

Marion County Chamber of Commerce

Board of Directors' Meeting

February 18, 2021

The Marion County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors met via Zoom on Thursday, February 18, 2021 at 12 noon CT. Logging into the meeting were the following board members: Shelby Potterfield, Erik McDaniel, Travis Hickman, Carmen O'Hagan, Dave Pestillo, Mandy Finotti, Donna Sartin and Kathie Tierney. Also on the call were Mike Otterman with Lodge Cast Iron, Rhonda Van Oteghem with the American Job Center, Becky Langham with Primex Color, Stan Settles with Senator Bill Hagerty's Office, 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 Mandy Finotti and seconded by Kathie Tierney to accept the minutes from the January 21, 2021 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 January 1 - 31, 2021" and "Account Balances as of February 17, 2021". Dave Pestillo asked for clarification as to the \$1,500 income categorized as wage contribution in the January report. Judy Blevins explained that the Marion County Partnership for Economic Development has a long-standing agreement with the chamber for the chamber's administrative assistant to do administrative assistant work for the partnership. This includes sending notices to partnership members, keeping meeting minutes, receiving dues payments, etc. In exchange, the partnership pays the chamber a quarterly amount of \$1,500 in July, October, January, and April. This money is deposited into the chamber checking account.

Donna Sartin made a motion to approve the financial reports. Kathie Tierney seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously. Copy of financial report was sent to board members prior to today's meeting and is on file with the minutes.

Mayor's Report

No mayors were in attendance. Since Mayor Jackson usually gives a COVID-19 update for the county, Judy Blevins stated that Marion County has now moved into the 1b category for vaccinations. This opens up eligibility for anyone age 65+ and school teachers/personnel. It was also mentioned that according to the Marion County EMA, there has been some confusion

regarding time zones when making appointments online. Anyone with an appointment for a vaccine in Marion County should come via CT, even if the appointment time stated ET.

Old Business

- Spencer Wayne Small Business Grants 2021

The chamber is currently accepting applications for 2021 Spencer Wayne Small Business Grants. In order to qualify for a Wayne Grant, the applicant must be a current chamber member in good standing. Applications have been slow to come in with the deadline date being close of business on Friday, February 26, 2021. We are encouraging eligible and interested small businesses to apply.

Donna Sartin suggested that maybe some of the money could be used for small business seminars targeted to chamber members. Discussion followed with the majority opinion being that while the idea of seminars (perhaps even in a virtual setting) is good, it would deviate from the guidelines already established for the funds given by Lodge Cast Iron specifically for the Spencer Wayne Small Business Grants.

- 2021 Golf Tournament

At the January 2021 board meeting, the decision as to whether to sponsor a golf tournament this year would be feasible given the COVID-19 guidelines. See minutes from the January meeting for details. While the board does not feel a decision can be made today, we are hopeful that an outdoors event may be possible by June. Perhaps this could be a first step toward normalcy for chamber activities.

Kathie Tierney stated that the hard part may be getting sponsors for the event given that many businesses have been adversely affected by COVID restrictions. Kathie also reported that the June 4th tentative date has been moved to June 11th at the request of the staff at Sweeten's Cove Golf Course due to a scheduling conflict. While this date is reserved for the chamber, the chamber is not locked into this date.

The golf tournament will be included on the meeting agenda for March.

New Business:

- Membership Applications

Two membership applications have been received – 1) Elaine Duke, Rising Director of Sequatchie Valley Head Start, is applying for individual membership, and 2) South Pittsburg Area Revitalization (SPARQ). Both applications have been reviewed by the membership committee which recommends both for board approval.

Kathie Tierney made a motion to approve both Elaine Duke and SPARQ for chamber membership. Erik McDaniel seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

Miscellaneous

President Potterfield announced that the chamber has been approved for a PPP loan (Payroll Protection Program) based on the fact that the chamber has a paid employee. The amount is calculated by multiplying an average month's salary times 2.5. For the chamber, that amount is \$2,899.27 and has been electronically deposited into our checking account as of today. While it is referred to as a loan, there is no payback requirement.

Sharing from Community Partners

Donna Sartin asked if anyone could recommend a patent attorney. Mike Otterman suggested Steve Stark with Miller and Martin as someone Lodge has worked with on issues of patenting.

Erik McDaniel asked if anyone could suggest a person to trim Crepe Myrtle bushes. Shelby Potterfield offered to send him a list of possibilities.

Stan Settles joined the meeting to introduce himself as representing Senator Bill Hagerty's office. On behalf of Senator Hagerty, Mr. Settles invited persons to reach out to him if they could be of assistance.

Shelby Potterfield updated the chamber on progress made by SVEConnect. They are finishing SVEConnect fiber in the East Valley Road area in Jasper. Then the Suck Creek Mountain area will begin around March 12th. Within the next month, they should be completing connection to all of Marion County that can be connected.

SVEC is currently assisting some other rural counties in TN. Becky Langham who lives in Coffee County expressed appreciation for the assistance from SVEC. She stated that they still have some 2,000 people without power in the county.

While SVEC is not in Texas, our hearts go out to the residents of that state who have been hit hard as a result of unprecedented weather conditions.

Mike Otterman said Lodge currently has openings. The storm has had an impact on Lodge's product distribution as trucks have not been able to travel due to road conditions.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Next scheduled meeting for the board is Thursday, March 18, 2021 at noon. It will continue to be via Zoom.