

Chamber election procedure needs revamping

THE VOTING PROCEDURE in the first board of directors election of the newly reconstituted Crested Butte/Mt. Crested Butte Chamber of Commerce was poorly managed and conceived. The *Chronicle* offers the following criticisms and suggestions:

The chamber should realize that many members will not be able to attend the annual meeting, regardless of its date; mail-in ballots would be appropriate.

The voting procedure was not private enough; ballots were collected by hand instead of stuffed into a box.

We suggest that the chamber follow

the procedure of the absentee ballots in general elections, maintaining secrecy while providing control over who votes.

Voters should be allowed to retract their mailed-in ballots by attending the annual meeting and casting similarly-designed ballots there. This allows for the possibility of nominations from the floor at that time.

Timing of the election is critical. When held as early as this year's, the as yet unpaid members have one less incentive to pay--their payment does not purchase a vote. This problem should have been foreseen.

We recommend an annual meeting date of the second week in February,

giving members ample time to pay. Some people are going to be late in any case, often because they just can't afford to pay in January. Why shut them out? Isn't maximum participation desired?

Because nominations will be open from the floor during the annual meeting, there should be no cut-off date for announcing candidacy. The Chamber should make attempts to provide a forum and ample time for discussion of candidates' views. The election should not be a popularity contest. It should be decided by what the members think is best for the area's economy, and who represents those ideas.

The forum might be interviews in the newspaper, such as was published last week in the *Chronicle*. Better would be an evening debate or two in the Pump Room, or even a mimeograph statement of positions mailed to each member.

The good turnout at this week's meeting is a sign that the chamber will likely see more participation and scrutiny. Such scrutiny should not be feared; it should be welcomed.

The increased participation likely to result from the tax will be the key to the chamber's upcoming success. The board of directors should recognize this and bend over backwards to facilitate such participation. --G.S.

Who is responsible for floundering ALS medical program?

RECENT ACCUSATIONS of "irresponsibility" aimed at the directors of the Crested Butte Fire Protection District spur the question of who is at fault for the difficulties the Advanced Life Support program (ALS) is now having.

On one side is a group of medical professionals who claim that the program (training and equipment for life-saving emergency medical treatment) needs part-time or full-time paid personnel. On the other is the board of

directors of the district who want the service but feel the heat to keep costs down.

The irresponsibility, paramedic Larry Kristof says, lies with the directors "not educating themselves" to understand the requirements of the program.

But perhaps the responsibility also lies with the employees of the district. Aren't staff people supposed to educate the policy-makers?

During all the hubbub and en-

thusiasm for starting an ALS program over the past year, was the public or board ever told that the move would require a commitment to hiring professionals?

At the very least, it seems that both sides have not communicated effectively to each other and to the public.

Now we have the equipment and, starting this spring, property owners (and renters) will start paying an additional 1/2-mill tax to fund the program. In order to continue, the board, the

staff, and the public must answer some questions.

How feasible is a volunteer-based ALS program? How much paid professional work is necessary and how much will it cost? Would an all-professional staff pay for itself through increased fees for services, or would this require a mill levy increase? Would the public support such an increase if that were the only way to provide the improved medical care it desires?

--G.S.