

Marion County Chamber of Commerce

Board of Directors' Meeting

September 17, 2020

The Marion County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors met via Zoom on Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 12 noon CDT. Logging into the meeting were the following board members: Kathie Tierney, Shelby Potterfield, Joyce Burkhalter, Erik McDaniel, Dan McDermott, Carmen O'Hagan, Travis Hickman, Patty Henry, Donna Sartin, and Dave Pestillo. Also on the call was Marion County Mayor David Jackson, Beth Duggar with SVEC, Jackie Starr, Family Coach with Salvation Army, and Judy Blevins, Administrative Assistant for the chamber.

President Shelby Potterfield called the meeting to order and recognized those in attendance.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Dave Pestillo and seconded by Donna Sartin to accept the minutes from the August 20, 2020 zoom board meeting. Copy of the minutes was sent to board members prior to today's call and is on file. Motion carried without dissent.

Financial Report:

Carmen O'Hagan presented the following financial reports, which had been emailed to board members prior to today's meeting: "Banking Summary August 1, 2020 – August 31, 2020" and "Account Balances as of September 15, 2020". Motion to approve the financial report as presented was made by Donna Sartin and seconded by Joyce Burkhalter. Dave Pestillo asked about year- to- date comparison. Judy Blevins will provide that information to Mr. Pestillo. (There was mention at last month's board meeting regarding setting up a committee to do a budget analysis. Committee has not yet been appointed. Mr. Pestillo is interested in being a part of that committee). Motion carried unanimously. Reports are on file with the minutes.

Guest Speaker:

Kyra Inglis, Marion County Election Commission Administrator, spoke to the chamber regarding policy and procedure for the upcoming Presidential Election on November 3, 2020. Highlighted points are as follows:

- In order to vote in the November election, one must be registered to vote by October 5, 2020. Registration application forms are online and are available at the election commission office at 109 Academy Ave in Jasper, county clerk's office, public libraries, or register of deeds. One can also receive a voter registration application during a transaction at a number of state agencies, such as Department of Safety and Department of Human Services, to name two. Additional information can be obtained by calling 423-942-2108 or by going online at www.marionvotes.com.

- It is possible to request an absentee ballot. Deadline for the “Absentee By-Mail Ballot” application for the November 3rd election is October 27, 2020. Some reasons why a mail-in ballot may be requested include age 60 or older, medical reasons, out-of-town on election day. It is recommended to request a ballot at least 2 weeks before the election and to return the ballot no later than 7 days before the election day. For a complete list of reasons to vote by mail, call the election commission office or go online at www.marionvotes.com.
- Early voting for the November 3rd election begins on October 14th, ending on October 29th. All early voting in the county is done at the election commission office. Hours for early voting are M – Th: 8 – 4; Fri: 8 – 6 and Sat: 8 – 2.
- Remember that TN is a voter ID state so that a form of personal ID is required when coming to vote.
- Marion County has seventeen polling precinct locations. A complete list is online.
- Precautions are in place to minimize COVID exposure. For the November election, the state has provided \$1.00 per registered voter for COVID prevention supplies just as masks, etc. All in-person voters will be given individual packets containing a pen, sanitizer, disposable stylus and an “I Voted” sticker.
- Poll workers are still needed. TN Promise (age 16 and up) recognizes hours worked at a poll.

Ms. Inglis’ information is very timely. For additional information, contact the Marion County Election Commission or go to their website. Go Vote!

Mayor’s Report:

The chamber appreciates County Mayor David Jackson joining our virtual meeting today. Below are points of interest shared by Mayor Jackson:

- The Mayor is hopeful that the county may get back to some sense of normalcy soon. COVID rates in Marion County fluctuate up and down. As of today, there are 87 active COVID cases in the county with 7 deaths. Until an effective vaccine is available, mask wearing is encouraged, although not mandatory in the county. Mayor Jackson urges everyone to follow recommended guidelines.
- There is an unnamed party interested in the Port Authority in Nickajack. If successful, it would bring 90 new jobs to the county.
- An announcement is anticipated after the first of next year that would add 60 – 70 new jobs to an existing business in the county.
- Mayor Jackson and the mayors of South Pittsburg, Jasper, New Hope and Kimball will be reviewing and approving a contract this afternoon with CSX for a new rail spur in New Hope. This is the culmination of lengthy negotiations among county officials, TDOT, CSX and others.
- According to Mayor Jackson, area retail businesses are looking good.
- In response to a question posed about the financial situation of the county given COVID restrictions, Mayor Jackson stated that the county is in good financial shape. Local

option taxes for the summer months have been great. Online sales have increased as well. In summary, Marion County has not taken a big hit due to tourism as have the larger metropolitan areas in Tennessee.

Old Business:

A. Citizen of the Year and Business of the Year 2020

Deadline to receive nominations for 2020 Citizen of the Year and 2020 Business of the Year was September 10th. Ten individuals and six businesses were nominated. Counting duplicates, this represents sixteen COTY applications and ten BOTY applications. The selection committee will meet next week to review all applications and will make a decision. An announcement will follow shortly thereafter.

New Business:

A. Election of Officers, Fiscal 2020/21

President- Elect: Donna Sartin made a motion to nominate Carmen O’Hagan as President-Elect. Motion was seconded by Kathie Tierney. There were no other nominations for this office. Carmen O’Hagan was approved by unanimous vote of board members present.

Vice-President: Dave Pestillo made a motion to nominate Erik McDaniel for a second term as Vice-President. Motion was seconded by Kathie Tierney. There were no other nominations for this office. Erik McDaniel was approved by unanimous vote of board members present.

Secretary/Treasurer: Kathie Tierney made a motion to nominate Dan McDermott as Secretary/Treasurer. Motion was seconded by Erik McDaniel. There were no other nominations for this office. Dan McDermott was approved by unanimous vote of board members present.

B. Small Business Grants

Shelby Potterfield announced that the chamber has been contacted by Lodge Manufacturing regarding a donation for emergency grants open to Marion County small businesses. President Potterfield and Vice-President Erik McDaniel have met with Mike Otterman, Lodge CEO. The chamber has agreed to facilitate an emergency grant program which is being named Community Cares Fund. Lodge has agreed to donate \$20,000 to fund Community Cares. The chamber and Lodge have also agreed to partner for the Spencer Wayne Small Business Grant with a donation of \$10,000 from

Lodge. We will manage these grant programs one at a time with the Community Cares Program being first.

President Potterfield explained that details including an application, press release and timeframe will be sent to committee to work on and asked if there were volunteers to be on the committee.

Patty Henry, Donna Sartin, Kathie Tierney, Dan McDermott expressed an interest in being on the committee. Joyce Burkhalter also volunteered if needed. President Potterfield stated that we will also want a representative from Lodge on the committee. The president may add additional committee members who have experience serving on an emergency grant committee in the spring.

Some members of the board expressed the opinion that preference should be given to businesses who were not given grants during the first round. Committee will take that under advisement.

C. Request for Sponsorship

The Greater Jasper Jaycees are sponsoring the **2020 Spencer Wayne Memorial Outboard Drag Boat Association's World Championship Drag Boat Race at Marion County Park** on October 10th and 11th. A copy of a letter the chamber received from the Jaycees was emailed to all board members prior to today's meeting. It was pointed out that this annual event brings in tourism dollars to the county. Donna Sartin made a motion that the chamber again this year participate as a lane sponsor in the amount of \$2,500. Kathie Tierney seconded the motion which carried without dissent.

D. Request for Advertisement

"2020 High School Football Preview" Magazine published by Marion County News. Sheet containing pricing options was emailed to board members prior to today's meeting. As a show of support for Marion County News, a motion was made by Kathie Tierney and seconded by Dave Pestillo to take out a ¼ page ad in this year's magazine in the amount of \$200. Motion carried without dissent.

E. Membership Application

The chamber has received a membership application from **TruBlue of South Chattanooga**. The applicants are residents of New Hope in Marion County. The membership committee has reviewed the application and recommends approval. Copy of the application was emailed to board members. Donna Sartin made a motion to approve TruBlue of South Chattanooga for chamber membership. Dan McDermott seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Miscellaneous

- There was discussion regarding when the chamber could resume meeting in-person. Next scheduled meeting is October 15th. It was pointed out that the Western Sizzlin will be reopening on September 30th and that the Rotary Club plans to have their meetings there beginning in October. It was decided that before making a decision, we should contact Western Sizzlin to find out about current policy and procedure as it relates to COVID restrictions. Judy Blevins will contact management at the Western Sizzlin and will report back to the board via email.

Sharing from Community Partners

- Jackie Starr, a Family Coach with Salvation Army, joined us via Zoom to discuss a new program available to qualifying residents including in Marion County. The program is called “2 Generation (2-GEN) TN Home”, and it is a partnership between the State of Tennessee and the Salvation Army’s Pathway of Hope Program. The joint goal is to help families with children who are struggling, to help them identify needs and resources in order to become more stable and to improve their quality of life. Ms. Starr’s role as a Family Coach it to help them set goals, connect with existing resources or develop resources if none is available. The only requirement is the family is struggling and that there are children in the home. There is a “vetting” process with new clients to make sure they are ready to commit to the program which is pretty intense and may last from six to eighteen months. According to Ms. Starr, the funding is flexible and may include paying rent or transportation. For additional information, Ms. Starr can be reached at 423-762-2390 (work cell), 423-308-7712 (direct office line) or through email at Jacquelyn.starr@uss.salvationarmy.org .
- Beth Duggar shared that there is a new non-profit organization in South Pittsburg called SPARQ (South Pittsburg Area Revitalization Quest). One of the events they are sponsoring is Artober which stands for Art in October. Downtown merchants have agreed to let their storefront windows be used to display local art. Folks can stroll down Cedar Avenue to admire art displays anytime of the day or night throughout the month.
- Kathie Tierney announced that the Children’s Advocacy Center in Marion County will have a fund raiser dinner at Pat’s Summitt Pavilion, Jasper Highlands, on October 3rd. Tickets will be available soon for \$50 each. There will be a catered meal, silent auction and entertainment. Auction items are being accepted. Contact Kathie Tierney. Proceeds to go to Children’s Advocacy Center.