

Wahkiakum Chamber of Commerce

Board Meeting

January 14, 2025/ 1034 Hours/ River Street Meeting Room

Attendees:

Steve Carson	Garrett Radcliff
Kim Howell	Dan Lorenzen
Kay Walters	Ryan Murillo
Brandi Beedle	Shannon Britt
Richard Erickson	Bob Jungers
Dianna Zimmerman	

Agenda:

Call to Order – 10:38 Steve Carson, President

Move to approve minutes from 12/25 to next meeting.

Any Agenda topics to add? None

Committee Reports:

Treasurer's Report –

Kim presented an end of year (EOY) financial report to the Board. EOY QB Reports were reviewed including the following: EOY 2025 Profit and Loss (P&L), EOY 2025 Budget vs Actuals, and EOY 2025 Hotel/Motel Restricted Fund P&L. Our Balance Sheet Report is being revised by our accountant and should be ready for the February Board Meeting.

Some highlights from the reports include:

A reminder that the Chamber operates on an annual calendar year cash basis accounting which means that income and expenses are accounted for when they are spent and received. Our \$15752 Ferry Sign Grant restricted income from WA State

Tourism received in 2024 was spent in 2025. The income showed on 2024 reports, our spending of (-\$8460.84) for design and fabrication shows on 2025. And our reimbursement to the state of \$7291.16 unspent funds that was made this month, will show on 2026 reports. As of this payment, our 4520 Ferry Sign Grant restricted account balance is zero.

Our EOY P&L and Budget vs Actuals reports show our annual income of \$190876 (\$21K below budget) and expenses of \$262519 (\$51K above budget), with a net income of (-\$68411). Our lower income is impacted by the 2025 Ferry sign grant expense without the 2024 income offset; and over budgeting for our County contract for staff wages, Hotel/Motel income and ticket sales. On the expense side, our Accounting Services were \$12K over budget due to upgrading to a CPA backed accounting firm mid-year. Hotel/Motel spend in Outside Services (\$11K over) and HM Advertising spending (\$44K over budget) made up most of the expense overspend. Advertising Tasha @ LL has suggested now that our processes and her services are settling out she expects our monthly maintenance fee to reduce to \$500/mo.

For the second half of 2025, Kim worked with Leading Light Accountants to establish new accounts in QB to, for the first time, capture the chamber's actual Hotel/Motel fund expenses other than Acct 8542 – HM Advertising. HM expenses such as payroll, rent & utilities, supplies, website, outside services, & storage are now being tracked. These new accounts did not have any amounts budgeted to them for 2025 (Budget vs Actuals). We had quite a bit of overspend (in our HM fund last year - \$40K for the Columbia Coast TV project and an additional \$15K above our actual FY25 HM income of \$41,494.29. Total expenses are \$96754.76. Net operating income is (-\$55260.47). This amount must be covered by the Accumulated Unspent HM Fund Reserve, that started the year with a balance of \$141,832.33. This leaves its balance at EOY at \$86,571.86.

We now have data to support developing a budget for the expense side of our anticipated 2026 HM revenue for the new HM accounts. We will need to set aside specific HM funds in support of Chamber HM expenses, with the rest set aside for the 8542 HM Advertising requests. The Hotel/Motel Committee will need to weigh in on this, including identifying parameters for using funds from the Accumulated Unspent HM Fund Reserve. Ryan and I expect to present the 2026 budget to the Board at our next meeting for approval.

Tourism:

Basic meeting went over budget and what is planned to spend in 2026. Ryan developed rubric for assessing applications. Will do a dummy application to practice with rubric. Thinking quarterly deadlines to submit HMT applications. Need to adv public that there will now be deadlines. Shannon would like to be included in HMT. Get tourism group meeting in early February

Chamber Staff:

Ryan has presentation. He and Garret are working on a report to show activities and work that has been done. Membership dues goal was 7500, actual was 9201.36. Have done more outreach. Got 28 new memberships this year. 35 membership renewals. Ryan has been seeking more feedback. Have too many membership perks, would like them to be fewer, simple, and more impactful. Many do not use many of the membership perks. The booths at BED are a big draw for sponsorships. Have 3 more ribbon cuttings upcoming for 2026, backwoods, patticakes, naturopath on island.

Offered trainings Grant Writing 101 and social media and Canva AI. Have sm business resources training coming in March. Looking to do a non-profit course.

Social media presence has increased engagement. 577k people have viewed our page.

Cost saving measures, downsizing, reduced hours.

Had great attendance at events this year. The Ferry celebration was a huge success. Great collaboration between town, BOCC, and Chamber.

Crab feed, sold out of tables, still have individual tables available. Article will be in The Eagle. Looking for volunteers and donations. Have you reached out to the new mayor and town council members to volunteer.

Unfinished Business:

Schedule meeting for new board member applications/interviews. 1/14 @1400. Potentially phone interview. Need to develop interview questions. 3 seats available.

New Business:

Dianna Zimmerman, coordinator for Wahkiakum youth mentoring. Jan is national mentoring month. Recruiting for the program. Want more youth, businesses or people with hobbies to host group activities, e.g. golf, fishing, sewing. WYM is based on prevention. One

year commitment, 4 hours per month and monthly group activities account for 2 hours. Great resources for kids and adults alike. Q&A 2/03/26 1800-1900 at the Hope Center.

Public comment:

Bob Jungers - Finalized transfer of ownership of water/sewer from TOC to PUD. Have MAA between the later entities to aid in future issues between sanitary sewer etc. PUD is now the utility provider for the county of Wahkiakum. Rates haven't been raised in 9 years. Believe current rates are adequate to carry into the future and tentatively don't see the need to raise rates currently. Working with WaDOH to subsidize improvements to the Wahk. Water system.

Shannon Britt – attended wahk. Wild bird fest preplanning meeting. End of feb/early march. Goal is to bring ppl to area in off season. Birding is a great activity in this county. People will travel for birding events. Ryan adv wings adv wings over Willapa ended. Hoping to pick up some of those ppl will come to Cathlamet. Develop passport for the county business to get people moving around Wahkiakum. Kim asked with we could tie-in to Ken's TV show as a potential. Potentially open up places not normally accessible in the refuge to allow birding during event. Potentially could pull commercial from TV footage, they did some filming of Andrew Emler talking about birding. They run local adds during the episodes of Columbia Coast.

South Sound Inuit Kayaking stayed last year looking to bring it back in 2026. Likely will be 3-4 night stay, last year brought about 50ppl staying overnight.

Meeting adjourned at 11:52