

## **Marion County Chamber of Commerce**

### **Board of Directors' Meeting**

**November 19, 2020**

The Marion County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors met via Zoom on Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 12 noon CT. Logging into the meeting were the following board members: Joyce Burkhalter, Kathie Tierney, Shelby Potterfield, Erik McDaniel, Travis Hickman, Patty Henry, Mandy Finotti, Cody Fox, and Patrick O'Hagan. Also on the call was 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 Joyce Burkhalter and seconded by Mandy Finotti to accept the minutes from the October 15, 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:**

Judy Blevins presented the following financial reports, which had been emailed to board members prior to today's meeting: "Banking Summary October 1, 2020 – October 31, 2020" and "Account Balances as of November 16, 2020". Regarding the credit refund for \$500 which was reflected on the report, this represents a refund from Sequatchie Valley Golf Course for the deposit made by the chamber for a scheduled golf tournament which had to be canceled. Because the transaction was made on the chamber's credit card, the refund came through the credit card. There is a procedure in banking that requires that if there is a credit card credit at the end of a quarter, the credit must be paid to the owner of the credit card. As it happened the \$500 credit was caught in this end of the quarter policy! A cashier's check in the amount of \$439.49 was sent to the chamber and the remaining amount of \$60.51 was applied to the card's balance. All this is reflected in the Banking Summary which is on file with the minutes.

Regarding the Grant Account, the beginning balance of that account was the \$30,000 given by Lodge Cast Iron. From that account, a direct withdrawal of \$216.87 was made by the bank for checks and a notebook. That amount was refunded to the grant account from the chamber's checking account so that the entire \$30,000 would be available for grants. As of 11/16/20, the grant account has a balance of \$10,000. Twenty thousand was distributed to twenty Community Cares Emergency Grant recipients, who received \$1,000 each. The remaining \$10,000 is designated for the Spencer Wayne Small Business Grant Program which will be opened for applications after the first of the year 2021.

Joyce Burkhalter made a motion to approve the financial reports. Cody Fox seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

## **Old Business**

### Community Cares Emergency Small Business Grants

President Potterfield presented the following report. The grant deadline was extended until November 6, 2020. Twenty-six applications were received. The following members of the selection committee met via Zoom on November 10<sup>th</sup> : Joyce Burkhalter, Mandy Finotti, Kathie Tierney, and Shelby Potterfield. After carefully reviewing all applications, twenty applicants were approved to receive \$1,000 each. Those checks have all been distributed to the twenty grateful business owners. Thirteen of the twenty business owners were women. It was also good to recognize that all areas of the county had representation (7 from Jasper, 4 from South Pittsburg, 5 from Kimball, 1 from New Hope, 2 from Whitwell, and 1 from Crossroads). They also represented a variety of business types – 5 beauty salons (hair, nails, health products, etc), 4 day cares, 2 restaurants, 5 retail stores, 1 pest control, 2 pet care salons, and 1 auto repair. The chamber is so appreciative to Lodge for this generous gift to the small business community. As mentioned during the financial report, the remaining grant amount has been designated for the Spencer Wayne Small Business Grants which are open only to chamber members.

## **New Business:**

### Copier for the Chamber Office

The copy machine in the chamber office stopped working. We have learned that the maintenance contract for the copier is no longer valid due to the age of the copier (purchased in 2005). To have a serviceman come would be \$150 per hour and that because of the age of the machine, it is unlikely that parts will be available. Judy Blevins has reached out to Southern Duplicating of Chattanooga, the business from whom the machine was purchased. A contract with quotes for a color copier, both new and leased, has been distributed to board members via email prior to today's meeting.

After discussion, the board requested that additional companies be contacted for comparative prices and service. There were also questions about details in the quote from Southern Duplicating. Judy Blevins asked that questions be emailed to her to be forwarded to Southern Duplicating. She also asked if it would be helpful to have a conference call with Greg Lamb, our contact with Southern Duplicating. Several members felt that would be helpful. Judy will reach out to other companies and will forward information received to all board members. If a conference call is still desired, we will set that up. Decision pending additional information.

### Membership Applications

The following membership applications have been received: Johnsons Hydroblast and Paint, C. Nicole Rogers, PLLC and High Speed Fitness IV, LLC (Anytime Fitness). The membership committee has reviewed the applications and recommends all three for membership. Erik

McDaniel made a motion to approve all three applications. Patty Henry seconded the motion which carried without dissent.

### **Report from Mayor Jackson**

Mayor Jackson addressed the increasing positive cases of COVID-19 in Marion County. Yesterday, the county reached one thousand and one cases, but he encouraged folks to look at active cases rather than the overall number of cases. The active cases fluctuates. Mayor Jackson stated that he hoped the county can stay within the 50 – 60 number of active cases until the pandemic can be resolved. We have had fifteen deaths. Mayor Jackson said that one death is too many, and he expressed his concern and condolences to the families affected by COVID deaths. Mayor Jackson says that he and the city/town mayors have talked about a county-wide mask mandate, but have determined that at this time it would be difficult to control a mandate. In addition, he questioned why a mandate in Hamilton County has not helped the surge in cases there? Mayor Jackson says if there is a big increase in active cases, the county may have to look at something different. But a mask mandate is not planned at this time. He encouraged people to wear masks in stores that request it and that folks be considerate of others. Mayor Jackson also commended Superintendent Mark Griffith and the entire school system for doing an outstanding job in keeping the schools open and the children safe.

Mayor Jackson said the expectation is that there will be COVID vaccine available in the county in December. First responders and health providers will have priority. It will be a two-shot process; 95% effective. The county will, of course, follow the directives of the state. Steve Lamb, our EMA Director, is taking the lead in developing the appropriate plan. Marion County is eligible for \$425,000 in COVID-19 money. The county has received about \$200,000 of that money.

The county has also been awarded \$30,251 COVID grant money to market Marion County through billboard advertisement. There are four digital billboards in the state, one at Mt. Juliet, one in Gallatin, one in Lenore City, and one in Cookeville. They will remain through the end of December. The county has also had a story/ad in a national magazine. The county has ordered 5,000 masks. The masks are blue with a white outline of the state of TN and a heart where Marion County is located. The masks state: “for the love of Marion County”. These will be distributed to students in the school system. After the above expenses, there is about \$49 left in the grant. The goal is to increase visitors to our area.

Outside of COVID, Mayor Jackson said that we are continuing to try to recruit new businesses and industries. The mayor’s office did send a packet back for a automotive parts company looking for property. That request was forwarded to the county by Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce. The county appreciates their partnership. This company would represent an investment of about \$63 million and 106 jobs in a three year period.

Mayor Jackson announced the holiday schedule to be as follows: The week of Thanksgiving, the Courthouse will close at 2:00 PM on Wednesday and remain closed Thursday and Friday.

Christmas personnel policy calls for closure the day before, the day of, and the day after Christmas so this year that will be Thursday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Day which is Friday, December 25<sup>th</sup>, and the following Monday, December 28<sup>th</sup>. The county offices will also be closed on New Year's Day and on the day before, if the state closes on that day (per county personnel policy).

Mayor Jackson said a report received yesterday showed tax revenue in the county to be good. The report showed that TN is the fifth most visited state outside of states with beaches. We've had a lot of visitors to the state this year. Fuel tax has dropped some but not as much as was anticipated. Overall, the state is doing pretty good financially. Local option tax in Marion County is as high as it has ever been. This is attributed to people shopping at home. Internet tax is up anywhere from 15 – 28%, according to Mayor Jackson.

Property tax notices were sent out last week. A number of people are already coming in to pay property taxes. A night dropbox is going to be installed at the courthouse to make it more convenient for taxes to be paid without coming inside.

Mayor Jackson wished everyone a happy and safe Thanksgiving and encouraged each person to do "whatever you feel is safe for you".

Mayor Jackson was asked about a Christmas parade schedule. He said that South Pittsburg and Jasper would have parades on December 5<sup>th</sup>. One change this year is that no candy will be thrown from the floats. Mayor Jackson said he thought Whitwell would have a parade on December 12<sup>th</sup> but he needed to doublecheck that date.

### **Miscellaneous**

On behalf of the chamber board, President Potterfield expressed sympathy for board member Donna Sartin in the passing of her father.

### **Sharing from Community Partners**

Patrick O'Hagan stated that there had been incorrect information in the media earlier this week which indicated that Chattanooga State Community College (main campus and at Kimball and Dayton) was closed. They are not closed but are in modified COVID procedure which means that they are open by appointment only. Staff is available to schedule appointments, just give them a call. Chattanooga State Kimball is looking forward to offering a new program in the spring. They are now taking applications and registering for a Medical Assistance Program. The chamber is happy to congratulate Patrick on his new position as interim director at Chattanooga State in Kimball.

Erik McDaniel shared that his church congregation has been hit hard by COVID. They have now had two church members who passed due to COVID.

Erik also reported that Champion Recovery Community is having a fund raiser called “Deck the Track”. Individuals, businesses or organizations can decorate a Christmas tree for a registration fee. We think the trees will be at the Chattanooga State walking track in Kimball, beginning December 5<sup>th</sup>. Erik will send additional information to the chamber office. That information will be forwarded through the chamber’s email distribution list. (Note: a flyer was subsequently received and share via email.)

Judy Blevins stated that the community calendar which prior to COVID had been maintained in the chamber office needs to be brought back. Anyone who is planning an event of interest to the community may send details of the event to [info@marioncountychamber.com](mailto:info@marioncountychamber.com).

Travis Hickman also encouraged people to utilize the community calendar through WEPG the River. Announcements air twice a day. Information can be sent to Travis directly or to the radio station with instruction as to how long to air the announcement.

President Potterfield shared that because of COVID restrictions, SVEC will not be having their usual Christmas auction and associated luncheon nor will they host the chamber office this year. However, they will continue their charitable giving to Multi-Cancer Support Network through a donation made possible by SVECares and a TVA community grant. SVEC continues a twenty-five year tradition of giving to local food banks. This year they will not accept canned goods but will accept monetary donations. For a gift of \$5.00 or more, a commemorative cookbook will be given as long as supplies last. SVEC will also be accepting donations for this year’s angel tree program. For a gift of \$10.00 or more, the contributor will receive an angel ornament.

President Potterfield is also happy to report that SVEConnect has begun connections in Battle Creek. They have completed the fiber backbone which covers all of Marion County – over 700 miles of fiber. There is still some splicing work to be done to make SVEConnect available throughout the county, but there is light at the end of the tunnel! Looks like work will be completed in January.

Judy Blevins announced that the chamber office will be closed for Thanksgiving November 24<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> .

Happy Thanksgiving to everyone!

Next scheduled meeting is Thursday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at noon. It will continue to be via Zoom.