**Marion County Chamber of Commerce**

**Board of Directors’ Meeting**

**January 23, 2020**

The Marion County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors met at the Western Sizzlin at noon on January 16, 2020. Board members in attendance were Kathie Tierney, Shelby Potterfield, Erik McDaniel, Meegan Burton, Vicki Messer, Donna Sartin, Joyce Burkhalter, and Carmen O’Hagan.

Others in attendance included Marilyn Quarles with Country Roads 93.3, Andrew Lawrence with Colonial Chemical, Robert Doherty and Carol Chandler with Redpoint Inn, Sonya McShan with Erlanger Hospital, and Mike Birdwell with Sequatchie Valley Electric Coop (SVEConnect).

President Kathie Tierney called the meeting to order and recognized those in attendance.

**Approval of Minutes:**

A motion was made by Meegan Burton and seconded by Shelby Potterfield to accept the minutes from the December 19, 2019 board meeting. Motion passed unanimously. Copy of the minutes is on file in the chamber office and will be posted on the chamber’s website.

**Financial Report:**

Financial reports were presented and distributed to all present: “Banking Summary” for the month of December 2019, “Account Balances as of 1/22/2020”, and “Income/Expense Graph by Category – Calendar Year 2019” . Motion was made by Donna Sartin and seconded by Vicki Messer to accept the financial report, a copy of which is on file with the minutes. Motion carried without dissent.

**Old Business:**

1. Lunch ‘n Learn – TN Driving Innovation Bus Tour

Kathie Tierney reported the chamber has partnered with TN Driving Innovation to bring “theVenture” Bus to Marion County for a lunch ‘n learn seminar on marketing for small businesses on Tuesday, January 28th. The bus will be parked at Chattanooga State Kimball Campus. There has been great response to the lunch ‘n learn which is free to registered participants. The chamber is providing sack lunches from SueBob’s Diner. Seminar and mentoring will be provided by TN Driving Innovation staff and Josh Brown with TN Small Business Development Center in Chattanooga.

1. Thank You Letter from Greater Jasper Jaycees

A copy of letter sent to the chamber from the Greater Jasper Jaycees was distributed. The letter thanked the chamber for sponsorship in the 2019 Spencer Wayne Memorial ODBA World Championship Race.

N**ew Business:**

1. 2020 Marion County Chamber of Commerce Spencer Wayne Small Business Grants

President Tierney asked for discussion regarding the Marion County Chamber of Commerce Spencer Wayne Small Business Grant Program for 2020. Proceeds from the 2019 Annual Marion County Chamber of Commerce Golf Classic has been dedicated to the 2020 grants. Net proceeds from the golf tournament equaled $7,184.28. In addition, part of a 2019 grant to SOCUMO was not used and was released by SOCUMO to be added to the 2020 grant program. This amount ($318.46) added to the net proceeds from the golf tournament equals $7,502.74 dedicated to the 2020 grant program.

Although the golf tournament 2020 was not on the agenda, discussion took a turn when the possibility of continuing the golf tournament at Sweeten’s Cove Golf Course came up. The chamber members present expressed unanimous consent to have future golf tournaments at this Marion County course if it is cost effective. President Tierney agreed to speak with the new course manager regarding current pricing and to report back to the chamber at next month’s meeting. Other course options were mentioned although none are located in Marion County. Donna Sartin volunteered to check with Black Creek as to charges for their golf course. Decision regarding a 2020 golf tournament site was tabled at this time pending additional information.

Back to the matter at hand, Erik McDaniel made an initial motion to approve up to $8,000 for the 2020 grant program. After additional discussion, McDaniel amended his motion to approve up to $8,500 for the 2020 grant program. Motion was seconded by Joyce Burkhalter and carried unanimously.

Since a business grant committee had already been established (Walker Henley, Kathie Tierney, Joyce Burkhalter, Joy Gunter, Shelby Potterfield, and Dan McDermott), the committee was authorized to review the current application, to make any updates as necessary, and to begin the process for accepting applications as soon as possible. Copies of the 2019 application, guidelines, and letter were distributed to all persons present at today’s meeting. Any suggestions should be sent to the chamber office.

Note: On January 24th the committee set the following projected timeline:

* January 29, 2020 – all requests for changes to the forms should be submitted to the chamber office.
* January 31, 2020 – forms should be updated and ready to distribute via email and Facebook.
* February 21, 2020 – deadline for applications to be submitted to chamber office.
* March 6, 2020 – committee reviews all applications received and approves or rejects each application based on information submitted and grant rules. On or shortly after March 6, 2020, all applicants will be notified of the committees decisions.

1. Membership Applications
2. Watts -N-Storage, 5496 Hwy 41, Jasper
3. Gordmans, 341 Kimball Crossing (replacing Goody’s – projected date 3/31/20)
4. Redpoint Inn, 30 Courthouse Square, Jasper (projected opening date in April)

The above listed applications have been reviewed by the membership committee which recommends approval. Copy of applications were included in today’s meeting packets.

Donna Sartin made a motion to approve all three new membership applicants listed above. Erik McDaniel seconded the motion which was passed without dissent.

**Mayor’s Report:**

No mayors were present at today’s meeting.

**Miscellaneous**

Mike Birdwell gave an update on SVEConnect as they are nearing their 2,000th customer. Mr. Birdwell explained that while SVEConnect may not always to able to be competitive with other providers financially, they can absolutely come out on top with great customer service. Because SVEC is a locally owned cooperative, the customer is “like family”. Mr. Birdwell continued by stating that Lodge and Mueller have become recent partners. According to Mr. Birdwell, this is a brand new network and SVEConnect wants the chamber to be proud of the fiber network available locally.

SVEConnect is currently connecting all of Whitwell, the south side of Powell’s Crossroads, Griffith Creek and Whitwell Mountain. North side of Powell’s Crossroads is coming soon as is Shellmound Road, Sequatchie Mountain and Hancock Road.

SVEConnect has applied for a state grant to include South Pittsburg Mountain and Battle Creek and hopes to hear back from the grant in March. Grants help make SVEConnect more affordable.

Shelby Potterfield announced that the SVEC December silent auction 2019 raised $13,000 for the Multi-Cancer Support Society. In addition the consulting firm FiberRise donated $10,000 for a total of $23,000 raised for Multi-County Cancer Support Network.

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Members were encouraged to review the announcement of upcoming events printed on the back page of today’s meeting agenda.

Next meeting is scheduled for February 20, 2020, at noon at the Western Sizzlin.

Minutes submitted by Judy Blevins Reviewed by President Kathie Tierney

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