



**Board Meeting Minutes
July 26, 2023
Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting**

Attendance

Present: Brandi Gaines, Billy Beckett, Suzie Burke, Phil Megenhardt, Paul Robinson, Eva Otto, Sean Erhardt, Jessica Vets

Absent: Jamie Hoffman, Amina Kapusuzoglu, Ken Saunderson

Staff: Pete Hanning, Caroline Sherman

Guests: Nicole Hill, Brooks Running

Call to Order – Brandi

The meeting was called to order by Brandi at 8:37am

- A. Mission Statement was read out loud.
 - a. The Fremont Chamber of Commerce strengthens the business climate and improves the quality of life in the Fremont community.
- B. Introductions: Welcome Nicole Hill. Great to have you join us. Introductions around the room.
- C. President's remarks: Enjoyed the rain, helped water her friend's yard.

Approval June Minutes: Suzie moved to approve; Phil seconded. A vote was held, and the June minutes were APPROVED.

Committee Reports and New Business

- A. (15 mins) Finance: 6-month budget review, Phil
 - a. We are at mid-year analysis. June overall. We watch our budget monthly to see if we're on target comparing our budgeted amounts against actuals. We have a few revenue engines. Meeting income exceeded our budget. The main revenue source is membership income.
 - b. Website expenses as we get used to the new membership management system. Thanks to Caroline for providing notes and seeing where we are.
 - c. We are where we should be at six months. The plans are strong. Oktoberfest is the Chamber's largest fundraiser. It is forecast at half of what it normally is. We are hopeful it will be stronger. We are fiscally conservative. Plan for the worst and hope for the best and take action to make the best happen. Nothing in our six months' review says we're off track of anything. We run a lean ship. Our largest expenses are human resources. Ken, Pete and Caroline, the workhorses of the chamber, allow the board to focus on board things like making sure our neighborhood is safe and programming.
 - d. We approved the budget with a deficit, because this is where we are. We can end the year less under water than we budgeted for. We are raising our dues, bringing in

- new members and bringing existing members to their proper membership package, and making other changes and working hard to bring in funds.
- e. Suzie: Lots of systems, but not a lot of people. If you know someone who hasn't joined the Chamber, encourage them to join. Get your peers to ask the right questions at their level.
- B. (5 mins) Marketing & Communications: Rack card & tours, Pete
- a. We are in final layout of the rack card. Working to get high resolution photos. Getting quotes on the printing.
 - b. Issues with Lenin, but we still want him on the card.
 - c. Hoping to have that printed very soon, which is great because we are on our last case of WG.
 - d. Adobe also wants to sponsor the rack card! Will share details. And potentially for one of the hysterical markers.
- C. (5 mins) Major Events: Oktoberfest, Phil
- a. Two months out. Breweries are signing up. Beer distributors are shifting around. Columbia Distributors provided large infrastructure of large beer trucks, but they're not investing in trucks like that, which means more expense.
 - b. Biggest thing the Chamber can do is talk about volunteering at the Oktoberfest on Saturday night or other nights. You get free beer at the end! That volunteer campaign has started. Looking forward to getting it going. Tickets are on sale and folks are buying now. Could have an industry night/day. Have all the people come out to recognize what a great event we have. It's a regional event from Everett to Olympia. We're the biggest in the NW. A BIG deal in the event world.
 - c. Brandi: It is the duty of every member to volunteer. Saturday night I hope to see you there. Jessica volunteered quite a bit. Bring your friends! Friday, Saturday night or Sunday.
 - d. Jessica: get there early, so you get the highest alcohol content line.
 - e. Suzie will send 10 friends.
 - f. Eva is excited to introduce folks to Old Stove and will bring them to Oktoberfest. She's working on them to join the Chamber.
 - g. Brandi: Manager of the Nickerson Old Stove was not a fan of Chambers.
 - h. Eva: Their new location is the old Lagunitas space. Will be an amazing event space.
- D. (5 mins) Membership: dues & benefits, Pete
- a. At our last board meeting agreed to increase dues. We are working hard to get that sorted out. Going really well. Had some good meetings with Jessica and Ken around the language and what is the value proposition. Working on getting businesses in the right package. That's been going well. Looking forward to seeing how that is working the numbers in our budget.
 - b. Jessica: Reviewed new value propositions listed in new dues letter and the new Employee benefits we are calling out.
 - c. Jessica and Brandi discussed various programs in house programs that provide value to employees and give us an opportunity to promote the Chamber.
- E. (5 mins) Programs: Pete
- a. 30 people registered at our mixer at the Elks Club. Opportunity for Elks & Chamber to network. Also, an opportunity for QA businesses to get involved in our Chamber, especially if their businesses are on the north side of QA.
 - b. Next month our event will be on the water on the vessel *Fremont Avenue*. Room for 40 people. Feliks Benel, local historian to give us a tour. Start at 5:30, tickets at \$49. Please put it on your calendar. Looking forward to that.

- c. Salesforce/Tableau, we agreed to partner with them on a housing initiative on August 22nd at 5:30 in Salesforce building across from Anytime Fitness. Free to attend. Hope that by us partnering, they will see the value and rejoin.

Office Reports—Pete & Caroline

A. Executive Director – Pete

a. Public Safety: Pete

- i. Fortunately, not a lot going on. No call in August.

b. Transportation/SDOT Route 40

- i. We will be rolling out our campaign spearheaded by Natalie Quick.

c. Lenin:

- i. Seattle Times editorial on Lenin by newest op-ed. My first response: if it's not about someone dying in fremont it's good press for Fremont. (Suzie) It created a lot of letters to the editor. Unfortunately, the author went to Twitter and conflated Lenin atrocities with Hitler & Seattle Times let him go. Pete met with him. Nice young man, 8-month old kid, new to the community. How we handle the story of Lenin is important and we're having the right conversations. He came to fremont for the Dumplings, we have dumpling tzar, Red Star Taco Bar who are using Lenin for commerce. The controversy helps our community immensely. Suzie mentioned that White Center would want it for \$25k. that is not enough. It continues to do what we want it to do.
- ii. Billy: I agree with Pete. It's the central icon of Fremont. We use it as a landmark, in advertising. It causes conversations we should be having as citizens of the world.
- iii. Suzie: we don't own it. It came temporarily to sit on a person's property. We had it on a flat bed for 2 years and hauled it around. Her estate went through probate, and nobody claimed it. It sits on someone's property who does not want it. I have a statue of a Ukrainian poet that the Ukrainian embassy wants to replace Lenin. They are doing this all over Europe. If we could loan that statue to White Center, it would relieve Phil Suetens. I've been cleaning up that statue, \$2k/year. More of a magnet than it used to be for graffiti. What would it cost to haul it away? \$5k years ago to do it. When there's an article in the Seattle Times with Fremont on it, we get good business. It's been for sale forever.
- iv. Caroline: if the former owners haven't claimed it, could it be argued that Phil S owns it?
- v. Brandi: has it gone through an attorney?
- vi. Suzie: It's unclaimed property. Left against the wishes of the property owner without insurance.
- vii. Brandi: An amazing piece of art is how we talk about it. We need to talk about that and not man.
- viii. Suzie: The story is how it got to Fremont. 3 years after it went up moved in three pieces to Fremont. Best photo is with for sale sign.
- ix. Pete: There's more to be discussed about this. In September let's have a sub-committee, Suzie and Billy, and anyone else who wants to discuss it. How we discussed war in Ukraine and shifted from Lenin lighting to Rocket lighting.

- x. Suzie: We're not in charge. We're helpful; here for the community. Phil S is in charge. Suzie will do whatever she can to help him. He's in a bad position.
- xi. Brandi: Let's decorate the hell out of him. Paper lederhosen for Oktoberfest? We have so much opportunity. Giant turkey head in November. It's a huge draw. What's going to go on his head this time? Need to update the string lights on the rocket—they are looking wobbly.

B. Office Management – Caroline

- a. Arts Fund
- b. NERF Grant
 - i. Suzie: New little bridge across the swale, been added by the building owners. Award!
 - ii. Walking Tours: consider reaching out to local business to discuss coupons with them. Get recommendations from Geocaching on how to do this. Write up directions for business owners & send to target businesses.
- c. Membership by the numbers

Announcements

- A. Announcements:
 - a. Hope to see you at the Elks Lodge.
 - b. Jessica: If I can do all the registration and share with Elks. Suzie & Jessica offered help.
 - c. Paul & Pete to bring the popups.
 - d. Limited parking.
 - e. Happy Birthday to Mick Jagger who turned 80 today.
- B. Calendar of Awesomeness—Chamber highlights – what have we accomplished that we want to highlight on our website?
 - a. Tout Candidate Event at the shipyard
- C. Chamber of Commerce Award Ideas – who do we want to nominate for a CoC Award and why?
 - a. Suzie: Lake Union building owners
 - b. Pete: Geocaching for helping with walking tours and for clean up on Ship Canal. For their help above and beyond for getting us on Adventure Labs.
 - c. Nicole for putting up with us.
- D. Other
 - a. Nicole will find out what Geocaching is doing. Marathon season coming up, so she'll report on that.
 - b. Do you still do reciprocal discounts for neighborhood businesses? Is that a member benefit?
 - c. Brandi: Michael Wanaka is no longer on the board. You have to participate in a committee, you need to be at the meetings. Michael had not been participating at all. When he has the time to commit, then he can come back. This will open up a space for other board members who are eager to participate to join.
 - d. Suzie: Everyone on the board brings something.
 - e. Brandi: appreciate different opinions and ideas.
 - f. Jessica: Hunter at Fremont Brewing is working on helping identify someone on the board. Edward Jones is sponsoring Obliteride and has more employees than any other sponsor participating except Fred Hutch. It ends at Gas Works and doesn't go

through Fremont but expect orange shirted folks. Marko Tubic doing the 100-mile ride. Jessica & Robert doing the 5k walk. You can participate virtually anywhere you are and log your miles.

- g. Pete: No meeting in August. Have a wonderful summer! Recharge and come back in September for a strong membership push.
- h. Suzie: boat ride—a great opportunity to see Fremont from the water.
- i. Brandi: Next meeting is after Oktoberfest so pay attention to all the “Volunteer now!” emails you’ll be getting, and sign up to volunteer at Oktoberfest!

Adjourn—Brandi

The meeting adjourned at 9:50am.

Minutes submitted by Caroline Sherman