

KODIAK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Noon, September 15th, 2021
Kodiak Chamber of Commerce Conference Room & Zoom Conference Call

Present:

President J. Bonney
Board Member D. Million
Board Member T. Kornelis
Vice President P. Cummings

Board Member G. Hawley
Board Member K. Bumgarner
Sec./Treasurer J. Sanford
Board Member D. Eubanks

Board Member G. Shank
Past President L. Knight
USCG Rep. Capt. Hernaez

Excused:

City of Kodiak Rep. M. Tvenge
KIB Rep. M. Powers

Board Member T. Wallace
Board Member P. Lampron

Discover Kodiak Rep. A. Williams

Staff:

Jena Lowmaster, Executive Director

Trinity Higinbotham, Community
Relations Director

Emily Sullivan, Administrative Assistant

CALL TO ORDER

President J. Bonney chaired the meeting at the Kodiak Chamber of Commerce Conference Room and on Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 12:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Corrections/Additions

Past President L. Knight made a motion to approve the Agenda. Board Member G. Shank seconded. Motion passed.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. August 18th, 2021 – Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
2. Executive Director's Report
3. Community Relations Report

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Past President L. Knight made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Board Member G. Shank seconded. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Alaska Fall Forum – Date Change (J. Lowmaster)

ED J. Lowmaster stated that the Alaska Fall Forum is being rescheduled to either Nov. 30th – Dec. 2nd or December 7th – 9th due to the statewide rise in COVID cases. Once the official dates are released, she will inform the board. President J. Bonney requested that she share the forum's agenda with the board once it is announced so the board can review it.

2. Annual Meeting – Saturday, October 23rd (J. Lowmaster)

ED J. Lowmaster stated that with the rise of COVID cases in the community, the board should decide whether an in-person event should have a limited capacity or be reconsidered altogether. Board Member D. Eubanks said that the board should consider the optics of the Chamber hosting an event that could potentially be blamed for another spike in community spread Covid cases. ED J. Lowmaster stated that Chamber's around the state are taking actions such as limiting capacities or requiring proof of vaccination. President J. Bonney stated that a full in-person event without mitigation protocols does not seem like a practical option, but that a limited capacity event allowing for more social distancing could be an option. Board Member G. Shank stated that many events have already been postponed and asked if the meeting could be postponed. ED J. Lowmaster stated that per the bylaws, a meeting must happen in October to swear in new board members and announce the award recipients, but a separate celebration could be planned later. Past President L. Knight said that if the active case count stays above 100, the Chamber should make the event virtual. Board Member K. Bumgarner said that Chamber members are concerned about being able to stay open for the holiday season, and that postponing or cancelling the event could also be seen in a negative light. Board Member G. Shank questioned whether the task of deciding for the entire Chamber membership is feasible. Board Member T. Kornelis suggested waiting until closer to the event and going by the CDC's guidelines, but also ensuring a virtual option. Sec./Treasurer J. Sanford suggested polling members to see what they desire as far as the format or COVID mitigation protocols should the event be in-person. ED J. Lowmaster said that a membership wide poll can easily be sent and that the results can be further discussed with the board via email.

i. **(3) Board Seats / Nominations**

ED J. Lowmaster stated that the application period is still open until the following Monday, September 20th, and that one application, in addition to J. Sanford and D. Eubanks, has been turned in.

ii. **Award Nominations**

ED J. Lowmaster stated that she will email the award nominations ballot for the board to vote.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Hiring Issues Within Kodiak Community (J. Lowmaster)**

ED J. Lowmaster stated that many businesses are experiencing a hiring shortage in Kodiak, which is being seen in the lower 48 as well. She suggested forming a subcommittee to brainstorm ideas such as working with the college for internships and stated that a virtual job fair might not be an option that will produce results. President J. Bonney questioned whether the board has the expertise to be able to address the problem and said that any committee formed should be opened to people outside of the board. USCG Rep. Capt. Hernaez volunteered to sit on any committee formed to address this issue and suggested that part time jobs should be offered to accommodate parents who cannot commit to full time jobs due to homeschooling their children. CRD T. Higinbotham suggested a job fair targeting military spouses. Vice President P. Cummings stated that businesses are suffering and seem to be trending towards downsizing, so businesses might need to adjust in the short term until the problem can be identified and solved. President J. Bonney questioned whether this is an issue that the Chamber should take on, and whether the City, Borough, or KEDC should be part of the conversation, or is this a Chamber initiative. Board Member T. Kornelis stated that this issue seems like an employee retention and business expansion concept and questioned if the declining population and current wages offered could be contributing to the problem. He stated that he does believe this to be an issue that the Chamber should address and volunteered to join a committee formed for this purpose.

2. **Kodiak Scholarship Foundation (J. Lowmaster)**

ED J. Lowmaster said the recipients of the Chamber's scholarship funds were Acacia Birbilas and Ester Flerchinger.

STANDING AGENDA ITEMS

1. **Committee Updates**

a. **Strategic Planning Committee (G. Shank)**

Board Member G. Shank stated that the committee met last week to review changes, additions, and corrections to the strategic plan. President J. Bonney recommended putting approval of the updated strategic plan on the next meeting's Agenda to allow for more time for discussion.

b. **Membership Committee (J. Lowmaster)**

ED J. Lowmaster stated that the committee met and reviewed the goals and are planning to meet again in mid-October. Sec./Treasurer J. Sanford said that one topic that was discussed was having delinquent members on the Agenda for the board to review. ED J. Lowmaster said that the problem with including them on the Agenda is that board meeting minutes are public, so she recommended that it be something discussed at Executive Committee meetings so that it would be kept private.

c. **Small Business Committee (D. Eubanks)**

Board Member D. Eubanks stated that the committee met earlier that morning and focused on the Shop the Rock event, which seemed to be a success in the community. He said that the mentor program for local businesses is still being discussed.

d. **Crab Fest Committee (J. Lowmaster)**

ED J. Lowmaster stated that the 2022 theme is "Let's Get Crackin'" and that the logo and poster contests have begun and will end November 10th, 2021. She will reach out to schools later in the week to increase student participation.

e. **ComFish Committee (J. Bonney)**

President J. Bonney stated that ComFish has been scheduled for March 24th – 26th, 2022 and will hopefully be an in-person event. She stated that they also discussed bringing fishermen in to consider how the Chamber can benefit them.

2. Legislative Issues of Chamber Concern

a. City & Borough Election Forums (K. Bumgarner)

Board Member K. Bumgarner stated that the Kodiak Daily Mirror is working with KMXT to put together political forums for City and Borough. The forums will take on September 28th with the City's from 6pm to 7pm and the Borough's from 7pm to 9pm. He said that they still need a moderator and Past President L. Knight volunteered for the role. He asked if there were any questions that business owners would like to hear on the record from candidates about tax. He said he wants to ensure that the business community is adequately represented. Board Member G. Shank suggested asking candidates what can be done locally about solving the hiring issues in the community.

3. Membership Updates & Recommendations for New Members – [<http://business.kodiakchamber.org/list/>]

a. New Members

ED J. Lowmaster announced three new members including Nichole Fisheries LLC, Chellissa Fisheries LLC, and Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference.

b. Dropped/Not Renewing Member

Emerald Isle Essentials and Kodiak History Museum decided not to renew, but notes were made to their account to revisit the possibility of them renewing in the future.

ACTION ITEMS

1. None

Upcoming Events

1. Business After Hours –

- i. Tuesday, September 21st – Bella Bronze (Postponed)
- ii. Thursday, October 7th – Kodiak College (Virtual Only)

2. Annual Dinner – Saturday, October 23rd

3. Downtown Trick-o-Treat – Friday, October 29th

4. Alaska Start-Up Week – November 8th – 12th

5. U.S. Coast Guard Annual Dinner – Friday, February 4th

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

1. None

BOARD COMMENTS:

1. Board Member G. Hawley stated that the fall flight schedule will continue to be reduced. For October there will be two flights a day throughout the month, with increased service on Tuesdays and Fridays to three flights. November will have more flights the weekends before and of Thanksgiving, while the day of Thanksgiving and the day after will have one flight.
2. Board Member D. Million said that a member came to her stating that people did not realize he had a business in Kodiak, and he said he was under the impression that it was the Chamber's job to recognize businesses. ED J. Lowmaster said she can reach out to the member to schedule News and Views or other promotional opportunities. Board Member D. Million said it was the owner of BrightBox Farms, and ED J. Lowmaster stated that he was not yet a member, but that he had met with her about his new business, Double Shovel Cider Company, becoming a member when it opens in the future.

ADJOURNMENT:

Past President L. Knight made a motion to adjourn. Board Member D. Eubanks seconded. President J. Bonney adjourned the meeting at 1:16 p.m.