Duncan – Vice President - excused absence  
Mark Opperman – Treasurer  
Melody Jordan – Executive Director  
Karla Hogan - excused absence  
Shelly Larson  
Paula Newman  
Marlene Peterson - excused absence  
Cassie Richey - excused absence  
Trisha VanEck  
Dylan Richards - City Liaison  
Dave Trask - City Council Member

**Call to Order**

George called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm and read the Chamber’s mission statement, “Enhancing our community by strengthening local business through service, connection, promotion, and advocacy.”

**Review of Previous Minutes**

George asked for a clarification of the July minutes stating that the City will not be funding a sign for the Chamber, and asked if the Chamber had been denied a funding application. Melody shared that funding from the City was an option discussed to achieve funding for an LED sign, but is not something we are actively pursuing.

**VOTE:** Motion to approve the July minutes as presented was made by Paula. Trisha seconded the motion. The motion was carried without objections or abstentions.

**Financial Report**

Mark updated the Board on account balances.

Umpqua Bank:

Checking \$7,134.32

Savings \$18,807.60 including \$17,300 EIDL funds

Key Bank:

\$10,997.86

Financial reports were received from Koopman Consulting for the months of June and July. George asked what expenses came through in the last two weeks that dropped the

Umpqua checking nearly \$10,000. Mark noted that there was a check for a little over \$2,500 to Sweet Home High Metal Fabrication Program for the Cut the Gut fundraiser donation, a check for a little over \$2,600 to Radiator Supply House for Cut the Gut merchandise, a check for about \$1700 to little town celebrations for Banquet catering, which came out to just under \$7,000 out. Paula asked how much came in from the Awards Banquet. Melody estimated a net income of \$1800 which includes income and expenses of 2020 and 2021.

### **Nonprofit Status Update**

The Chamber has not yet received a response from the IRS.

### **Executive Director Update**

Melody reported on the following:

- Our Easter Seals participant, Shirley, has accepted a full time position elsewhere and is no longer working in the office. Melody is considering ending the contract with Easter Seals due to a small pool of participants to choose from and requirements as a Host Agency being difficult to fulfill at this time.
- Jen Castaneda has been volunteering three days a week for two hours on Mondays and Fridays, and on Saturdays for four hours through Labor day to help us fulfill our City Agreement. With Jen's help, Melody is able to maintain posted office hours most of the time, but there are some times when Melody must close the office to attend meetings or events.
- The Executive Directors from Chambers in the region met recently, and Melody noted that she enjoyed hearing perspectives about event plans, such as annual banquets, from more experienced Directors.
- Melody is working on maintaining a relationship to legislation by meeting with Sean Tate of Tate Public Affairs, who has been an active link between County and State to local Chambers. Sean will be contributing to our upcoming newsletters with relevant content for local businesses. Melody also noted that although the Chamber has been event focused the last several months, she is working to maintain all of our pillars including Business Advocacy.
- In partnership with the City and the Oregon Jamboree, the Chamber has started Tune it up Tuesdays, evolved from shop local effort Tuesdays Downtown. The Jamboree secured entertainment for every Tuesday through September 21, and the City is sponsoring the cost of performers. Melody has worked with downtown stores to stay open until eight pm to create opportunities for customers to shop, and is encouraging take out orders from Sweet Home restaurants. Additionally, the classic car, truck, and side-by-side community is encouraged to cruise in for the weekly festivities.
- The City is sponsoring cash prizes for businesses to spruce up their storefronts in preparation for Business Oregon visiting Sweet Home on August 24.
- Melody has been working with the Ambassadors team to re-engage the committee and set some new goals. Modeling after the Lebanon Chamber and other larger Chambers, Melody adapted an Ambassador Handbook and is looking to grow the committee. She requested that if any of the Board know someone who may be a good fit, to please send their contact information.

Paula asked if Sweet Home Chamber will be receiving any income from the Gateway Leadership partnership. Melody shared that the topic had been discussed, but she will seek formal confirmation in writing. Melody noted that Lebanon has extended the invitation to Sweet Home businesses, and the brochure is in our current newsletter. George proposed that he, Paula, and Melody make a promotional video to promote the leadership program.

George noted that the Oregon State Chamber of Commerce annual conference is coming up on October 19 and 20, and that it would be beneficial for Melody to attend. The cost is \$275. It was unclear if the cost includes a hotel room, and Melody will confirm what is included in the cost.

Paula shared that she is attending an ambassador conference in Springfield September 16-19 with the Lebanon Chamber, and that it would be great if Sweet Home's ambassador team could attend.

### **Princess Court Committee Report - Cassie**

The Sportsman's Holiday Princess Court Committee dismissed two girls from the court, bringing the number to five. The court performed a song for Chips 'N Splinters and participated in the parade. Good feedback was received for their participation. Cassie hopes to have a Committee meeting this month to debrief, make notes of ideas, and set dates for next year's event. The Committee may need to change up the Board next year. Shirley Austin helped in many areas with coronation including lining up the sound person and entertainment.

### **Other Business**

George noted, and Mark confirmed, that 2022 budget planning will begin in October.

George also noted that nominations will open in December for the 2022 Executive Team. Melody asked if the current Executive Team could renew their role, and George was unsure. George will discuss the Executive Team nominations with Christy and address at a later date.

Paula addressed the widespread issue of hiring employees, and inquired about the "Hiring in Sweet Home" post that Melody created a couple of months back. Melody said when she noticed the trend of employers struggling with hiring, she created the post (on Facebook) and tagged every business that was hiring. Businesses reached out and asked to be added to the list. (The post was shared 277 times.) Melody noted that there hasn't been much activity on the post recently.

Paula proposed hosting a panel discussion about hiring and retention to support businesses in this challenge. The purpose of the panel would be to educate, find out what the issues are, and how we can help. There was discussion of potential candidates for the panel, and Shelly suggested including candidates who are having hiring or retention issues to balance out the discussion. Shelly and Melody shared

concerns about low attendance for such an event, and Paula suggested getting feedback from business owners at the upcoming Business After Hours event.

City Councilor Dave Trask shared that the City Council is supportive of the Chamber, and that he believes the Chamber is doing a great job.

Melody noted that the August Business After Hours host has changed to Steelhead Fitness, as Buck's Sanitary Service is working in fire camps across the state.

Paula asked if anything needs to be done with losing the Chamber's Office Assistant. Melody was unsure of what could be done immediately, but noted that she would like to try to work in a budget for an office employee in the 2022 budget. Paula shared that she thinks the Chamber could find more volunteers to avoid paying an employee. Melody shared concerns about allowing volunteers access to sensitive information to help with office tasks, and it was agreed that access should be given very selectively. Melody shared another concern about reliability issues for volunteer positions, and the need for help with office procedure tasks. Paula suggested that each Board member look for two possible trustworthy, reliable volunteers and send names and contact information to Melody by the next Board meeting.

George adjourned the meeting at 6:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Opperman  
Treasurer

Melody Reese  
Recorder

