



**Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce
Meeting Minutes
April 29, 2020**

1. Acknowledgement of meeting via email due to COVID19 social distancing requirements.

Members who participated included: Rebecca Watkins (Presbyterian Church), Chris Lizza (Mono Market), Nancy Pinizzotto (Nicely's), Corey Auchoberry (Lee Vining Chevron), Carolyn Webb (Virginia Lakes Resort), Margie and Wayne Beaver (Beaver's Sporting Goods), Tom Crowe (Mono Lake Kayak Rentals), Tim and Kim Traynor (Yosemite Gateway Motel), Kelley Miller (El Mono Motel), Claire Landsowki (Mono Lake Committee), Tim and Stephanie Banta (Lakeview Lodge).

2. Introduce Claire Landowski from the Mono Lake Committee and vote her into the position of Secretary/Treasurer of the LV Chamber of Commerce.

VOTE: YES - 10, NO - 0. Claire is the new Secretary/Treasurer.

3. Treasurer's Report - bank account balance:

Our bank account currently has approximately \$2200 in it
Annual recurring expenses total approx. \$1052

4. Secretary's Report - 20 paid memberships for 2019, and only 13 for 2020. This may be due to hardship as a result of businesses being closed during the pandemic.

5. Tioga Pass opening 2020 - We will update members via email as we get more information. A letter has been sent to the Mono County Supervisors from the LV Chamber of Commerce asking them to be proactive in making sure Tioga Pass is ready to open when Yosemite opens back up. So far we have not received any response. We encourage all members to keep emailing the supervisor for our district: Bob Gardner, bgardner@mono.ca.gov.

6. Fishing Report from Beaver's Sporting Goods - Fishing opener delayed until June 1.

7. Vote to spend \$850 on fish stocking in 2020 - **VOTE: YES - 10, NO - 0. We will spend \$850 on fish stocking this year.** If more membership dues come in, we will increase that number.

8. Discuss advertising methods for 2020 - The Chamber is looking for someone to run a social media campaign for the LV Chamber of Commerce. We did not get any volunteers at this time. We will continue to pursue this idea. We will continue to pay for the leevining.com website, and we will also consider publications that we can afford.

9. Vote to spend \$250 on advertising in 2020 - **VOTE: YES - 10, NO - 0. We will spend \$250 on advertising this year.** If more dues come in, we can increase that number.

10. Update on Mono County re-opening plan - Mono County and local chambers of commerce are working together with the local COVID19 Emergency Operations Center and are in the process of developing an Economic Recovery Plan that includes a plan to re-open businesses and tourism when the time comes - hopefully SOON! Claire has been attending meetings and listening to the conversation. As soon as we have something official we can share, we will pass it on. If you would like to offer some constructive input or get involved in this process, please email Jeff Simpson at jsimpson@monocounty.gov.

11. Discuss Eastern Sierra Chamber Alliance - Chambers of Commerce from Lone Pine up to Bridgeport are starting talks of forming the "Eastern Sierra Chamber Alliance." The idea is that we have a common interest in attracting visitors and tourism to the area, and together we may be able to have more of an influence than each of us do individually. This would include pooling advertising power, working towards getting Tioga Pass open each season, and launching a social media campaign for the entire area. And more so right now, supporting each other through the COVID19 pandemic. We are attending these meetings regularly to see how this unfolds, and we welcome your input so that we can make sure Lee Vining has a good presence there. Any input or comments are appreciated!

11. Tioga Inn Community Housing Project: Vote to have the LV Chamber of Commerce send a letter in support of the project. **VOTE: YES - 1, NO - 9, ABSTAIN - 1. We will not send a letter in support of the project.** Most members explained they were not necessarily against the project - just the involvement of the Chamber of Commerce in taking a side on the issue. (see comments below).

12. Please see member comments on next page.

13. Date for our fall meeting will be set sometime in September.

14. Adjourn

Participating Businesses:	Question 2: Vote Claire In	Question 7: Spend on fish stocking	Question 8: spend on advertising	Question 11: write letter in support of Tioga Inn Housing Project	Comments:
Rebecca Watkins, Presbyterian Church	yes	yes	yes	abstain	
Chris Lizza, Mono Market	yes	yes	yes	yes	see below
Nancy Pinizzotto, Nicely's	yes	yes	yes	no	see below
Corey Auchoberry, LV Chevron	yes	yes	yes	no	
Carolyn Webb, Virginia Lakes Resort	yes	yes	yes	no	see below
Margie and Wayne Beaver, Beaver's Sporting Goods	yes	yes	yes	no	
Tom Crowe, Mono Lake Kayak Rentals	yes	yes	yes	no	
Tim and Kim Traynor, Yosemite Gateway Motel	yes	yes	yes	no	
Kelly Miller, El Mono Motel	yes	yes	yes	no	see below
Mono Lake Committee	yes	yes	yes	no	
Tim and Stephanie Banta, Lakeview Lodge	-	-	-	no	see below
VOTING RESULTS:	YES	YES	YES	NO	

MEMBER COMMENTS:

Chris Lizza:

- Should we lobby the Supervisors to do a Memorial Day weekend opening on the 23rd? or would that bring too many people up here? (fishing opener)
- on advertising: I think the fishing and tourism guides remain relevant and important advertising portals. If Lee Vining is missing, readers will focus on the communities that have a presence there.
- Eastern Sierra Chamber alliance: Seems to me that's what Jeff Simpson does (very well) - duplication?
- Tioga Inn Housing Project: We need housing for work staff, otherwise the only opportunity to add workers is to poach from each other, which is counterproductive. It seems to be the ideal location,... but I won't argue more for it here and will go along with the group

Nancy Pinizzotto:

- On Tioga Pass: I think we need to look into the cost of porta potties if it would help in opening the road through the park
- On Tioga Inn Housing Project: I vote no on the chamber as a body writing a letter regarding the Tioga inn project as i feel it is too political and controversial. I think individuals should respond on their own and keep the chamber out of it. We don't need any more discord among business owners in town

Carolyn, Virginia Lakes:

- On expenses: Why is your business license \$100 - and renewal should only be \$25
- On Tioga Pass: Tioga Pass opening each year is at the NPS 's mercy for opening. They have their guidelines and they stick to them. I've seen it happen too many times in the last 46 years and they never budge. They don't have the budget to hire enough people to care-take the highway, so maybe it might be approached with some funding from the County to help NPS with early staffing for out of state/country visitors, as that seems to be their issue. Only 86% of all people read signs and the minions feel the other 14% don't matter. But, that is not the case. It's the 14% they worry about. There is a poem "In days of old when Knights were bold and toilets were invented, they left their load along the road and walked away contented". Less said.
- On Fishing report: I'll e-mail Margie and maybe suggest Wayne start a Lee Vining Fishing Report for Lakes along 120, LV Creek, Parker, Little Walker, and Lundy.
- I will always vote for more fish, and you might even consider a tournament held at the nearest lake and have weigh-ins local and this can get a lot of attention, and easy to advertise. Everyone has been doing derby's off and on all summer from Bishop to Bridgeport for many years.
- On advertising: YES, and I have always said that Tourism is great, Costly brochures don't transfer into dollars. A product, gimmick, or event can all add up to dollars.
- On re-opening: Have already given Jeff my thoughts. From all the healthy people skiing at Virginia Lakes at the FAKE opener last Saturday, 32 cars at Big Virginia shows me that healthy people don't need to shelter in place. NV will be outlining their re-opening on Thursday, will be interesting to see how they do it. Hear a rumor that Fishing may start earlier than June 1st, and it's being considered with the right science and data.
- On chamber alliance: I believe that is the best idea I've heard in a long time and overdue. It may be difficult at first as each community doesn't want to part with their part of the pie as you can see from all the individual brochures each area provides for tourists/vacationers. Would the Alliance do one large social media page for Inyo, or Inyo and Mono, and do just one brochure/visitor guide/fishing map type media. And would you consider adding the town of Walker?

- On Tioga Inn Housing Project: A chamber of commerce (or board of trade) is a form of [business network](#), for example, a local organization of businesses whose goal is to further the interests of businesses. Business owners in towns form these local societies to advocate on behalf of the business community as a whole and not be selective in their support. It has to be the entire community working together to bring in tourism to the area.

"No" on the letter. But supporting the plan is a very worthy venture and can be shown by letters from those that are in support of the project be sent to the Board, Forest Service, or other entities that are not familiar with this project. Adages are always good to remember no matter how old because it will always come back and get you. "Don't cut off your nose to spite your face", and never burn a bridge.

Kelly Miller, El Mono:

- On Tioga Inn Housing Project: I have mixed feelings about the project, so I vote no I really don't feel the chamber should support or oppose this project. We can do that as individual businesses

Stephanie Banta, Lakeview Lodge:

- On the Tioga Inn Housing Project: It would be best if the chamber was not involved. Since it represents the whole town and not everyone agrees.