

Norwood Chamber of Commerce of Wright's Mesa
Executive Board Meeting - Minutes
July 13, 2021, Lone Cone Library

I. Called to Order at 12:07 p.m.

Board members present in person were: John Metzger, Gretchen Wells, Nola Svoboda, Bernice White, Lerri Lamers, Becky Hannigan

Guest members present were: Molly Radecki

II. Approve Minutes

Bernice made the motion to approve the minutes from June, Nola seconded, all in favor.

III. Officers' Reports

John Metzger / President

- **Ride the Rockies Recap**
 - John reported RTR went well and the riders got to vote on their favorite town and Norwood won.
 - The Denver Post is supposed to come to Norwood and do a thank you.
 - Molly as a homeowner would have liked to have more heads as to the route through town.
- **Lodging Tax**
 - The chamber board listened in on Telluride Town Council's meeting in regards to the county lodging tax and Telluride considering opting out of the county lodging tax.
 - John questioned why if the lodging tax is supposed to benefit the whole county, why Norwood doesn't receive more. Gretchen said it's because Norwood gets its share it pays into based off its own lodging. John stated that Norwood pays into the San Miguel County Sheriff's Department through taxes also, and they don't just patrol Telluride, that tax requires the Sheriff's department to cover the whole county.
 - John thinks the tax should cover the whole county, Gretchen said you get what you pay into it. John said if it wasn't broken out by the school districts, Norwood would get a lot more. Gretchen said if property taxes weren't broken out by what people pay in Norwood vs. Telluride, it would be more equitable too. John thinks an argument could be made for lodging tax to be more equally distributed across the county.
 - John has had conversations with Kris Holstrom, Mike Bordogna, as well as Michael Martelon from the Telluride Tourism Board.
 - Michael gave John a verbal agreement that the Tourism Board and the chamber should regionalise marketing and focus

marketing in different areas. This would help solve Telluride's current issues.

- John said Kris said San Miguel County doesn't really do economic development, but maybe it should.
- Kris brought up a couple important points including regenerative agriculture and small businesses, which WEEDC is working on. Gretchen said she had just gotten something from Deana at WEEDC that said they forgot to include Norwood again.
- John has talked to Paula Brown about grants and matching funds. The chamber doesn't have money for matching funds. John thinks if the chamber were to receive more lodging tax, that could be used for match grants. What he doesn't want is money from lodging tax to run large ads in the New York Times to get people to visit Norwood, but instead use the funds to beautify downtown as well as do regional marketing.
- Gretchen asked, why bother with beautification when there is no enforcement of codes, including clean yards and weed problems. Gretchen mentioned Bob Franceze's place as an example. She said first we need to enforce codes and the chamber should be behind it.

■ **Molly Radecki**

- Molly presented ideas to help Norwood, including establishing a gray water system in which water would feed into the yard, as well as a community wood chipper to help people mulch their yards.
- Molly would like to start a campaign or research and development group for a main street revitalization. She believes there could be some unintended consequences for Norwood unless we're aggressive in writing letters and engaging our commissioners.
- Telluride wants to use the 2% lodging tax for affordable housing. Telluride receives around \$700,000 to fund the Telluride Tourism Board and the Norwood Chamber receives a portion of that, between \$10,000-\$12,000. Molly has talked with some from the Telluride Town Council who believe Norwood should be receiving upwards of \$40,000 in lodging tax each year. Molly believes there may be a glitch in the system because Mountain Village and Telluride work on a muni-rev system as a way for the municipalities to hold short-term rentals accountable. Molly believes there needs to be coordination between county commissioners and managers because of the use of two different systems and Norwood not getting its fair share.
- John said Norwood gets .01% of the total county lodging tax
- Telluride Affordable Housing Initiative is a movement to change the county lodging tax to a Telluride town tax. Molly thinks it's

important to push the dialog of rural development and work together and show Telluride what Norwood is giving to Telluride.

- Molly said there is talk within the Norwood community of annexing from San Miguel County, she believes we should spend the energy on revitalizing Norwood rather than break off.
- Mountain Village broke off from the county lodging tax to form their own town tax. They are also separating from the San Miguel Regional Housing Authority because the original intention of the SMRHA is not what they are doing now. Molly assumed SMRHA was supposed to help Norwood, but this has not been the case as they are focused on Telluride alone. MV left and created their own initiative to encourage deed restricted housing. Molly is worried that investors such as those in Telluride will come into Norwood, purchase prime real estate and change the culture of the town.
- Molly would love to find a way to create more homeowners and more business owners, but Norwood's infrastructure and main street buildings need a lot of work and capital.
 - Gretchen asked if the chamber should get more involved and how to get more involved in general. Should the chamber get on board with SMRHA to push initiatives? Molly said the chamber is a great non profit to leverage.
 - How can we find strategic grants? Molly mentioned a revolving loan fund for businesses in which a non profit applies for and redistributes the funds to businesses.
 - The value of keeping a historic building is so much greater but you can't quantify it with money, but that's part of its historic value. If there was money from a revolving loan fund, they could put payment on capital to make the building profitable.
 - The character of downtown should be maintained, vs an out of state investor who changes the character of town.
 - Mission now is to determine which grants Norwood could go for and collaborate with the chamber to get a grant program going.
 - How can Norwood take on more and be more reliant without offending those who believe they are helping.
 - Is there a way to do a capital campaign in Norwood, using the Opportunity Zone fund to raise capital for development in Norwood?
 - Molly would like to talk to Region 10.
 - Gretchen thinks the chamber should talk to Kris and Mike from the county. John suggested a retreat

with some of the bigger players from the county and the towns to go over ideas.

- End goal could be making a business plan Norwood could use for grant funding.
 - Molly presents the Rural Business Development Grand Fund toolkit as an example to get started.

■ **Questions:**

- Why is the county lodging tax broken up by school districts? If it's a county tax, why doesn't the whole county benefit from it? Why not just split it in half or equally divided?
- Why do the schools in Telluride get so much money and Norwood gets so little in comparison?
- What would happen to Norwood if Telluride opts out of the county lodging tax?
- Would the county lodging tax disappear? If not, would Norwood continue to receive its portion of the tax?
- If Norwood received more lodging tax, how could those funds be used? Matching grants, beautification?
- Norwood needs to know what happens to Norwood if the lodging tax initiative makes it on November's ballot. Should we put together a meeting to discuss? When would be best, August? Who should we invite?
 - Kris Holstrom, Mike Bordogna, Delanie, Trish from Region 10, Micheal Martlon, Geneva from Telluride Town Council, The county and the Telluride Tourism Board.
 - Hold the meeting somewhere fun such as The Livery.
- Molly will put together everything to send to the chamber board. John asked if everyone could share their thoughts of what the chamber should do and who they should invite in an email chain.

Terri Lamers / Treasurer

- **Treasurer's Report**
 - The beginning balance for June 1, 2021 was \$5,144.28. Deposits of \$48.29 were credited to the account. Disbursements of \$350.00 were made, making the balance on June 30, 2021 \$4,842.57.

Gretchen made the motion to approve the minutes and Treasurer's Report from June, Bernice seconded, all in favor.

Nola Svoboda / Secretary

- **Marketing Report; website and social media**
 - Nola designed the chamber's rodeo ad to run in the Norwood Post and The Daily Planet.

- John thought the ad would look great as the banner across main street. He also suggested creating a new logo from Nola's ad design, using the horse, creating something with dark skies and the "horse," perhaps a pegasus constellation.

Gretchen Wells / VP

- **Lodging Tax Meeting**
 - If the RV park goes in, there will be lodging tax from that.
- **Farmers Market**
 - Gretchen said the farmers market is struggling. Venders continue to quit.
 - Nola walked through the Telluride Farmers Market and couldn't believe how many Norwood businesses were selling in Telluride and can't understand why those businesses wouldn't want to support their local community by vending at the Norwood Farmers Market.
 - Gretchen will talk with the board about moving the market to Mondays in hopes of better vendor turnout.

Becky Hannigan / New Member At-Large

- **Banner**
 - Becky gave a recap of Katie Alexander's suggestions for the main street banner. She demonstrated how the banner could be changed out based on events throughout the year.
 - She said the different events would pay for their portion of the banner.
- **Baseball Tournament**
 - Becky talked to Ken Watt about the baseball tournament ... He had 25 teams lined up and 15 out of the 25 teams cancelled due to the lack of lodging in Norwood and Telluride. The older groups will be at the Norwood School only with 5-6 teams.
 - Becky asked Ken if it was okay for the chamber to bring signs for Norwood's businesses. Becky presented her ideas for signs at the ballpark and grandstands.
- **Membership Drive**
 - Becky presented her form idea for a membership drive and ideas for dues, as well as her research on how to support and promote businesses.
 - Becky plans on hitting the pavement to get memberships but needs to know who has paid for a membership.

Bernice White / Member At-Large

Bernice let the board know the San Miguel County just posted in the paper that the mountain town cannot handle any more tourism amid the labor and housing crisis.

Matt Mogg / Member At-Large

Not present

IV. Old Business

- **Visitor Center**

- Nola said she doesn't have time to work on a proposal for the future of the visitor center space. However, she decided now is not the time for a proposal because she believes the chamber needs to know what was previously agreed upon for the visitor center space between the library and the chamber. She believes the current chamber board needs to find out what the space's plans were supposed to be. She said if there was an agreement and the chamber was left with something different, the chamber should know what the original agreements were. Gretchen and Terri agreed.
- John said it seemed like after Carrie's comments during last month's meeting that there was a lot of effort to avoid conflicts of interest that resulted in a bunch of conflicts of interest and he doesn't want to jump into an MOU without knowing what was originally agreed upon.
- Perhaps the chamber should bring in John Dotson to help clarify how the visitor center space came to be and what exactly was agreed upon.
- Terri will try to find the original plans for the visitor center space from Carrie.
- Bernice mentioned that the cops actually hate the silk screen on the new adventure business and the visitor center in Naturita because they cannot see inside.
- John mentioned Matt is on the new housing advisory committee and knows of the builder and thought there could be an opportunity for a model home which could double as the visitor center. He asked if there are other options for a visitor center. Molly mentioned that WEEDC is getting a grant to help revitalize storefronts which the chamber may be able to utilize if it chooses to move to a storefront.
- John applied for a \$2,500 grant for the Rodeo and Unaweep Byway celebration.

V. New Business:

- **RV Park**

- Gretchen reported that she has been hearing a lot of people opposing the new proposed RV Park.
- Johns stated that the chamber met on the phone and voted to become a bronze sponsor for the rodeo as well as run some local advertising to the expenditure of \$1,000.

VI. Public Comment

No public

VII. Adjournment: Gretchen motioned to adjourn, Bernice seconded, all in favor. The meeting adjourned at 1:53 p.m.

Next Chamber Executive Board Meeting: Tuesday, August 10, 2021 at 12:00 p.m., at the Lone Cone Library/Zoom.

Submitted by Nola Svoboda