



Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce
Fall 2022 Meeting
November 10, 11:30am
Lee Vining Community Center

MEETING MINUTES

11:30am - 12:00 Potluck lunch

12:00pm: Begin Meeting

1. Members and guests in attendance:

Kim and Tim Traynor - Yosemite Gateway Motel
Claire Landowski - Mono Lake Committee
Wayne and Brad Beaver - Beaver's Sporting Goods
Stephanie Banta - Lakeview Lodge and Basin Cafe
Jameisha Washington and Eric Rios-Bretado - Inyo National Forest
Jeff Simpson - Mono County Economic Development, Tourism and Film Commission
Matt Paruolo - Southern California Edison.

2. Membership Renewal Reminder - billing will be going out in the next couple of weeks for 2023 dues. (Due Jan 1, 2023).

3. Secretary/Treasurer Report: From Claire:

Membership and financial report

In 2022 we had 19 members, up a good bit from 2021 (16 members) and 2020 (17 members). New members this year were Tioga Green, Banta Enterprises, and Sierra Hospitality Group (the Pinnizzottos' businesses). Thank you so much to these new members for joining us!

You'll soon be receiving renewal letters for next year, and we hope that you'll join the Chamber for 2023! We have made lots of progress in bridging communication gaps with Yosemite and the Forest Service, have continued to build a strong social media presence that brings business to town, and are cooking up lots of ideas to

The full financial report is attached, but in summary:

Total revenue from membership dues was \$2,800.

Notes on Expenses:

Phone-- we spend about \$55 per month on the phone line, which is answered by Mono Lake Committee Staff. This is a large annual expense, and we'd previously discussed changing the service provider to something cheaper. The MLC is planning to make a change to their phone system in the near future, so

while the line will still be answered by them, the way this is billed will probably change, and should be much cheaper for the Chamber. More info to come soon on this.

Fish— in the spring we'd voted to spend \$1250 on fish. We also carried over \$2100 from last year that was allocated for fish stocking; that was spent this year. Wayne has the full report on the successful year of fish stocking.

Christmas lights-- we also had agreed last fall to spend about \$500 on new Christmas lights for the town. Thank you to Margie for coordinating that purchase. They worked great last season and it's almost time to put them back up!

Facebook/Instagram boosted posts— this year Kim worked hard on our social media presence and featured every chamber business with a boosted post, as well as additional boosted posts to highlight the town and tourist season. Total expense for these posts was \$509.

4. Fish Stocking Recap from Beaver's Sporting Goods -

Beaver's Sporting Goods collected a total of \$16,066.00 in donations for local fish stocking this year. This included \$4105.75 from the donation buckets, \$3350.00 from the Chamber (of which \$2100.00 rolled over from 2021), and the balance from local businesses and individuals. Stocking was also up from Mono County as well as from Fish and Wildlife. Overall, it was a very good year for fish stocking. We talked about how to more efficiently get the word out to visitors about the fish stocking that occurs each season without giving away exact time and location. Social media seems to be the best for getting this information out. The Chamber will coordinate more regularly with Beaver's Sporting Goods in regards to regular posts about fish stocking.

Kim brought up the idea of starting a non-profit just for Lee Vining fish stocking that is outside of the Chamber, but Wayne made the point that it is just easier to run the donations through the Chamber since it is already set up. And once again, it is a good idea, but someone has to be willing to do it. We discussed a fishing opener fundraiser led by the Chamber. Tim Traynor volunteered to organize it. We will be looking for volunteers and ideas in the coming months.

Comment from Stephanie Banta that fish stocking seems quite successful on its own. Perhaps Chamber should budget more funds for social media and for possible ways to make the appearance of town more appealing - like lamppost flags or something of that sort. This needs further discussion and some volunteers to lead the effort. With more member involvement, we could certainly raise more funds and do more to help the town!

5. Social Media and Advertising summary for 2022 -

From Kim: The Chamber spent just over \$500 on social media targeted ads in 2022. \$100 of that went to member spotlight boosted posts. Each member spotlight reached approximately 700-1800 people. The other \$400 went to general posts about Fishing opener, Yosemite National Park and Tioga Pass, Fall Colors, etc. We reached just over 300,000 people from these posts that were targeted to visitors in CA, OR, AZ, and have interests in things like outdoors, hiking, fishing, camping, California Travel, tourism, etc. We will revise our approach next year - possibly give the members the option to pay for more ads, or also opt out from any posts. We desperately need a volunteer for someone to run the Chamber social media. In order for it to be effective, it has to be consistent all year round. Perhaps there is a high school kid who would like to "intern" for the Chamber and do this? Or get paid a small amount?

Also, anyone who would like Mono County Tourism to make announcements about their businesses (le events or opening dates), can email Jeff Simpson, and he is happy to post for your business.

We also discussed changing the name of our Facebook and Instagram pages from "Lee Vining Chamber of Commerce" to something a little more interesting like "Visit Lee Vining" or "Explore Lee Vining"

6. Speakers: Inyo National Forest - Jameisha Washington and Eric Rios-Bretado

Inyo National Forest has already set their opening and closing dates for Lower Lee Vining Creek Campgrounds: OPEN - Weekend of 4/27, CLOSE 10/29.

It was suggested that perhaps they could open a week earlier to better prepare for Fishing Opener. Jameisha promised to look into this.

Also, they will likely be starting to use [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) for their campground reservation system in the 2024 season. This will probably be a hybrid of being able to reserve, and also walk in and book an available spot.

7. Speaker: SCE - Matt Paruolo

Matt was here mostly to introduce himself and make himself available to us for information and event contributions from SCE. He will be giving us regular updates on what is going on locally with SCE, and is available directly if you have any questions. His email is matthew.parulo@sce.com

8. Speaker: Jeff Simpson - Mono County Tourism and Economic Development

Mono County has budgeted \$100,000 for fish stocking for next year.

The Visitor Guide for 2023 is headed to production, and will be ad free again.

Reminder that the Employee Retention Tax Credit is still available for qualifying businesses that have kept employees through covid. For more information, please contact Jeff for a contact who can help you with applying if you are interested.

We discussed the letter the Chamber plans to write to Yosemite National Park officials in relation to their development of next year's peak hours reservation system (if there is one).

*NOTE: shortly after our meeting, the park announced that there will be no reservation system in 2023, so this letter was not finalized or sent. We have asked the park to make the Fall meeting with them an annual one.

9. Recap of 11/7 meeting with YNP regarding reservation system, etc.

The Zoom meeting with Joe Meyer of YNP was well attended. At the time the Park had not yet made a decision on the reservation system for 2023. There were several comments around allowing drive-through access for locals and visitors if the reservation system is in place and several requests to change the hours during which a reservation is needed.

Meyer said that they would likely be considering some longer-term reservation system in the future and that when they did so, they would have many opportunities for public comment.

10. Need volunteers for hanging Christmas lights in town just after Thanksgiving

Paul McFarland volunteered. We still need more volunteers.

2:00pm: Meeting adjourned