

Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

11:30 am

La Place Rendez-Vous

M I N U T E S

Christine Denby	P	Cathy Emes	P	Nancy Daley	A	Janet Plumridge	A
Gary Rogozinski	A	Wanda Barker	P	Barb Cournoyer	P	Lillian Gerley	A
Bev Kotnik	P	Krista Mauro	A	Leo Melanson	P	Pam Parsons	A
Anne Renaud	A	Paul Sunstrum	P	Ken Perry – TOFF	A	Geoff Gillon – RRFDC	A
Patti Anderson	P	Christine Jourdain	A	Jane Gillon	A		
Dawn Booth	P	Cassandra Parise	P	P - PRESENT			A - ABSENT

GUESTS:

Wanda Botsford – Ken Boshcoff MP Constituency Office
 BJ – B93

John McTaggart – Border Traffic Committee

Alana Barr – Community Living Fort Frances & District

David Kaemingh – Kaemingh Fuels

Jackie Lampi-Hughes – Energy Fitness Centre

Rick Cooper – Bell

John McEvoy – Bell

Greg Mercure – Canada Border Services Agency

Bill Gushulak – Fort Frances General Supply

Alan Tibbetts – H & R Block

Paul Noonan – La Place Rendez-Vous

Diane Noonan – La Place Rendez-Vous

George Emes – Edward Jones

Call to Order

11:45 am

President Christine Denby welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the agenda.

President's Message

"I'll try to keep this brief. I would like to thank everyone for taking time out of their busy schedules to be here this afternoon, showing your commitment not only to the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce but to the Town of Fort Frances and the Rainy River district as a whole.

A week ago, I was enjoying time at the beach in Playa del Carmen, Mexico. I left with snow on the ground and came back to people raking their yards and preparing for the green of Spring! It is a reminder that much has happened since our last General Meeting. We had an election for our board for the first time in ten years ~ indicating strong support for the Chamber of Commerce by our membership. We have a great board with many new faces – not only to our board but to our area as well. I'd like to thank everyone who has volunteered their time to the board.

At Christmas time, we caused a bit of stir with our Shop Local Campaign. We felt it was time to Thank our local consumers for shopping locally, making people aware of their impact on the local economy with that choice. That campaign didn't end with the Christmas season. We recently put up fresh posters around town, once again Thanking people for shopping locally.

The Business Retention and Expansion Project got back on its feet with the hiring of our new Community Development Officer Cassandra Parise. Cassandra has done a great job at picking up where Kerry left off, with the assistance of our volunteer, Irene Laing. Surveys have now been completed and the report in the works for June release.

In December, I had sent out an email and fax to our membership asking for input on Non Residential recycling. We received some good responses, which were combined with responses from the BIA. I met with BIA president Russ Ling, to work on a joint presentation but due to various time constraints, the project was put on hold. I still strongly believe that as a community and as a business community, we need to partner and work together to make recycling a priority.

We held our Strategic Planning session in March, which we'll touch on later in the meeting. Strategic planning was one of our priorities for last year but with there is only so much to get things done ~ I'm very pleased we made it happen and I'd like to thank Geoff Gillon for facilitating. Another big task was the By Laws review, which was also be touched on later this meeting.

Upcoming ~ The Home and Leisure show committee, under the direction of Dawn Booth and Nancy Daley, has been very busy planning. Mark your calendars ~ May 2nd and 3rd. I'd like to thank our lead sponsors, Tbay Tel. Following closely, is our Business After Hours Deck Party, held in conjunction with the RRFDC's Customer Service Challenge winners recognition, here at the Rendez-Vous. Again, mark your calendar and order sunshine ~ that event is happening Wednesday May 28th. Plans for Quest for the Best held in conjunction with the Fort Frances Bass Championship are well under way, with B93 FM as our major sponsor.

I'd like to welcome new Town of Fort Frances Representative, Ken Perry. I'm certain Mr. Perry will be an asset to the Chamber. We look forward to working more closely with the Town of Fort Frances, as the Voice of Business.

I'd like to thank you once again for taking time out of your busy day to attend today and urge to stop in to see Dawn and Cassandra at our office on Scott street, our check out our website @ fortfranceschamber.com. We are here for you, our members and need your input so that we can be 'The Voice of Business'".

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the November 27, 2007 General Membership Meeting were presented for review.

MOTION: Fort Frances General Supply (Gushulak) – NCDS Career Works (C. Emes) to accept the minutes from the November 27, 2007 General Membership meeting as presented. CARRIED.

Treasurer's Report

As Treasurer Janet Plumridge was unable to attend, Chamber Manager Dawn Booth presented the year-to-date balance sheet and income statement ending March 31, 2008. Dawn noted that the Executive committee worked hard at putting together a balanced budget for the year which was approved by the Board of Directors back in February. She went on to explain that the Executive committee plans to keep a close eye on the financial situation of the Chamber again in 2008 as that is one of their goals for the year. She explained that to date we have received close to 60% of revenue towards our \$40,000 membership goal which is increased from previous years and as such, membership development and retention will be another main focus for the year. A new employee, through the Job Creation Partnership program is hoped to start

within the next month and this will be one of their main focuses. Dawn then explained the Wages and Benefits Recoveries line item and our internship agreement through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) who fund 90% of a one-year contract for our Community Development Officer who will be with us until late November this year. Dawn noted that the Chamber plans to continue with their three main fundraising events again this year - Home & Leisure Show, Quest for the Best and Business Awards Banquet which all impact our bottom line and help us continue to operate on an annual basis. Furthermore, she explained the introduction of two new projects for the year – tapestry project which will be launched at the 20th Annual Home & Leisure Show next week and a first ever golf tournament planned to be open to all Chamber members in Fort Frances, International Falls, Emo and Rainy River. She concluded saying the Board has a busy year planned and will work hard to ensure a balanced budget at year end.

MOTION: Fort Frances General Supply (Gushulak) – B93 (Melanson) to accept the Treasurer’s Report as presented. CARRIED.

Proposed By-Law Changes (see attached)

Christine noted that the Executive committee reviews the by-laws periodically to ensure all information is relevant and understandable. In recent months, the Executive committee, in particular Past President Gary Rogozinski, spent a lot of time researching other Chamber by-laws proposing several changes. Although not present, Gary was thanked for his hard work. Christine quickly went through the proposed changes noting that most changes were word smithing changes and formatting changes with the main changes being a clearer election process procedure. Directors would be elected to three-year terms on a staggered basis. At least four Director seats would be vacated each year allowing for new members to serve the Board. Officers/Executive members would be elected in December from the Board of Directors and serve for not more than two years in succession, unless approved by the General Membership.

MOTION: H & R Block (Tibbetts) – Good Impressions Printing (Kotnik) to accept the proposed by-law changes as presented. CARRIED.

Strategic Planning Session

Christine reported that the Board of Directors recently held a Strategic Planning Session on March 25, 2008 at the Fort Frances Museum. She explained that a good group of people came out to partake in the session, all bringing great comments, suggestions and discussion to the table. She thanked everyone who came out. A draft report is currently being worked on outlining six key issues identified during the session including: 123. Any member with ideas are more than welcome to share them with us at any time. The draft plan will be presented to the membership for review and comment once the process is complete at the Board level.

Guest Speaker

Christine introduced our first guest speaker of the day, Greg Mercure who is Chief of Operations for Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) Fort Frances Division. **(See presentation attached)**

Christine thanked Greg for taking the time to join us and to provide our members with great information and statistics on border operations.

Guest Speaker

Christine introduced our second guest speaker, John McTaggart, Chair of the Town’s Border Traffic Committee. **(See presentation attached)**

Christine thanked John for explaining the committee goals and recommendations.

Question & Answer Period

Members had a chance to ask questions to both Greg Mercure and John McTaggart.

Adjournment