

Salida Business Alliance Minutes

8.4.22

Attendance

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| Allie Stevens | Monarch Mountain | Drew Nelson | City of Salida |
| Donna Cole | Kal Toys | Vickie Sue Vigil | Mountain Mail |
| Scarlett Massine | Noon Rotary | Lori Roberts | Salida Chamber |
| Michael Varnum | City of Salida | Angel Rowel | Discovery Pass |
| Robin Nejame | High Country Bank | Nicole Balaun | Su Cassa |
| Ken Brandon | Box of Bubbles | Rob Prescott | Varies |
| Merrell Bergin | City of Salida | Pamela Good | Good skin Matters |

Start Time: 8:34am

- Angel: Let's call the meeting to order. Let's keep side convos to a minimum. We're here to discuss the dissolving of the current board and a possible takeover.
- VS: This organization stated in 1979 with a bunch of businesses getting together. We're at a point that I am retiring, and I was able to do it as part of my job. The last few years, business models have changed and are no longer the mom-and-pop shops. We must adjust accordingly.
- Angel: SBA has a number of signature events. We are excited to announce that High Country Bank will be taking over the Parade of lights.
- Robin: We're excited. I connected with the board when we found out about this opportunity because it really needs to keep happening. We have the people power and have great mentors to help us through it. This year's theme with be nutcrackers. From October to December, we have a number of events but we're ready for it! Thank you, guys, for your years of tradition.
- VS: We just don't have the manpower to keep doing this. High Country Bank has the resources to make this happen.
- Angel: Our lives have changed a lot in the last year for all of us. I personally cannot be in a leadership role here if I don't have the time to dedicate to it. We had a great purpose during Covid, but VS is right that the business dynamic is changing. It's important that we have a good plan for our members going forward
- Merrell: Event fatigue is a real issue. People take for granted what goes into these events. Parade of lights is why I moved here. It's not just about downtown, but the community is coming together. If we can focus on the most impactful parts. Another need may need to be filled now. Maybe there is work that can be divided that has longer term effects.
- Robin: On the chamber board. Who is a small business owner?
- Lori: Heather from Moonlight.
- Robin: I know the benefits we receive from being members of both. Maybe we need to move people toward the Chamber.
- Lori: Years ago, the SBA was under the chamber umbrella. We currently would like to have more downtown representation on our board. We are meeting with 5 businesses about signage that could help the downtown businesses. I've talked to Scotty Hughes about being on the board. We're always wanted to have a diverse board, but people need their space.
- Michael: Agreed, we would like to have more local businesses on the board.
- VS: The Chamber and the SBA have always had each others back.
- Angel: We've been so involved with the broad voices for so long. With the SBDC, The EDC and the chamber.
- VS: The networking is what it's all about.
- Rob: What you're talking about is communication. It was a shock to us that you were disbanding. I think a more accurate description is a micro business, not a small business. It's a choice to be here, and we all make sacrifices to be here. What do mom and pop business, need to know? To me communication is the key. When Donna came to our store to tell us about an event, what was the best I've seen. What support do these businesses need?
- VS: I think that's the crossroads were at. We used to have huge turn outs to these meetings. We used to have business that would reach out to us.
- Pam: I have been working on a project with Alignable. It's an online platform. It's about main street. It's about having in person meetings. I'm one of the ambassadors. The alliance is bringing it to main street. There is the day of giving Oct 15. It's in the works right now. I respect everyone here. Some people are ready to re-engage and I need board members. I'm already in and feel bad that I haven't been able to join everyone here. I think it will take a reboot.
- VS: This isn't the first time the SBA has been rebooted, we did it in the 90's.

Donna: I felt like the SBA meetings used to be a forum for the city. What's going to happen now?

Drew: We can only reach as many people who can attend. We have tried to bulk up our capacity for communication. We recently hired on an engagement coordinator. The challenge that we have is that people expect that we go door to door. Social media has smashed the old model and it's a different form of communication. Lori has been fantastic about communicating with the business community. We have a tremendous amount of businesses outside on F st. I will say that the SBA was instrumental in keep businesses open during the pandemic. And I want to say how grateful I am to this group. It brought us closer together in a lot of ways and the outcome was incredibly positive. I want to say thank you to all the board members. You helped so much, and I can understand the exhaustion. Just remember that even though there are only 15 people sitting here, you helped hundreds of people. The city will have calls to action coming up. I wonder if this can be energized in a different venue.

Pam: In Salida there are over 500 on Alignable and in BV there are over 300.

Robin: If you're not a member of this, you're not going to hear things. Back in the day, if you weren't getting Donna's emails, you weren't getting the info. My point is that that is going away, but now I get the Chamber emails and I get the Mountain Mail. That will be a bummer that this going away. If people want the info, we need a place for them to land.

Nicole: It is important to remember that we are not the downtown business alliance.

VS: This all sounds great, but it's hard to get the manpower to make it all happen.

Robin: The 501c3, when the Monarch race team was turned over to us, it was great to have a place where people can donate money.

Nicole: To clarify, we've never been a donation-based group. We changed our status during the pandemic because we took in a much larger amount of money. This will likely change if we do not collect that much over a certain number of years.

Michael: We stated a new communication tool with the city. You can now sign up to receive the agenda and bullet point of council meetings. You can also come to a meeting or watch on the youtube channel. You can sign up on the city's website.

Lori: Historically my job was to get hwy 50 business involved. It's hard for them because running lodging requires a lot of time. We have a lack of volunteers to step up. I could see how we could be a conduit, but I do not want to get involved in special fees. It might be an option to have a subcommittee, but I would want that person to be on the board so that there is a bigger picture. We always try to have mixed industry on the board.

Rob: I think we have to think about what makes Salida unique and that is downtown. The amenities that we have downtown is not in a lot of places. I came from a jaded background in Breck. They destroyed businesses during the pandemic. I think if this org goes away you'll lose the micro business voice. Maybe with the Chamber, but you have so many other voices.

Lori: Most of our business are small business. And we are an independent organization.

Rob: Maybe you can step up and take a role then.

Lori: There are so many people that come to Salida, who don't even know there is a downtown. It crucial to look at the whole picture.

Rob: The synergies are important, but the small guy needs a platform. I heard the term meeting too many times. The people who are here are not really meeting focused. It could be more gorilla style. One of the topics I see is a guest centric approach. What information are they missing. It's all about marketing and communication. The shop local thing you guys do is awesome.

Angel: That was in partnership with the chamber.

Rob: The competition is Amanzon. And we need to work together and maybe the Chamber can step up. I've taken a role like this one many times. There has to be a team approach. There has to be a ton of Vickie Sues.

Donna; Who do you have for your board?

Rob: Are you all quitting tomorrow?

VS: Yes, this current board is resigning at the end of this year.

Robin: These people in here and volunteering their butts off, and are burnt out. We're at our capacity. I love the idea of SBA continuing, I'm done with meetings. I'm intrigued by the idea of a subcommittee. But you can't force people to come to meetings. The membership dues were moneys collected to do things.

VS: Would you try to be money based? The only way we could support everything we did with dues. So how would you be able to go forward?

Rob: Yes, it would be money based. I would look different though. If there is a transition period, I think we could find other people to step up.

Nicole: If it is changing a lot, I think we need to create a new entity. SBA has been around a long time and people know what to expect.

Rob: I don't know who has the time to start something new. I think it should be tweaked to micro business.

Lori: We should be cautious to not duplicate efforts.

Allie: It should be noted that finding board members won't be as easy as it sounds. Everyone in this room knows a board that needs people.

Angel: Tell us more about what you did in Breck. Did you have a board?

Rob: No, we did not have a board.

Robin: I think this a bigger discussion. It sounds like you have a plan. So, I think it would make sense for you to submit a business plan for us to review. And if it aligns great and if not, then you can start your own thing.

VS: Why did you not join the SBA in the past?

Rob: We're not meeting people. I think the definition of meeting changes into a new version.

Angel: I think that it's important too, to be familiar with the other organizations in town. There is so much work that goes on behind the scenes and people don't even realize what's going on.

Allie: We can help connect you with the right people to see what is needed.

Rob: It needs to be downtown focus.

Robin: And that is the problem for me. We are a community.

Angel: I say this with the utmost respect. It sounds like your ideas are there, but the wisdom in the room is crucial and don't let it fall on deaf hears. Even the city gets push back. We cannot exclude businesses.

Michael: The community person we hired is for arts and culture. The creative district is downtown and the city will be putting effort into reviving that. If you were to do a downtown only group, I agree that it cannot be this group.

VS: What I see happing going forward is getting information from those who are interested in taking over. Please put it in writing so that we can vote.

Angel: Adjourned

End: 9:56am