



Board Meeting Minutes
September 25, 2024
Adobe

Attendance

Board Present: Brandi Gaines, Paul Robinson, Eva Otto, Phil Megenhardt, Adam Gardner, Nicole Hill, Jamie Hoffman, Jessica Vets

Board Absent: Suzie Burke, Ken Saunderson

Office Team Present: Pete Hanning, Caroline Sherman

Guests: Jana Kincl, Fremont Brewing, manager of both taprooms; Jason Schumacher, Salesforce, director of philanthropy analytics.

Call to Order – Brandi

The meeting was called to order by Brandi at 8:42am (there were technical delays)

A. Mission Statement was read out loud:

The Fremont Chamber of Commerce strengthens the business climate and improves the quality of life in the Fremont community.

B. President's Remarks: We have some guests today, so we'll do introductions.

C. Introductions: Jason and Jana introduced themselves.

Approval of July and August Board Meeting Minutes: Eva moved to approve, and Adam seconded.

APPROVED.

Committee Reports and New Business

A. (5 mins) Oktoberfest: Phil

- a. Three amazing days. Super fun. Been doing this for 30 years. Cut 80% of staff on Sunday afternoon. Operationally went really well.
- b. Katrina Eileen chose not to do anything. Brewery load in went really well. Attendance on Friday night.
- c. Did we have a bump due to the weather? Alas no. 13,800 last year, this year 13,059. 2022 great year, 2023 had a great year even with rain. Had high hopes for this weekend. We wash and recycle a lot of the glassware, 14k glasses. Saturday start washing. End of event with 2k glasses.
- d. New normal? Sunny weekend, no bump in attendance. Expenses were a lot higher. Our budget stretch goal for this event was ~\$42k. Sunday biggest Sunday we've ever had. There were competing events. Husky game, Luminata, etc. Also, after the last two years after COVID more folks like staying at home.
- e. Advanced sales were high, walkup sales low. Usually, front gate is built for lots of walkup ticket sales, as these numbers were flipped from previous years. Points of sale: front gate, merch tent, sign tent. Will share year-over-year attendance later.
- f. Overall, will use 15k as the marketing number because there are a lot of ins and outs and it's a better number to use for marketing. Will have more data at the next meeting.
- g. 30 ejections on Friday/Saturday. 300 dogs on dog day.

- h. 2,300 on a Sunday is the biggest number we've ever had. Surprised Saturday didn't bump up higher.
 - i. Pete: how did we do with volunteers?
 - i. Saturday short, all other shifts were OK. Sunday was good because did T-shirt program with Salesforce. 20 volunteers or more get a custom t-shirt. Nearly 50 Salesforce folks.
 - j. Jessica: Saturday night was awesome. Feedback to Phil: Group has been pinging me and 20 people, none together, no coordination. Would be nice if all in one place. Otherwise, always super fun.
 - i. Not having consistent operational help is a constant issue. Training people are all carnys. Great attitude and super smart. Here's your checklist and they don't follow it.
 - k. Pete: The chamber can do a better job of alerting our local breweries to participate. We need to do it on our end.
 - i. We started in March. Can't help those that don't connect until that last minute. The idea that people are leaving the event. We eject folks for overservice. The owner of Swel had an incident with someone. Sit down places are geared up to take in a lot of folks ready to eat, but they can't handle the volume. Getting business neighbors ready for this is a challenge. Will put together a marketing plan for the Chamber with details of what to do when.
 - ii. Overall goal is making sure that if you walk down the street Monday morning, you wouldn't notice there was a huge event.
 - l. Jana: Usually, we get folks coming after Oktoberfest closes, and we can't serve them, as they've already had too much alcohol.
 - m. Jamie: It negatively affects our business, because no one buys anything and the folks that come in are intoxicated. By over 25%.
 - i. What we used to hear is that the bars got as much business as at the Fremont Fair.
 - n. Brandi: We should get a survey out to businesses.
 - o. Jamie: Overall it's good, as it brings folks to Fremont. Restaurants may do better, but bars—folks can't drink anymore.
 - p. Brandi: Frelard's super gay brewing lots of fun!
 - q. Phil: Free Range Cycles closes—can't deal with crowds. How do you have the small business because the parade is blocking access. Lots of ideas on this. We inform the community in advance. We made accommodations to UW Medicine and their parking lots. Understanding their needs. A survey is easy. We'll do that.
- B. (5 mins) Finance: Phil
- a. Greens in August. Fall numbers will bring in more. We are at double our budgeted loss right now, but only \$6 over. Cash flow will be recognized for Oktoberfest. Will put a report together before next meeting with recommendations to get to the end of the year with a positive cashflow.
 - b. Reserves pushed out until the Spring. Used to be January, so that's an improvement.
 - c. Jason: IF you extended to the last year, would the downward trend be the same? Yes.
 - d. Membership Renewals vs Budget:
 - e. Jason: What is rate of renewal or attrition rate?
 - i. Pete: we are lower than our goal of about 250, and it's harder and harder to bump that back up. Small businesses are not finding value.
 - f. Jason: lots of churn at low end?
 - i. Yes
 - g. Pete Larger businesses are in for it, but the money comes in "herky jerky".
 - h. Phil: We're at 175. The small businesses bounce around 20. The big ones are solid and that's where we need to go. Small business are a big portion of our membership.
- C. (5 mins) Fall Fundraising/Event: Brandi
- a. No traction on this.
- D. (5 mins) 501c3 Update: Brandi

- a. Brandi, Pete and Caroline met with George Ptasinski, Apex Law Group. We are working on applying for the Creative Arts District, state program. That would give us grants, support our art and maker businesses. Tech, maritime, breweries, art, etc. We need to get some things in place. Because it's a collaboration with FAC & FNC, we're looking to make a 501c3 so we can fundraise. Because we do gov't outreach, we are a 501c6 and can't fundraise.
 - b. Looking to take over History House non-profit by Burke Family. Use that to have something separate. Then we can raise a lot more money. Pay artists, consultants, provide more value to our community. We could provide double the value by also promoting the arts district.
 - c. Jessica: how have we involved FAC?
 - d. Pete: Had a couple of meetings around 501c3 (as a chamber & for CAD) If we can create this, are there activities we could place on 501c3? When we look at structure, FAC & FNC would have participation on board members, but we're controlling structure so we won't be usurped.
 - e. Jessica: There were lots of people on the Arts Council who would not like others having control.
 - f. George is all about making it clean.
 - g. Jessica: As long as the obstructionists with FAC are not involved, it's all good.
 - h. Brandi: We want them completely involved. Jason, we would love your feedback.
 - i. Jason: having an affiliated c3 is a great idea and will unlock funds. Figuring out campaigns around this is important. \$10ks of money available. If volunteering for OktFest is through c3, then Adobe types can donate for that time and it's possible to connect it back to the 501c6.
 - j. Jessica: Initiative coming up on the c6 side that will be as big as \$15k minimum wage and mandating a 401k. If they don't, the state will implement the 401k and the biz will have to pay the fees. Coming July 2027. We can use this as a marketing piece. Here's this great art thing coming, and how the Chamber works it. Relevant to a swath of businesses. This is why the voice still matters and all the businesses can get involved. Sell to organizations.
 - k. Pete: Super happy to have Jason on board and we want to lean on you for help with this. Consider the timing. Can take 3-6 months for determination letter.
 - l. Brandi: That's why we want to use the existing one as it's in good standing. We want to make sure who the governing body is, not the Burke family. FAC, FNC and the FCC. Don't want single players driving the bus. Need to figure it all out.
 - m. Jamie: We can help with this. Keep me in the loop.
 - n. Phil: Burien has an Arts District. He used to own the Improv. NAME??
- E. (5 mins) Programs: Women in Leadership breakfast, Oct 16: Eva
- a. Great program. Discussing challenges and unique paths for women in leadership. Panel covers large and small business leaders. MoPop CEO Michele Smith, nominated for prestigious woman of the year, honored at Huskies game, super start. Amber Davis/Triangle Spirits. Kate Isler/W Marketplace that services entrepreneurial women. Jessie Swisher Spiers of Seattle Humane, and Suzanne Weller, collaborator. Bring the awesome folks in your company and network to come. It's at Livbud Café.
 - b. Pete: Livbud in Brooks building. Light breakfast. Yes, bring people in your teams to come. Paid event.
 - c. Brandi: All members pay the member rate.
 - d. Paul: How did we arrive at \$50 fee?
 - e. Pete: At the Awards b'fast, we lost money. These programs have to make money. Cost comes to paying for breakfast.
 - f. Paul: I see not as many folks paying for it.
 - g. Pete: If Ken were on the call, he'd say the maritime breakfast is \$50.
 - h. Phil: The program sounds unbelievably great! Do you need help with marketing?
 - i. Eva: Yes, we need help.
 - j. Phil: Consider paid marketing/social media advertising.
 - k. Pete: The event is live, it's going out in the Friday Blast.
 - l. Jamie: Send it on Instagram and we'll share it.

- m. Use flyer with 5 heads.
- F. (5 mins) Membership (seeking new chair): Pete
 - a. Pete: Suzie is interested in chairing, but we need a co-chair.
- G. (5 mins) Government Affairs: Suzie

Office Reports—Pete

- A. Executive Director – Pete
 - I. Membership Targets for new/upsell
 - II. Public Safety/Emergency Preparedness
 - o Add full board to Google Public Safety list. Dealing with one woman in crisis and working to get her to services. Community services officers within SPD. Jane XX have had several conversations on this. How do we put together a blueprint for these few individuals who persistently cause trouble.
 - o Phil: We have a guy hanging out on our buildings. What action can our business do?
 - o Jamie: We deal with it all the time. We post her photo on our wall. Call the cops immediately.
 - o Pete: You have to ask for a police presence. I want this person to be trespassed. Chamber is sending out these steps on the public safety.
 - o Brandi: smells like a program waiting to happen?
 - o Pete: let's do a 10-minute 101 on what to do. And printed out.
 - o We get the most amount of traffic around public safety. Our member businesses do feel that they are being heard.
 - o Jamie: Pete is doing a great job.
 - o Pete: working with Jane on this.
 - III. Transportation/SDOT Route 40
 - IV. Stone Way Reopening & Crosswalk Petition
 - o Reopening is happening soon. May have a date soon.
 - o On Stone Way near the Bank of America—petition to put in a crosswalk there. It will be in the Blast.
 - o Adam left.
 - o Jessica: could we get a colorful crosswalk?
 - o Pete: Increased pedestrian safety is important. Need to engage community on this. Looking for a painted intersection campaign.
 - V. Social Media/Newsletter
 - o Blast is this week. If you have something to promote for this week, let us know. Last edition was Oktoberfest volunteering, 35 years of ribbon cutting for Sunday Mkt. It was really great. If you had a chance to see the extension of the mkt it now goes past Indoor Sun Shoppe. Next year looking to extend. Mischief and Indoor Sun Shoppe very excited about this.
 - o Next Tue at 5pm, Indoor Sun Shoppe will have a service for Benny the Rock Stacker. Sean, former board member is pushing this.
 - o Paul: Time Capsule—received nothing. Push that.
 - o Pete: Fremont View Apartments: ribbon cutting and looking for welcome folders/coupons, etc. Also for Time Capsule contributions to open in 62 years, 2062. Seattle Worlds Fair in 1962. These are classic small biz owners—eccentric! It's in Paul's bank. If you have a memory or letter you want to put in there.
 - VI. Eva Left.
 - VII. Phil: What is happening with Holiday Marketing.
 - VIII. Brandi: Do we have a Holiday Plan? What did we do last year, let's talk to Ken. Let's get it done sooner than next board meeting, or Oct 16th.
- B. Office Manager – Caroline—see Budget Dashboard online.
 - I. Arts Fund

- II. Hysterical Markers
 - Done
 - Jamie to buy another/same ad for Oktoberfest.
 - Promote ads
- III. Trick or Treat in Fremont
 - Send flyer to board.
- IV. Creative District
- V. Additional Program & Membership Stats
 - NERF Grant complete.

Announcements

- A. Announcements
- 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?
 -
- D. Other

Adjourn—Brandi

Brandi adjourned the meeting at 9:59am.

Meeting Chat:

Jessica: SoloPreneur idea: Pay big \$\$ for all meetings & membership! “Latte” membership for small professionals.