

**SMITHS FALLS AND DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
**Minutes of Meeting – July 11, 2018**  
**Valley Heartland Board Room**  
**7:30 a.m.**

**Present: Barbara Black, Eileen Crosbie, Kristine Fair, Mike Fletcher, Tracy Gallipeau-Nolan, Sean Lawrence, Crystal LeVatte, Chris Saumure, Jean Sherman, Cy Wells**

**Council: Jeff Banks, Jay Brennan, Dawn Quinn**

**Staff: Becky Allen, Ciara Atkinson, Gail Moore-Barrie**

**Regrets: Amber Beasley**

**Absent:**

**Guest:**

**Call to Order by President Barbara Black at 7:33 a.m.**

**Mission Statement Read by President, Barbara Black.**

**Motion to Accept Minutes of June 13, 2018:**

**Moved:** Sean Lawrence

**Second:** Cy Wells

**Motion Carried.**

**Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest**

- None.

**Council Report – Town of Smiths Falls**

- Dawn Quinn attended the bike decorating contest hosted by the town on Canada Day. 33 people came, even with the heat.
- The Rideau Rendezvous held at Settlers Ridge Centre was another very successful event that took place on the weekend. It was packed, with lots of activity visible from Brockville Street. Dawn Quinn raised \$3,000 from beer ticket sales.
- The upcoming Bike and Hike on the Cataraqui Trail will take place on September 16. Dawn Quinn would really like the work on the trail to progress so people know about it and therefore use it more. They are working on getting a trail head built.
- Le Boat is 72% sold out for the season.
- The next council meeting will take place in the new office/ Visitor Centre.
- The Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) is looking to expand broadband internet accessibility in order to eliminate holes. The EORN is looking for a contribution from

the town for the project. The county has agreed to pay \$500,000 and has asked Smiths Falls for \$50,000. Tweed reports broadband internet accessibility being an issue in areas surrounding the town.

- The Child Development Centre, currently on Thurber Street, will be moving to the new Catholic school currently being built. A discussion will follow later as to what will happen to the present centre. It is possible it will be kept as extra space since the town is experiencing an increase in population. The new Child Development Centre will start running in September.

### **Council Report – Township of Rideau Lakes**

- The township has purchased the old Gallagher property in Portland. They hope to move all services, including the fire station, library, etc., into one location, and this property will play a role in that. An alternative option is their offer on the old public school. No final decisions have been made.
- The current mayor is retiring but wants a seat on council.
- The construction on Elgin Street from the high school to Highway 15 is progressing.

### **Treasurer Report – Mike Fletcher**

- The Chamber is in a “summer slump” in terms of revenue. This is partly due to the increased payroll costs from the seasonal campground staff.
- The financial work currently being done should indicate how the rest of the summer will look.
- All of this information is in the current report.
- As a result, the Chamber is currently at a loss of around \$18,000. The town has not been invoiced yet, but that will make a big difference financially.
- Quarterly CPP and EI and tax to the federal government payments were missed due to the staff changeover. The liability was being recorded, but no payments were made. There will be an additional cost for being late.
- This is a slow time for the Chamber in terms of gaining revenue from events, money from the campground will have a significant impact.
- Mike expects a net profit of about \$65,000 from the campground for the year, after all expenses. Every year we only receive over \$20,000 of this back from the town, therefore we are losing money. Still, this money from the town would put us in a positive position financially.
- Kristine Fair asked where we were financially at this time last year. It is uncertain, however as of the end of May we are in a better position than we were last year.
- Jeff Banks asked if the increase in camping rates resulted from the increase in minimum wage. Partly, however they were not raised specifically to compensate for wage increases. Barbara Black reminded of the presentation that was held where the new rates were determined based on surrounding areas.
- Chris Saumure asked Gail Moore-Barrie if campers that have been coming back for years notice rate increases. Gail replied yes, they would.

- Jeff Banks pointed out that camping is not cheap anymore.
- Long-term campers are heavily discounted. Full-seasonal campers are only charged 75% of what they would be based on the daily rates. However, there are only 6 full-seasonal campers. Canal side campers are charged just over \$3,000 for the season, while Lombard side campers are charged around \$2,800.
- Hydro fees are included in the cost of camping. This is because the campground does not have the ability to track usage for each campsite separately. Sean Lawrence said we talked about the cost of installing individual meters would be too great when we do not know how long we have to make the money back.
- Eileen Crosbie asked if the campground is fully booked for the season. Mike Fletcher replied that it is practically full on weekends.
- The thought that all of the campers are simply using the campground to live without paying taxes is not true, most of them are transient.
  
- Sean Lawrence asked what the final estimate for the golf tournament was. Mike Fletcher said he has the figures, but he and Becky Allen will have to determine the final amount.

### **Chamber Update – Becky Allen**

- The Chamber will be moving downstairs before the next council meeting. This is supposed to happen next Thursday. The new office will be cohesive with the Downtown Business Association (DBA), as well as Economic Development.
- We have a summer student coming from Willis College for a placement program. The school is closing so this will only be a one-time occurrence.
- Because of the extra person, we will man the new front desk for most of Monday to Friday with the exception of lunch. Economic Development has a student covering the desk on Saturdays.
- No hard agreement exists for staffing the desk. One will have to be put in place by the end of August for when the summer students leave.
- Barbara Black asked what the desk person's purpose is. Becky Allen replied they are mostly there for tourists and people looking for brochures.
- Barbara Black said the Chamber got busy during previous summers.
- The placement student will not be paid, but he has to work for a certain number of hours to successfully complete his program. If he is sick, Economic Development has two students who can cover the desk, so having someone there at all times will not be an issue.
- Dawn Quinn thought a nice sign should be made for all of the offices located in the new space.
- Barbara Black asked if it is possible for the Chamber to be called in to man the desk when nobody else can; Becky Allen said they will not.
- Jordan Drummond, a summer student for Economic Development, has had his hours moved from Monday to Friday to Tuesday to Saturday instead. This way no one has an increased payroll cost.
- Jay Brennan asked if the desk is basically for foot traffic. Becky Allen replied yes, and it will have its own phone line as well.

- Jay Brennan did not think people realize the office is open on Saturdays, and that the campground can probably handle any visitors.
- Barbara Black asked that Becky Allen brings back the desk issue to council before deciding any future arrangements.
- Mercedes leaving left us with some issues with bookkeeping. A bookkeeper, Bev Hewitt, was contacted to discuss the possibility of getting her to take care of the more complex aspects of bookkeeping. Bev will come back with a quote based on our needs, but so far has said she is willing and can possibly save us from having to pay late tax fees.
- The campground's annual barbeque will take place on Friday, August 10 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., and Smith & Smith have been booked for entertainment. More information on the event will be sent out to everyone.
- Downtown construction, which we are calling the Great Excavate, will start next April. The Chamber is working in collaboration with the DBA and Public Works in hosting an information session for anyone that will be affected by the construction. The event will be on July 24 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Station Theatre. Speakers from Napanee and Kingston are coming to talk about their experience. Registration is open to business owners and stakeholders, those interested should contact Becky. This information will also be available in the next newsletter.
- There will be a grand opening at the new consignment store, A Silly Goose, on Friday, July 20, with an 11:00 a.m. ribbon cutting. Anyone that would like to attend should come.
- Ontario Vape and Great Waterway Hearing do not yet have a grand opening planned, but they may want to merge theirs with A Silly Goose's. The landlord of these new stores may also open the new apartments for viewing on that day. Eileen Crosbie mentioned that the apartments are very nice.
- Starting in August, the Chamber is going to prioritize updating starter packages as well as our website.
- The Smiths Falls & District Arts & Culture Council is hosting an arts fair on August 18. It will have vendors, so interested businesses are welcome to reach out to the council.
- The Tweed Front Yard Shindig will take place on August 25. The Chamber was asked to potentially sponsor a hole, however there is no financial commitment.
- Sean Lawrence asked that Becky Allen comes up with a draft budget for next year by September.

### **Delegation to Council: Victoria Park Campground**

- Barbara Black recalled Dawn Quinn mentioning at last month's meeting to go to the town council with our expectations for the campground.
- Barbara Black said people booked spots for this year as they left the campground last year. When they came back this year the construction prevented them from being able to move into their sites. We need to know by September what will happen with the campground next year since people leaving this year want to reserve for next year now; we have to have definitive answer

- Chris Saumure asked if the town council will become inactive by July 30. Jay Brennan replied yes, they are unable to make financial decisions by then.
- Chris Saumure said we want to have a delegation now for the campground's future, with the possibility of expanding or moving it. Jay Brennan said nothing is going to happen to the campground unless there is an alternative use for that property. He suggested coming back in a public form.
- Barbara Black said we need to know if the campground lease will be renewed and for how long. She talked about the previous discussion over potentially removing the canal side sites and other renovation ideas. We need longer than a three or four-year lease to make those changes. Becky Allen added that the Chamber's future also partially lies on the campground's future.
- Sean Lawrence said Dawn Quinn and Jay Brennan need to bring up the campground with council so there is a basis for our delegation. Mike Fletcher thought this might be difficult since some members of council are openly against keeping the it.
- Dawn Quinn says the Chamber council must get organized and approach the town council publicly.
- Jeff Banks asked what Parks Canada thinks about our having the campground. Sean Lawrence said they don't have a problem with it but the town does.
- Jeff Banks suggested the Chamber actually working with Parks Canada; Sean Lawrence said we cannot because their lease is not over at the same time as ours.
- Barbara Black said our intention is to go to the town council. Becky Allen said we are on Monday, July 16 at 5:00 p.m. We are third in line.
- Jay Brennan said all of the Chamber board members should come to the delegation. Barbara Black asked that everyone attend if possible. She asked Becky Allen to send all of the delegation information to the board members.

### **2019 Chamber Gala & AGM**

- Becky Allen suggested sending out a card with all of the fall events included, such as the AGM and gala.
- Barbara Black thanked Kristine Fair and everyone who helped with last year's gala. Kristine said we should hold this year's gala before surrounding districts. Barbara Black said the hospital is having their casino night in September, and that our event should not interfere with theirs. Last year's gala was on Friday, October 13.
- Becky Allen suggested having a meeting soon to start planning the event, determining dates, etc.
- Becky Allen said that the All Candidates event will happen the week after Thanksgiving. Jay Brennan said the legion might have started planning it on their own and that Becky Allen should talk to them about it.
- Barbara Black asked for volunteers for the gala planning committee. Kristine Fair and Crystal LeVatte volunteered. Kristine said they will need help with setting up and taking down the event; Barbara did not think this would be an issue.
- Kristine Fair asked Becky Allen to find out when Small Business Week is since that is when the AGM usually takes place. Sean Lawrence suggested doing the AGM as part of one of the Business Breakfasts. Becky Allen said the November breakfast will be the AGM as well.

## **Downtown Construction Shuttle**

- Cy Wells said that during the downtown construction, southbound traffic will go down Beckwith Street, while northbound traffic will go up Market Street or another street close by. The other possibility is that both lanes of traffic will continue on Beckwith Street but no parking will be made available. Cy said he wants to have the shuttle run from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on a half-hour loop from Andress' Independent Grocer to Settlers Ridge Centre to The Garden Market. The shuttle will run for 31 weeks, which will cost about \$31,000. That is \$226 per week to run the shuttle service.
- Cy Wells said the shuttle must be well advertised for people both in and out of town. This will save people from having to drive and park amidst the construction. Because of the 30-minute loop, people will shop while they wait for the shuttle's return, which helps increase traffic to businesses in the area. The shuttle will be funded somehow, but people will not be charged for the service.
- Cy Wells said he and Becky Allen plan on doing a delegation with the town council. He talked about the idea of having a sponsor for the shuttle each week; Sean Lawrence suggested advertising the sponsor on the shuttle with brochures.
- Cy Wells said somebody needs to make a motion for the Chamber to take care of funding. Chris Saumure suggested the DBA as an alternative holder. Barbara Black asked what specifically Cy wants from the Chamber; he wants us to hold the shuttle service money and pay Healey Transportation Ltd..
- Sean Lawrence said he does not want the Chamber to be liable in case the shuttle is short on funding. Chris Saumure said we could always stop running it if this were to happen.
- Barbara Black recalled last month's meeting where it was suggested that the Chamber's proceeds from calendar sales could be donated to the shuttle service. Eileen Crosbie said the money the DBA normally receives for flowers and beautification purposes might not be needed due to the construction. Cy Wells said he is attending the DBA's board meeting next Tuesday to ask them for their support in funding the shuttle, marketing it as helping their members.
- Barbara Black brought up issues that could occur with the service itself, such as people leaving their belongings on it, getting kicked off, etc. She wondered if the Chamber is going to be held responsible each time an incident like this occurs.
- Mike Fletcher said the funding aspects of the shuttle would not be difficult to handle.

## **Motion for the Chamber to Hold Money for the Shuttle with No Financial Liability:**

**Moved:** Cy Wells

**Second:** Chris Saumure

**All in Favour.**

**Motion Carried.**

## **New Business Added to Agenda**

- No new business.

**Special Tribute: Pat Wiseman**

- A few moments of reflection for Pat Wiseman.

**Motion to Adjourn at 8:47 a.m.**

**Moved:** Mike Fletcher

**Second:** Sean Lawrence

**Motion Carried.**

**Next meeting is on Wednesday, August 8, 2018, 7:30 a.m. at Valley Heartland Board Room.**