



**Board Meeting Minutes
November 29, 2023
Microsoft Teams Meeting**

Attendance

Present: Brandi Gaines, Paul Robinson, Phil Megenhardt, Eva Otto, Suzie Burke, Sean Erhardt, Ken Saunderson

Absent: Billy Beckett, Jamie Hoffman, Amina Kapusuzoglu, Jessica Vets

Staff: Pete Hanning, Caroline Sherman

Guests: Nicole Hill, Brooks; Adam Gardner, Google

Call to Order – Brandi

The meeting was called to order by Brandi at 8:39am

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. President's Remarks: Thankful for everyone on the board and staff and committee leads.

Approval October Minutes: Suzie moved to approve, Ken seconded, and the October minutes were APPROVED.

Committee Reports and New Business

A. (15 mins) Finance, Phil

- a. Thinking about gratitude. Thinking about the budget and full of gratitude for everything in Fremont. Been with the Chamber for 20 years. Reviewing budget—we care about our community. We look to the future. Planning for next year. Recap last year. See the slide deck.
- b. 2023 approved budget with loss of \$59,188. It sounds incredible that we as a board would do that, but we jumped in the pool of what we wanted to change and how we were doing things. For a number of years, we've had a number of contractors that were specific to meaningful and measurable tasks that needed to be accomplished and move our agenda forward, the Chamber's mission.
- c. We looked at some revenue engines and we brought in our Executive Director who's Pete and that is where we ended up. We try to pass a balanced budget. We had to tap into our reserves that cover a minimum of 6 months to a year. Our reserves got us through COVID. With all of that, our projected loss will be -\$13,712. We have 4 months reserves as of now.
- d. Goal: pass a budget that doesn't show a loss. Working to get businesses at the correct membership level. Walked us through a Conservative budget and a Stretch budget.

- e. This year, we need to get more aggressive with these revenue engines.
- f. Membership: We want to move 183 members to 212. Suzie: Goal is 300 members! Phil is happy with meeting the dollar goal. Discussion of different membership levels and how to best leverage each of them. Center of the Universe is our top level, but only has 4 members. Making sure members are at the correct level is important. Shining Star is for non-profits and very small businesses.
- g. Meeting Goals: reviewed 2019 net with Ken running programs.
- h. Ken: use meetings to attract new members and show value.
- i. Discussed a new revenue stream—a smaller event, like a wine event or like Georgetown Bites, a food tour. Consider Troll Stroll. Pay \$40-\$60, meet at Troll, get a free t-shirt, and go eat & drink at participating businesses. The scale of Oktoberfest is unmanageable for board. But Troll Stroll could be managed by board/staff.
- j. Reviewed Oktoberfest income. Normally we get 14k-16k guests. This year, 13k people. Revised the contract for 2024. Increased the income to \$42k—still a conservative figure. Fremont Fair & Trick or Treat income numbers remain conservative.
- k. Stretch Goals: within reach—attainable.
- l. Expenses: Biggest are contractors. Caroline spent more time on member management software conversion. Do we have the capacity to bring on Ken to run programs?
- m. Net Conservative vs Stretch: biggest change is hiring a program manager.
- n. We're recognizing our expenses, looking to increase revenue. My goal is to approve the budget at the Retreat.
- o. We have really clear 5 pillars.
- p. Suzie: left over money goes into reserves.
- q. Phil: All of this was all thought out based on 5 years' experience, plus.
- r. Pete: Best financial presentation ever! Grants is something we want to look at. Initial conversations with FAC to become a Creative District.
- s. Ken: It's a challenge to bring in a Shining Star membership. Bumping up members is a good thing. Ken is willing to volunteer the marketing committee to brainstorm new event. Look for an opportunity to sit down with Dan Strauss & OED and see if we could get a grant from OED.
- t. Suzie: Not going to become a taxed district/BIA like the Ballard Alliance.
- u. Phil: Jessica got us a number of OED grants.
- v. Pete: Sarah Nelson and Maritza Rivera of the City Council can also help.
- w. Suzie: Asked to get Maritza, Dan & Sarah to do a little Walk Through. Fremont Sunday Market wants to expand under the bridge. Folks are interested. Skating rink for Xmas, most likely next year!
- x. Phil: Expenses: Marketing expenses goals. Walking Tour Rack Card, holiday marketing. There is money for some of these, but not a lot. Looking at lighting something up for the holidays.

B. (5 mins) Marketing & Communications, Ken

- a. Thanks to Pete & Caroline. We are on the home stretch with the Hysterical Markers. Working on selling Hysterical Marker sponsorships as a three-year sponsorship \$500.00 per year per marker.
- b. Rack Cards have been distributed to downtown hotels and concierges. Got extra holders to distribute to local businesses.

- c. Xmas campaign: I volunteered to run daily posts on Facebook and Instagram to promote the neighborhood and the activities and to coordinate the digital advertising on that. I have a big budget of about \$600.00, so I'm working on that and happy to volunteer my time.
 - d. Still working on lighting SOMETHING every year. Researching lighting the Dinos. Thanks to Fremont Dock and Rotary for their help on this.
 - e. Our next marketing meeting will be held on Feb 20th after the board retreat because we wanted to get some direction in terms of budget and I don't think there's any real urgency to get together and until that time.
- C. (5 mins) Programs, Eva
- a. Looking forward to next years program agenda. We are happy with what we've come up with. Things that come up: Public Safety meeting was not well attended, but there is still a desire for another meeting where all the landlords could come together to talk about this.
 - b. Jan: Tech Tips at Adobe
 - c. Feb: Health & Wellness at Brooks.
 - d. Spring: Wine & Say Cheese—headshots for business folks. Working out the details. On that. Would love Ken's help with that.
 - e. April: Awards ceremony in April
 - f. Placeholder for Women in the Workforce—no one particular industry. Would love ideas for a women's panel.
 - g. June: Candidate Forum? Police Chief, Mayor, City Council. Meet & greet. Still at Pacific Fishermen Shipyard.
 - h. Maritime Boat Tour or a yacht party. Have a space open in July. Want to fit Public Safety in sooner rather than later.
 - i. Robust agenda for first six months
 - j. Caroline suggested making use of new member Wet Clay Café
 - k. Suzie says Tivoli wants to join and host!
 - l. Eva: for next year, we might sell tickets to watch the Xmas Boat parade.
 - m. Shameless at Wet Clay or High Dive as one of the monthly events. Really well attended at Aslan Brewery.
 - n. Brandi: Happy Hours should be separate, rather than in place of our regular events.

Office Reports—Pete & Caroline

- A. Executive Director – Pete
 - a. Public Safety
 - i. Lots of criminal activity in darker holiday months: property, robbery, retail theft. Caroline & Pete are working to up the engagement and have seen a lot more responses on that. Every first Tuesday is the Public Safety call. Pete to focus more on this and provide effective but low-cost efforts to help.
 - b. Transportation/SDOT Route 40
 - i. SDOT has finalized their proposal for Route 40. We are working actively to get changes made: bus stop going north, removal of bus only lanes, not losing as much parking. Working with Ballard Alliance, NSIA, Westlake businesses, FNC. Good meetings around that.
 - ii. Brandi: could we do a community open house to educate folks?
 - iii. Pete: SDOT coming to FNC's next meeting in Jan. Have asked businesses to show up. Can continue to write to our council members. Hired Natalie Quick

- to help with PR. Have to put pressure on City to make changes. SDOT & Metro are set on their plans and are not listening anymore.
- iv. Suzie: Westlake might be suing the City.
- v. Brandi: Post on our social & calendar.
- vi. Pete: At Doric Lodge Jan ??.
- c. Membership Recruitment
 - i. Brooks is renewing at Cosmos level! Really excited about strengthening our relationship with Brooks. Met with NW Running Club. Want to bring back briefcase Relay and maybe another race in Fremont.
 - ii. Want to make sure our Rack Cards are also in our local businesses as well as hotels & HM, so businesses see the value we bring.
 - iii. Brandi: Large companies: have them at your front desk/reception areas.
 - iv. In contact with 2 out of 3 brokers at 34th & Fremont about decorating their windows over the holidays. Key & Starbucks will do something. Trying to get hold of folks at Chase brokers.
 - v. Brandi: go to landowner.
 - vi. Suzie: Old Italian family in Georgetown?
 - vii. Brandi: wrapping paper & lights
 - viii. We had a fabulous public safety breakfast with Ann Davison. Not well attended and not enough board attendance. Thank you, Suzie, for sponsoring the event. The Holiday Party is next week and only 4 signups. Other events: ribbon cuttings: Charlie's Queer Books, & Jessica's ribbon cutting.
 - ix. Consider texting!
- d. Board Recruitment
 - i. Looking forward to Nicole and Adam. Grateful to all the new folks from last year.
 - ii. Suzie: Pick something you have interest in and get into it! We're volunteers, we're not sitting here to place hold. Your outreach to whoever you represent—the more of that you do the better.
 - iii. Eva: Reached out to Fremont Abbey. They wanted to do a trade for their membership. I suggested the non-profit. Trade \$1k event space for their membership. Discuss at Retreat or party. Reached out to a bunch of businesses in upper Fremont. Feedback: No one's ever invited me before. Spruce, Ha, Old Stoke Gardens, and another one
 - iv. Suzie: Tivoli & SPU, Joann Fleet. Very handy. The last person actually joined our board. It's helpful. Consider her for the board. Fremont Dock has her contact info.
 - v. Pete: has been in Tivoli. They said 2024.
 - vi. Suzie: They are ready.
- B. Office Management – Caroline, see attached report.
 - a. Arts Fund
 - b. NERF Grant
 - c. Holiday Events Page
 - d. Programs Feedback
 - e. Ribbon Cuttings: Charlie's Queer Books, Jessica. Working on Wet Clay Café and Baskette
 - f. Membership by the numbers

Announcements

- A. Announcements:
 - a. Pete meeting with Leo & WSU students to do a project near the firepit.
- B. Calendar of Awesomeness—Chamber highlights – what have we accomplished that we want to highlight on our website?
- C. Chamber of Commerce Award Ideas – who do we want to nominate for a CoC Award and why?
 - a. Brandi & Suzie: Paul for all his legwork!
- D. Other

Adjourn—Brandi

Brandi adjourned the meeting at 9:59am.

Minutes submitted by Caroline Sherman

Meeting Chat:

[8:52 AM] Brandi Gaines (she/her)

I would like to also revise the renewal email to speak more to value of membership as Ken suggested.

[8:59 AM] Brandi Gaines (she/her)

Whitney is no longer at West Seattle Chamber and is now the owner of her own marketing firm!! [\(35\) Whitney Moore | LinkedIn](#); [\(35\) Electric Butter Marketing: Overview | LinkedIn](#)

[9:07 AM] Brandi Gaines (she/her)

We will approve at the board retreat to give everyone time to review.

[9:13 AM] Caroline Sherman

If anyone wants to join the Grants Committee/conversation, please let me know.

[9:18 AM] Brandi Gaines (she/her)

grants for business districts (not BIA): [Business Districts - Office of Economic Development | seattle.gov](#)

[9:19 AM]

Sean Erhardt (Guest) has temporarily joined the chat.

[9:19 AM] Brandi Gaines (she/her)

Could we get OED director, Markham McIntyre, to join a meeting to learn about grants

[9:22 AM] Adam Gardner (Guest)

I'm still working on finding someone from Google who can present at Tech Tips

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[9:22 AM] Adam Gardner (Guest)

happy to chat more w/you, Eva

[9:23 AM] Nicole Hill

Excited to learn more, Eva!

[9:24 AM] Brandi Gaines (she/her)

Alan Alabastro can do the headshots. I hired him to do some for Adobe 😊

[9:24 AM] Brandi Gaines (she/her)

Women in small business, with focus on BIPOC if possible.

[9:29 AM] Adam Gardner (Guest)

sorry folks - I have to drop, thank you!

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[9:29 AM]

Adam Gardner (Guest) no longer has access to the chat.

[9:29 AM] Brandi Gaines (she/her)

Thank you!

[9:29 AM]

Paul Robinson (Guest) has temporarily joined the chat.

[9:55 AM] Phil Bold Hat (Guest)

Merry Christmas and happy New Year Have to get ready for next meeting

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[9:55 AM] Brandi Gaines (she/her)

thank you, phil!!

[9:55 AM] Ken Saunderson (Guest)

I need to hit another meeting. NOTE: the next public hearing on the apartment project where the funeral home is located is set for 5 p.m. on December 5. Happy Happy Holidays!

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