

## **Hotchkiss Community Chamber of Commerce**

December 7, 2011

*Present: President Nathan Sponseller (First State Bank), Bill Long - Vice President (TDS Telecom), Treasurer-- Rhonda Duclou (Hotchkiss Public Library), Corresponding Secretary - Katherine Colwell (Rivendell Retreat), Recording Sec. – Tom Wills (Wills Gallery and Used Books), Katie Gnauck (Hotchkiss Trading Company), Marsy Moore (Delta County Federal Credit Union), Sue Whittlesey (High Wire Ranch) and Bob Stechert (orchardist- Republican District 3 County Commissioner candidate)*

Chamber President, Nathan Sponseller, called the meeting to order.

It was moved by Katie Gnauck that the minutes of the November meeting, as written by Tom, and proofed and e-mailed out by Katherine, be approved. The motion was seconded and approved. The minutes are available on the Hotchkiss Chamber website. ([www.hotchkisschamber.com](http://www.hotchkisschamber.com)).

Marsy Moore moved that the Treasurer's report be accepted as submitted. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved. 2011 Chamber expenses to date stood at \$5,770 with expenses at \$7,143.90 including a \$1349.62 one-time capital project item for replacing the roof at the visitor's center. The general checking account stood at \$2,446.91 and Special Projects at \$6,982.98.

Corresponding Secretary Katherine Colwell reported the Chamber had 83 members for 2011 and that 8 2012 renewals had been received so far. Katherine has been busy including continuing to work on the Chamber website. New pictures, information and more have been added. She encourages members to go look at the site and send her comments. Katherine and Nathan met with Alexis Halbert of the Paonia Chamber to talk about the joint Chambers website ([www.northforkvalley.net](http://www.northforkvalley.net)).

Bob Stechert of Rogers Mesa introduced himself as a Republican candidate for the District 3 County Commissioners seat. Olen Lund, the current North Fork commissioner, will be term limited. Stechert said that his main issues were getting growth moving again in Delta County while making sure that our rural quality of life is protected. Katherine suggested that Stechert look at the Colorado Cottage Foods bill, which will be reintroduced in the State Legislature this coming session. The bill would lighten the Health Department regulation of farmers making value added products from their own produce.

Stechert, a former Delta County School Board member, is also an attorney and orchardist. His wife Nancy owns the Yoga Tree in Hotchkiss.

Photographer and new Chamber member, Mary Hockenbery, led a discussion about downtown beautification including possible public art and specifically bringing back the flower planter program. Hockenbery also serves on the Hotchkiss Planning Commission and there was some discussion of how the Chamber's wishes to beautify downtown might fit into a Town Downtown Improvement Plan, something the Town current Master Plan recommends being done. Hockenbery will be talking to downtown business owners to

see what ideas and support are out there. She will also bring the issue of a DTI Plan up with the Planning Commission.

Nathan reported that planning the Joint Chamber Symposium rescheduled for Saturday, January 21 (Local Business Meets Local Government) was proceeding. Some invitees still need to be contacted. He invited Bob Stechert to attend. Besides discussion about future planning during the morning sessions, Oxbow Mining will be giving the lunchtime presentation focusing on their planned Oak Mesa mine project.

In a discussion of the Hotchkiss Antiques and Collectibles Fair on February 24-25 at Heritage Hall, it was generally agreed that it was okay that the Chamber act as a pass through for general event advertising and website notice but perhaps not an outright donation. Kathy (Shiles) also needs to be a 2012 member Chamber member.

Holiday promotions and events have gone well so far. The Craft Fair on November 19 was once again a success thanks to director Rhonda Duclo. Gloria Crank manned the Hot Bucks booth at the Fair and almost sold out that day. All Bucks were gone at the bank by the following Wednesday. All businesses and residences are urged to get their Lighting Contest displays up ASAP as citizen judging wraps up December 17.

Nathan and Katherine will meet with Ride the Rockies representatives on December 13th. The Hotchkiss stop for the bike tour event will be on Sunday, June 10th.

Members are urged to return their membership renewals and ballots, including bylaw changes vote, ASAP. The votes will be counted at the January 4 Chamber meeting.

*Respectfully submitted, Tom Wills - (retiring) Recording Secretary*