

Board of Directors
Wednesday, January 7, 2004
7:00am - Ramada Inn

Attending: John Pundt, President; Barbara Gunnell, Secretary; Chris Christoffer, Treasurer; Johanna Dillard, Immediate Past President; Tricia Benetti, Jenny Bream, Sid Fannick, Marty Giles, Renee Middleton, Sam Roth, Beve Saukko, Tom Scheideman, Timm Slater, Board Members; Martin Callery & Ron Opitz, Community at Large Directors; Shirley Liberante, Executive Director; Connie Davis, Office Manager.
Guests: Deryl Beebe, Ambassadors; Joe Benetti, City of Coos Bay & Benetti's Italian Restaurant; Jessica Chavez & Brandy Thompson, Cardinal Employment Services.

President Pundt called the meeting to order and everyone present introduced themselves and their businesses.

The Minutes of the December 3, 2003 meeting were approved as mailed.

John stated that one of the goals from the Retreat was to continue to improve partnerships by sharing committee interests and goals. He said that Johanna began this in 2003 by holding meetings of committee chairs so that they could coordinate their committee's efforts. He said that he will e-mail current committee chairs and get those meetings started again for 2004. He asked anyone with issues or concerns to call him at 267-2121 or e-mail him at the address listed in the Chamber directory.

Shirley Liberante mentioned the goals for 2004 and said that they were published, as a reminder, in the January newsletter. She stated that Rick Howell and the Government Affairs Committee did a super job last year, met regularly and compiled issues & concerns to address with local legislators via telephone conferencing calls. She said that plans are to continue these calls when legislative sessions begin again in August. She said that topics need to be ready to discuss at the regular meeting, the 3rd Tuesday of each month, and that this will be discussed further in the committee chair meetings. She said that these calls have been very successful in the past and cited an example regarding Ken Messerle and his assistance with re-establishing our local Enterprise Zone status. She emphasized the importance of working together with the right people for our area to benefit.

Shirley talked about the importance of the role that front-line people play in greeting visitors and the impression they make about our community. She said that plans are to establish a training program, to include members of the Board, business owners and employees, and will be working with the media to get the information out to residents regarding giving information to visitors wherever and whenever they ask questions about the area.

Shirley reported that the subject of moving the Chamber office was brought up at the Retreat. She said that she has been working on that goal, has received a copy of a prospective lease and has sent it to the Chamber's attorney for review. She said that she will bring more details to the Board next month and that plans are also underway to work on promoting the Chamber as its own entity.

Shirley reported on the final results of the Economic Outlook Forum. She said that we had 28 sponsors this year, 235 attendees with income of \$8570, expenses of \$3514 for a net of \$4623. She stated that The Mill did a great job, and when additional people showed more tables were added to accommodate them. She thanked Jon Richards for getting John Mitchell as keynote speaker again.

Shirley reminded everyone that they need to get in their nominations for Business & Citizen of the Year as the

deadline is this Friday. She said that time is needed to choose the winners and get the awards purchased in preparation for the banquet that is only a couple of weeks away. She stated that we have received some nominations, but would like to receive more prior to making a selection.

Shirley asked everyone to call her, or John, with any concerns regarding the Chamber and asked that everyone continue with the "Positivity" theme.

Chris Christoffer gave a condensed treasurer's report and said that we have \$82,800 in cash operating reserves, we are on budget for the year and are ahead of last year by \$20,000.

Newly elected Ambassador president Deryl Beebe reported that she has been taking pictures of ribbon cuttings, making certificates with the business name and opening date and presenting it in a frame to the business owners. She said that they have been very impressed and proud to hang them in their place of business.

Tourism Chair Marty Giles reported that money from the Chamber Tourism budget will pay for the signage on the Charleston to Bandon tour route. She said that a letter was written regarding shell fish licensing, (and the accessibility of obtaining a license), expressing concerns about visitors arriving at night who want to go clamming early in the morning. Suggested solution would be to have RV parks purchase licenses in quantity and then be able to sell them to individuals at odd hours if required. She said that she had an opportunity to chat with Bob Jacobson, retired marine extension agent, regarding the possibility of having a one-day license for visitors, but was told that only 3-day licenses will be available. She said that the cost for a 3-day license will be \$6.50. Marty said that the next regular meeting of the tourism committee will be Thursday the 15th at the Ramada Inn.

Economic Development Chair Jon Richards stated that comments he heard regarding the recent Economic Outlook Forum were that it was the "best one yet." He said he was pleased that the speakers were upbeat and views were that the economy is improving, leaving people with a more positive feeling. He said that both John Mitchell and Guy Tauer have agreed to speak at the 2004 Economic Outlook Forum that will be held on December 10th. He reported that the Vision 2014 document is in the process of completion. He said that this is the closest thing to a comprehensive community plan that we have and that a small group of people, himself, Sid Fannick, Shirley Liberante and Martin Callery, have been making good headway with the project and have identified 15 issues for the document. He said that Rick Howell has been giving input on K-12 education and Ron Opitz has been giving input on community infrastructure. Jon said that the Economic Development committee will be meeting on Monday the 26th at the Ramada Inn.

IBO Lunch Forum Chair Raye Gieseke reported that she has been concentrating on coming up with new speakers for 2004 Wednesdays. She said that January Forum speakers scheduled are Karl Kennedy on the 14th, Brady Scott on the 21st and Joe Litzinger on the 28th. She said that she markets IBO every time she makes calls for her business by inviting them to attend one of the Wednesday forums. She said that by doing this it makes people feel more welcome in the community. She asked that anyone having ideas for future topics and/or speakers please contact her while keeping in mind that these are "business oriented" events.

Promotions Chair Tricia Benetti said that this month's meeting has been cancelled. She said that Clair Jones, North Bend representative to the committee, has stepped down and another representative will be appointed by the North Bend City Council. She said that the group is working on a new "Come to the Coast" commercial for the purpose of attracting visitors during off-season months and will be featuring activities such as whale watching, etc.

Government Affairs Chair Rick Howell reported that ballots will soon be in the mail regarding Measure 30. He said that defeat of the measure will mean that the district will lose 35 school days. He said that it is time for everyone to be thinking about lining up legislative issues to discuss with our representatives.

Shirley Liberante reported for the Forestry/Fisheries committee saying that they have been working on the 4th annual Lumberjack Festival that will be held at The Mill on June 26th. She said that this year it will be held on the other side of The Mill, by the dock, closer to the water where more seating and parking will be available. She said that the committee has had inquiries from TV companies wanting to film the event but since this is a transition

year, they may not do this until next year. She said that this festival is “on the circuit” and participants come from all over the world to compete. She said that log rolling may be an added event this year but it would not be in the bay.

Membership Chair Johanna Dillard said that this year plans are to call on all new members, invite them to Forums and Board Meetings and try to get them more involved in the community. John suggested that Board Members discuss the benefits of Chamber membership with their regular business clients.

Leadership Coos Coordinator Connie Davis reported that next week’s session features education and the group will be hearing an overview of public, private, charter and home school education, will tour the new science building and ORCO technology lab at North Bend and will hear about the SMART and ASPIRE programs. Following a tour of the Southwestern Oregon Community College campus and an overview of the college they will board a bus for the Marshfield High campus where they will tour the school bank, radio station and new science building and will hear about alternative education programs that include Destinations Charter School, CE2, IPASS and Teen Parent programs. Representatives from the STARS program, Alternative Youth Activities and Belloni Boys & Girls Ranch will be speaking. The day will end with a presentation and tour at the SWOYA Boys & Girls Club.

Banquet committee chair Beverly Saukko reported that “An Evening in Paradise” will be held at The Mill on Saturday, January 24th with the social hour beginning at 6:00 and dinner at 7:00. She asked everyone to plan on attending and help celebrate all the successes we had last year. She said she is working on a picture board of past banquets and other Chamber activities that will be displayed during the evening. She asked that anyone having picture they would like to display to call her at 267-6312 and she would pick them up. She mentioned that the Banquet committee will be meeting today at 1:00pm to finalize plans for the event.

Transportation committee co-chair Martin Callery said that the January meeting has been cancelled and the February meeting has been changed to the first Wednesday of the month due to a conflicting schedule.

City of Coos Bay’s Mayor Joe Benetti reported that the Council gave their approval to a new subdivision to be built on 36 lots in the Prefontaine Drive area of Coos Bay. He said that they also approved a transportation plan that will include both cities and reported that a discussion was held regarding a petition that a group wants to circulate regarding having a Nascar race on city streets and highway 101. Joe reported that he and City Finance Director Janelle Howard recently gave a presentation to Leadership Coos and assured everyone that the City’s financial picture is looking good and they are going into 2004 with a good carryover.

Martin Callery reported that a group is coming together in Charleston, that includes OIMB, the Port, Coast Guard, South Slough and Charleston Merchants, and will be working on a master plan for Charleston. He said that a master plan is needed so that infrastructure can be coordinated and other services can integrate. He reminded everyone that the Annual Charleston Crab Feed will be on Saturday, February 14th this year.

Martin reported that they have met with the primary contractor re: the railroad bridge and have attended weekly progress meetings. He said that they are slightly behind schedule due to delays in permitting. He said that barge work for in-water work is expected to be complete by mid-February and the steel fabrication work in March or April. He said that dredging will be done at the Charleston Marina and that project has been held up due to bad weather.

SCDC’s Ron Opitz reported that they are working on four different expansion projects in the area that represents over \$30 million in capital investment and said that the projects are in varying stages. He stated that California people have purchased the Old City Hall and they have also purchased a couple of houses in the area; a new art studio in Coquille will open with 3 people and eventually plans to expand to 23 employees. Ron said that the Governor has been down twice in the last six months and he had the opportunity to spend time with the Governor’s assistant, Marty Brantley. He said that the Governor has assigned the Oregon Solutions Team to the airport project and meetings are planned that include SCDC, Gary LeTellier, Nikki Whitty, Ken Messerle, Joanne Verger, and Bandon Dunes. He said projected completion for the new airport is 2006. He also reported that State transportation funds will be used to repair highways 38 and 42 and some will be used to improve portions of highway 101. He said that three major projects for the Coos Bay-North Bend area are being discussed that will

involve housing/restaurant/theater, and also that future meetings are planned with the museum folks regarding the proposed new museum. Ron stated that SCDC is also looking to relocate into the same new location as the Chamber. He said that plans would also include the Oregon Economic Development Dept., and a fourth party. He said that this will centralize local services and that Shirley will include all of this information in her report next month.

Tricia Benetti commended John Pundt for the work he and his employees at the radio station did during the recent power outage. John said that he appreciated the fact that local businesses brought them food, coffee, candles and other necessities and he was encouraged by the way the community all pulled together in this emergency. Shirley gave kudos to all the businesses that stayed open to help the community. She said that Bay Area Hospital's cafeteria was open to the public and later in the afternoon offered meals for half price. She also said that The Mill's restaurant was open but their hotel's power was out but the maintenance crew ran power to one of the rooms for a person with medical problems, and then went the extra mile by checking on him every hour. Some of the other businesses open were LaHueradura Mexican Restaurant, the Airport Heights Market, BiMart and Farris.

Marty Giles announced that Blossom Gulch School has invited people to visit, watch a classroom in operation and have lunch.

Having no further business, President Pundt adjourned the meeting.