

FCBGF Board Meeting Minutes – April 9, 2024

Present: Derek Baker, Randy Byers, Shaina Case, Keren Meister-Emerich, Sharron Kelsey, Tom Lacock, Khale Lenhart, Janelle Rose*, Jason Sanchez, Kerri Young

Absent: Scott Aker, Matt Ashby, Jaime Liberty, Mark Rinne, Tracy Wilson

Call to order:

Khale Lenhart called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm in the Gathering Room at the Cheyenne Botanic Gardens. *Nine (9) voting members were present, and a quorum was established.

*Arrived after meeting was called to order and minutes from February 12, 2024 approved.

Approve minutes from February 12, 2024, meeting:

Khale asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the February 12, 2024 meeting. Randy moved to approve the minutes from the February 12 board meeting. Keren seconded. Khale asked for discussion. No discussion was raised. Khale called for a vote to approve the February 12, 2024 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Chair's Report/Executive Committee Report –Chair Khale Lenhart

(please see the printed report in the meeting packet.)

Khale reported that the copyright photos issue related to the botanic.org website was resolved with the foundation paying less than what it authorized.

The Blackbaud contract dispute is still pending. Blackbaud has new lawyers on this case, and Khale has given them the same offer as before. They have not yet responded to that offer.

Director's Report – Scott Aker, CBG Manager

(Please see the printed report in the meeting packet.)

Jill directed folks to Scott's report in the meeting packet because Scott was unable to attend the meeting. She encouraged board members to walk through the conservatory to see the enhancements that have been made and continue to be made.

Keren asked about the date for reserving a special conservatory meal. Jill responded that reservations can be made through the CBG business office after April 25. There will be multiple dates per month available.

Foundation Executive Director's Report – Jill Lovato

(Please also refer to the written report in the meeting packet.)

Membership

Jill reported that membership is on a slight uptick right now. This is the time of year when we see more memberships purchased, and Jill also conducted her annual lapsed membership sweep in March. The sweep resulted in contacting 131 households about lapsed memberships.

Also regarding membership, Jill is now sending out digital membership cards through Guide By Cell, which is the interpretation app we already use. Some people are requesting physical membership cards, but overall, the digital cards have been well-received. Jill has sent out over 500 digital cards and about 20% of those have been downloaded on devices.

Major Fundraising Activities

Unfortunately, we did not receive grants from Delta Kappa Gamma for Dia de los Muertos and Conservatory of Lights in the amount of \$3500 because the proposals were not education-oriented enough, nor did we receive the \$12,935 grant from Civic League for the hoop house structure because Christmas House funding went largely to downtown bronze projects. Jill does anticipate a smaller amount from Civic League to aid with the hail structure project.

We have received over \$10,000 in sponsorships since February from TDSi, Taco John's, and Bluepeak.

The Diane Petersen bequest has been placed in a 9-month CD at Wyoming Bank & Trust. The \$38,000 CD will earn 4.76% interest during the 9-month period.

Annual Appeal

The 2024 annual appeal will be to benefit the Paul Smith Children's Village. The appeal will raise money to renovate the children's village pond, greenhouse, hardscape in the Secret Garden, the grassy area; as well as to spruce up some perennial gardens in the village. The annual appeal will launch with a mailer in late May or early June. We will direct WyoGives funds to the annual appeal.

Other Activities

Jill reported that major donors enjoyed receiving a trio of primroses as a donor appreciation gift for Valentine's Day. Jill will honor sponsors this summer or fall with a plant gift.

The Membership & Development Committee will meet on April 15 to discuss a potential membership drive in May and a summer mini golf tournament to benefit the annual appeal.

Volunteer Liaison Report –Sharron Kelsey, Volunteer Liaison

Sharron noted that she has put up the volunteer comment box in the volunteer break and will rotate that location with the greeter desk. The comment box is for commenting on what volunteers enjoy about volunteering and what else they'd like us to know. She has received one comment so far.

Sharron said that the volunteers are really happy that Trudy Fox was hired as the part-time volunteer coordinator.

Finance Committee – Kerri Young

(please refer to the February financial and committee report in your board meeting packet)

Kerri noted the treasurer's report in the meeting packet, pointing out that total operating revenue was a little over \$77,000 at the end of February with the majority in unrestricted donations (most of which was the Petersen bequest). Membership revenues were just over \$19,000. Expenditures are tracking within those revenues.

Project revenue was at just over \$83,000 at the end of February, and project expenditures were just over \$105,000 with net outflow of both prior year and current year funds at just over \$22,000.

The endowment is healthy with total investment income of just over \$130,000. The final installment of the grant to the gardens was made on April 1. We granted a total of \$42,000 this year from cash on hand.

Jill and Kerri are working on the FY25 budget, which they will present it to the Finance Committee on April 24.

Derek asked if there is any reason why we have a Jonah Bank Visa? Is there a particular reward or cash back with this card? Kerri said we could look into other options. Derek suggested that we look for a card with specific reward benefits and offered to take the lead on that.

Membership & Development Committee – Tracy Wilson – unable to attend

No report.

Jill noted that the committee will meet on April 15 to discuss a potential membership drive in May and a mini golf tournament this summer.

Community and Government Relations Committee – no report

This committee is not active and does not currently have any members.

Building & Grounds – Randy Byers and Scott Aker

Please see the Director's Report in your meeting packet for a master plan update.

Randy said input from the public open house in February was positive and well-attended. Five council members attended and seemed genuinely interested in the process and what could come from this master plan for 6th penny proposals.

Jill noted that the plan should be finished by the end of April. Six to eight projects on the grounds and solar patios are included.

Randy reported that the peace garden is finished and ready to be planted.

Arboretum Committee – Scott Aker, Derek Baker, and Randy Byers

Randy reported that HB84 (the bill to establish the arboretum as a state historic site) failed to be introduced by one vote. In the end, \$3.5 million was left in the budget to fund the arboretum, and the Governor did not veto that line item. The money is there, but it cannot be spent at this time since the enabling legislation failed. Randy has asked Carlyann to brief interested parties on what the path forward is and what legislators are thinking after the session.

Janelle asked why we thought it failed to be introduced. The final “no” vote was a Laramie County legislator, and the reason seems to be general politics. Some legislators don’t like it because it is a Cheyenne project. It is also a Freedom Caucus versus Wyoming Caucus battle.

The Annual Arboretum Plant Sale is June 1 at the arboretum near the lath house. Members can shop first from 10:00 am to noon, and the sale opens to the general public from noon to 2:00. This year’s sale is a purchase and carry format. We did not take advanced orders this year. Rather, we used data from the two prior years to determine what to order and in what quantities. We will need Wifi and adequate parking for the sale. Jessica has notified the VA of the sale, and we anticipate that there will be no VA funerals during that time.

City Council Update – Dr. Mark Rinne – unable to attend

Dr. Rinne submitted the following written report to be included in the meeting minutes.

In the last month, the City Governing Body has:

Approved on 3rd reading changing the parking ordinance so that tickets now go with the owner and not the vehicle. In the past, people would have multiple parking tickets and get out of them by not driving the offending vehicle or selling it. Now if they are ticketed, even if they are in a different vehicle, the vehicle they are driving can be immobilized.

Instructed staff to evaluate our parking ordinances with the goal of possibly implementing paid parking for the downtown.

Annexed 924 acres to the SW of the City for another Microsoft Data Center
Cheyenne is scheduled to have 6 data centers under construction this Summer.

Authorized the signing of an agreement with State Parks for an outdoor recreation grant for the Belvoir Ranch. The State grant is for \$608K. There is an accompanying Federal grant for \$408K and a \$121K match from the City. The monies will be used to build a parking lot, bathrooms, a picnic shelter a trailhead and the first mile of trail.

Approved a \$9M contract for E Del Range. Construction should start this Summer.

Approved a \$1.2M contract for the reconstruction of the Carlson/Powderhouse intersection, which will include a stop light.

The City is updating the Parks and Rec Master Plan. Public input can be given online until May 10. If you cannot find it on the City’s web page, I can provide the link.

The City received impact funds from the Industrial Siting Council to defray some of the infrastructure costs for the new Cowboy Solar project. This is a huge 3845 acre solar farm that will be 4 miles SE of Cheyenne. It is expected to generate 771 Mega Watts of power.

February 24 sales tax revenues were down \$224K, or 11.1% from 23. This reflects a slow down in oil and gas development and activities. It also appears that overall consumer spending is slowing down as well.

The old Bed, Bath & Beyond building is scheduled to become a Sprouts Grocery.

As always, if you have any questions, you can email or call me.

Dr Mark Rinne

Community Recreation & Events Report –Jason Sanchez, CRE Director

Jason directed the board's attention to the report he emailed to everyone on Monday, April 8. He intends to share with this board the same quarterly reports he provides city council going forward.

He pointed out the map that shows where rodent and mosquito abatement occurs throughout town. He also noted that Cheyenne will host the a statewide Parks and Rec conference this fall. It is a regional conference, and he hopes it is well-attended. He expressed his appreciation for Scott and his team for keeping the CBG offerings fresh and being willing to try new things.

He also expressed that he is happy that Trudy is back in a part-time capacity.

CRE is active in budget work. It will present its budget on May 10 to the full governing body. There are many one-time and ongoing funding requests.

Jason noted that he is excited about the CBG master plan and anticipates grant opportunities for the major pathways renovation included in the plan.

The recent windstorm did a lot of damage around town, and Forestry and Parks have worked hard to clear fallen trees. Other minor damage occurred to pickleball courts and ball fields.

CRE is partnering with Visit Cheyenne to host a farm-to-table event at the arboretum.

Jason reported that the city expects the current 6th penny to be collected by summer 2025 and for the next ballot initiative to take place in November 2025. CRE wants to have its project proposals ready to go. He noted that the timing of the CBG master plan is perfect for introducing potential projects for this funding mechanism.

Jason mentioned that he sent a link to board members today to the Parks and Rec master plan survey and encouraged board members to respond to it. The survey is open for a month.

Keren complimented Jason on the report he sent to board members, noting that it is useful to read and impressive.

New Business

None raised.

Adjourn

Khale reminded the board that next month is the budget meeting and establishing a quorum is critical. That meeting is on May 21 at 5:30 pm right here at the gardens.

Khale adjourned the meeting at 6:05.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 21, 2024, at 5:30 pm (Budget Meeting; quorum is critical)

2024 Meeting Schedule

May 21 (FY25 Budget Meeting)

August 13

October 8 (New Member and Officer Slate)

December 10