**Board Meeting Minutes**

**February 28, 2024**

**Microsoft Teams Meeting**

**Attendance**

**Present:** Brandi Gaines, Paul Robinson, Phil Megenhardt, Eva Otto, Suzie Burke, Sean Erhardt, Nicole Hill, Adam Gardner, Ken Saunderson

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

**Staff:** Pete Hanning, Caroline Sherman

**Guests:** none

**Call to Order – Brandi**

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

1. Mission Statement was read out loud.
   1. The Fremont Chamber of Commerce strengthens the business climate and improves the quality of life in the Fremont community.
2. President’s Remarks: Each and every one of you is a star in this community. No one new, so everyone knows each other. Looking back at word of the year from the retreat. Making sure they still resonate with everyone. Mine was Boundaries. Taking vacation to Palm Springs tomorrow. Bringing laptop. Won’t check it.
3. Review of everyone’s word of the year. Phil keeps his on his monitor.
4. Ken: Commitment—getting things done.
5. Suzie: Persistence. Never ever give up.

**Approval of November, December and January Retreat Minutes:** Suzie moved to approve, Eva seconded, and all the minutes wereAPPROVED.

**Committee Reports and New Business**

1. (15 mins) Finance, Phil
   1. Financial Report: Good news is all the numbers we looked at for December are great.
   2. Suzie went over it after the Retreat. Phil shared his PowerPoint slides for the new Budget. Updated in mid-January. Last year, the board approved a budget with a loss. In planning for 2024, we put together a budget that doesn’t show a loss. We are meeting our goal of a 6-month to a year reserve. It took us 5 years to get a one-year reserve before the pandemic. Conservative: $59k, Stretch: $73k. The biggest revenue engines are meetings & meeting sponsorships. Our conservative goal for meetings income is $7,550, Stretch: $21,100. In 2019, Ken ran programs and meeting income was $21,100. Ken and Whitney would market our meetings. We are looking at a really big stretch goal for meetings. At the Retreat we talked about a new fundraising event like a wine or beer walk. Should be an easy lift. Total revenues: Actuals in 2023 $96,642. Conservative 2024: $140,100 and Stretch: $167…. Our consultants are our biggest expense. Stretch goal brings Ken back into this. Overall Expenses—see slide deck.
   3. Brandi: Why would we bring back Ken into the budget?
   4. Brandi: How disappointing we had to cancel Health & Wellness meeting. Was really looking forward to that. Talk about a cancellation policy? 48 hours? 72 hours? Cancelling a week ahead of time was too soon. Do we just always have the program, or do we have a cancellation policy? Consider also having ad hoc Happy Hours—just show up, no registration required. Doesn’t always have to be revenue generating, needs to be community building as well.
   5. Phil: Cancelling the program lit a fuse. We’re missing a communications plan and a marketing plan. What’s the program, how are we marketing it, what’s the social media plan? We don’t have idea issues, but logistical, planning issues. Consider hiring Whitney back to manage social media. We have Pete as ED. Talk about his role. What are we directing our staff to do? Can we vote on a budget that has these stretch goals but doesn’t have a road map to the stretch goals. If we do the Conservative budget, I’d be happy. We wouldn’t be under budget. If we manage this budget, we would be underwater by August.
   6. Ken: Not sure I have the capacity to run the programs like I did years ago. Discuss with Programs committee. It takes a lot of time and energy. My business is doing as well as I want it to be. Discuss how I can participate as a volunteer, but we need a business model in the program committee. Hiring someone to support the program committee is a good idea.
   7. Brandi: Business plan.
   8. Eva: As chair of program committee, Ken, we’d welcome you on our committee, or being in that brainstorming session would be great. Doing a program in Jan/Feb is a difficult time to get an early morning group of people is hard. Gala is March 2nd. People are just waking up. I think they’ll get half the number of attendees they did last year. Our program needs to be super-inspirational to get those big crowds in the winter.
   9. Suzie: We start the year with taxes.
   10. Eva: Solid schedule coming up: Shameless, Awards, Wine & Say Cheese, Candidate Forum. Would love to bring back the Health & Wellness in July or September. Part of it is getting the word out. How we can increase our channels and get our message out in a consistent way. We should do a social media program with Whitney.
   11. Brandi: Have H&W redo. Maybe next year in winter when folks are considering their resolutions.
   12. Phil: Shared 2024 Budget, rev 3: BK through BP. Walking Guides, WG Sponsorship, General ledger accounts. You can see the Conservative vs Stretch. Other piece is, Ken asks if we have any marketing dollars. We do, but it’s for holiday lighting. Overall, our expenses and budgeting does go to our team. We as a board committed to investing in this position. Difficulties I face: there is no way to hire these people. Pete needs to take all this on. My thought would be to wait and see. If we waited another month, I think it would be OK. Right now, we’re doing OK. We’re working on memberships. As far as reserves go, we’re using them. Instead of 100s of dollars, we are only $45.
   13. Adam: Conservative Budget: By end of year, we’d still have 4-month reserve in bank?
   14. Phil: reserves help us manage our cash flow. Our Cash flow is dipping, but it would get us through those.
   15. Adam: 6-12 months of reserves is really important from a risk management perspective vs cash flow. What if we take a mixed approach: tie expenditures to revenue and revisit six months in. Tie stretch items to revenue items and revisit.
   16. Phil: What you are suggesting: with this looming depletion. Looking at Membership goals we are always around that 200-member number. Pete is doing a great job of upselling/right-sizing members. This is where the marketing ties in and our members see our values. Getting us back in the 200 numbers. Adam, yes, we can do what you suggest. I can change my reporting. Usually, if I see anything red, I call it out. What are we doing to fix it. What I would suggest is that at the end of May/early June, I could put together a report on where we are financially. That would give Pete and the Exec Committee information to put a road map together. Can’t hire anyone. We have to break up some expenses to do that, if we go with a conservative budget.
   17. Caroline: Will need numbers for Stephen, so he can match to it.
   18. Suzie: Move to recommend Conservative budget for now and work on stretching it as the year goes on. Ken seconded that.
   19. CONSERVATIVE 2024 Budget APPROVED.
   20. Brandi: go back and look at Whitney’s Marketing 101 program. Phil and I can stop talking and start planning some events. I need to commit to how we do it.
   21. Ken: Strongly encourage board members to bring in other team members in their companies to join committees and participate. Get additional energy, ideas, and support.
   22. Brandi: more members to participate in these committees.
   23. Pete: Kudos to you, because Ibrahim is very active in the Public Safety needs. Nicole, Michael at Trailhead has been very active. I could see him in programs.
2. (5 mins) Marketing & Communications, Ken
   1. Encourage board members to sit in on our meetings. Aggressive plan, putting together a marketing plan. Top things we’re working on. Finishing up HM by June. Thank you, Pete, Caroline & Jon Hegeman. We have a new one for the Zoo, but all the core ones will be done.
   2. Will take a look at the fundraising event and what that looks like for the board, and genuinely have an impact on our businesses. These wine/beer walks are great but need to show value.
3. (5 mins) Membership, Pete
   1. Since Jessica is not here. Her theme for the Membership Committee is Less talk, more Walk. Prior to the Shameless event, Jessica, Pete & other board members will walk the lower Stone Way corridor. Our general membership meeting time, March 26th at 3pm for Membership Meeting, we’ll be in Upper Fremont to do the same thing and to encourage folks to join the Chamber. Powerful to have you help so you can share how being a member helps your business.
   2. Brandi: Please send out invitations for all these dates and get it on the calendar.
4. (5 mins) Programs, Eva
   1. We pretty much covered.
5. (5 mins) Awards, Caroline
   1. Awards mtg March 6, 1:30pm
   2. Suzie: Ken Phillips, Sr, U-Park parking died a few weeks ago. 1988 created a parking lot for Fremont, now has 18. Why are events in Fremont so good? Because we have a place to put the events. Would love to put Ken’s name on an award so it’s there, permanently. U-Park is not going away. He’ll be a little distracted for a year, closing out estate of active business. What Fremont was like towards the end of the 80s. Those parking lots helped. He wanted to put parking lots in Ballard, too, but never got any cooperation. Ballard has never wanted to share. Almost free parking.
   3. Brandi: We need your input by March 20th.
   4. Caroline: Need to get decisions in time to take awards up to Scott’s Trophy to get the name plates engraved.
   5. Pete: Liquor Board: you are the only business group who actually sees us as not a nuisance. That powerful acknowledgement is important. Make sure we are always having certificates acknowledging sectors in our neighborhood.
   6. Suzie: Last year, we gave it to a postal worker. Suzie heard about it from a dozen different people. If there is something we can give the police department. Anything like that. Don’t put it out of the question. We’re not giving them specifically to our members, the whole idea is to bring our members together and to also look at who we are working with in the bigger picture. Consider Sarah Nelson or Ann Davison.
   7. Pete: Suzie, please attend.
   8. Brandi: Consider polling the community for next year nominees.

**Office Reports—Pete & Caroline**

1. Executive Director – Pete
   1. Public Safety
      1. Every month, first Tue of the month. Last couple of months well attended. Next Tue, doing in person at El Camino at 9:30. Invited Brent Low. Public Safety for Bob Kettle, chair of Public Safety on City Council.
   2. Transportation/SDOT Route 40
      1. Phil & I attended last week. They are going to be tearing up Fremont Ave to replace a 100-year-old water main in 2025. It is going to have severe impacts. Limited lanes as they replace the street decking from sidewalk to sidewalk. Working with SDOT on that. Signed a contract with a contractor. When that company comes into the community, we’ll get contact & project mgr info & share.
      2. Suzie: Remember that we require them to find off-site parking for their employees, so they don’t take up street parking. That has to be said up front & committed to in the contract.
      3. Pete: Will reach out with Jules who does their outreach reminding them of that.
      4. Phil: Suzie: Once the contractors are signed, is that when we can start working with that individual for good communication around important dates, etc.
      5. Suzie: Jules from SDOT has to know all our dates and share with any contractor. Our dates are few, but precious. Also, the off-site parking is SO IMPORTANT. If you have to deal with it after the fact, it’s impossible. That comes through the person who manages them. You want someone managing it, not be managed by it.
      6. Pete will send an email to project manager about parking (& calendar) and will cc Suzie.
   3. Membership Recruitment
      1. We have a new membership tier. Same pricing as Milky Way but called Space Station @ $650 level for property managers/owners. Actively moving members over to it and recruiting new members at that level.
   4. Board Recruitment
      1. Billy has to step away from board because his business is so busy. Leaves a hole in representation from hospitality. If you know someone, let me know. It’s a wide bucket—coffee, restaurant, bar, etc.
2. Office Management – Caroline, see attached report.
   1. Registration for Shameless: Doublecheck folks are members when they arrive.

**Announcements**

1. Announcements: Phil: Soupocalypse was good!
2. Calendar of Awesomeness—Chamber highlights – what have we accomplished that we want to highlight on our website?
3. Big R on top of Mischief has come back. Mischief has brought it back. Rainier Brewery gave it to History House years ago. Worked with City Lights Neon, too.
4. Give them a certificate! The Return of the R! Get photos, celebrate it, etc. Event around St. Patrick’s Day. Consider doing it in conjunction with their celebration.
5. Mischief needs to renew.
6. Chamber of Commerce Award Ideas – who do we want to nominate for a CoC Award and why?
7. Phil: Solid Waste with the city: Sally. Two issues: Fremont Fair & trash. Sally (?) works with Waste Management to allow us to hire a contractor to manage the garbage instead of Waste Management dropping off a container.
8. Suzie: is that the same gal we’ve worked with before who got us trash cans.
9. FAC wants to end the parade at the Fremont Fair grounds at Evanston. This is now official with City. Bold Hat & FAC have worked together end on Evanston. It’s not even a mile now. Not turning. Do you want to give them an award for this? Fremont Fair is going super good.
10. Ken: Seattle Harbor Patrol of SPD for an award. We’ve wanted a fun way to honor them before. Dan Strauss is working hard to do an analysis for Harbor Patrol. It’s critical to add revenue/support would be terrific.
11. Suzie: Think we’ve probably given them an award in the past. They are working with one boat, almost no budget, but still try to protect our waterways. We need them!
12. Ken: NSIA by John Hersac, OED, did a major study of maritime sectors in City and King County. Will be using that to promote those sectors. Good advocate, maritime industry.
13. Suzie: OED doesn’t always do a lot of economic development. Trying to keep businesses in good shape vis a vis transportation. Comes at it from a different point of view that the city rarely hears.
14. Other

**Adjourn—Brandi**

Brandi adjourned the meeting at 9:59am.

Minutes submitted by Caroline Sherman

**Meeting Chat:**

Adam Gardner (Unverified)9:31 AM

there's a place in SLU

Link https://www.athleticawards.com/

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Ken Saunderson (Unverified)9:32 AM

I use athletic awards as well. Terrific local, family-owned business. They are in south lake union. EZ free parking.

* 1 Like reaction.

Brandi Gaines (Guest)9:36 AM

I've gone there as well.

Bless you, Phil.  by Pete Hanning 9:44 AM

Brandi Gaines (Guest)9:56 AM

Caroline Sherman, when I download the ics calendar reminder for the event, it defaults to 6-8 instead of 5-7, can you look at that

Adam Gardner (Unverified)9:58 AM

sorry have to drop - thanks!

👍1 Like reaction.