

Marion County Chamber of Commerce

Board of Directors' Meeting

April 21, 2022

The Marion County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors met on April 21, 2022 at noon CDT at the Western Sizzlin in Jasper. The following board members were present: Carmen O'Hagan, Dave Pestillo, Sonya Walker-McShan, Joyce Burkhalter, and Travis Hickman. Also present were Gina Pannell with ReMax Realty, Rhonda Van Oteghem with American Job Center, Trey Chance with First Volunteer Bank, and Judy Blevins, administrative assistant for the chamber.

Note: A quorum of board members was not present; therefore, evotes will be requested for all motions made during the meeting.

President Carmen O'Hagan called the meeting to order and asked those present to introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Joyce Burkhalter and seconded by Sonya Walker-McShan to accept the minutes from the March 17, 2022 board meeting. (Minutes had been previously emailed to board members.) A copy of the minutes is on file in the chamber office. Evotes will be requested.

Financial Report:

Treasurer Dave Pestillo presented the following financial reports: "Banking Summary – March 2022", and "Account Balances as of 4/19/2022". Travis Hickman made a motion to accept the financial reports as presented. Joyce Burkhalter seconded the motion which will be sent to board members for an evote. For details, see report, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Mayor's Report

No mayors were present at today's meeting.

Old Business

- Chamber Business Grants 2022

Since last month's board meeting, the chamber has paid the grant awarded to WEPG/The River (\$1,537.81). Other grants approved are in the process of completing their approved projects and will be reported in future meetings as the projects are completed and payments made. (See March 17, 2022 board meeting minutes for additional information regarding the 2022 Spencer Wayne Small Business Grants.)

- Golf Tournament 2022

The 2022 Marion County Chamber of Commerce Golf Classic is scheduled for June 10, 2022 at Sweeten's Cove Golf Club. Major sponsors confirmed are Riverside Chevrolet Buick GMC (Premiere Sponsor), SVEConnect (Gold Sponsor) and Lodge Cast Iron (Silver Sponsor). Bronze sponsorship is available. Hole sponsors, team registration, and volunteers are now being accepted. Items for goody bags are also being accepted. There was discussion about having additional money making events at the tournament, such as a raffle, a silent auction, even a golf ball cannon (Trey Chance has information about this.) These are ideas for the golf committee to discuss. The committee will need to meet soon in order to report at the May board meeting. For additional details provided during the March 17, 2022 board meeting, see minutes.

- Update on Website

No report.

- Marathon Race Update

No report.

- "Mountain of Kindness"

At the March board meeting President O'Hagan appointed Patrick O'Hagan and Michelle Story along with herself and Assistant Judy Blevins to make contact with Mr. John Christoff in order to determine how/if the chamber can assist Mr. Christoff in a litter prevention initiative. (A letter from Mr. Christoff was shared with the board at last month's meeting and is on file with the March 17, 2022 minutes.) On March 23, 2022, a virtual call with made to Mr. Christoff. On the call were President O'Hagan, Patrick O'Hagan, and Judy Blevins. Michelle Story was unable to join in the call. Since the call, the chamber has reached out to Greensteps and to TN Achieves; however, at today's board meeting, there was no additional information to report.

New Business

No new business was on the agenda. However, after the agenda was printed and emailed to board members, a request was received today from Marion County News regarding ads in a high school graduation insert to be published and included in the May 17th issue of Marion County News. Deadline for submitting an ad is May 6th, which is before the next chamber board meeting scheduled for May 19th, therefore it was added as a new business item.

Considerable discussion followed as to the larger issue of chamber advertising in general and how it might fit into the chamber's mission. Ultimately, the decision at today's meeting was that the chamber needs to develop a long range plan (maybe even a 3 or 5-year plan) so that

any advertising would be purposeful and anticipated within the chamber budget. It was even suggested that the chamber approach primary advertisers to develop a contract with the chamber with fixed prices that can be anticipated in the chamber's fiscal year.

Because of the deadline for this particular advertisement request and the consensus of the board members present to take a long range look at chamber advertising, an ad in the 2022 graduation insert failed to garner a motion.

Discussion continued with a question as to funding. Some county chambers receive a yearly amount from their county commission. Has the chamber asked the county to be a line item in the county's budget? Some surrounding county chambers are partially funded through their county's budget. A suggestion was also made to visit some chambers from counties similar to Marion to see how they are funded and how their money is budgeted.

President O'Hagan appointed Sonya Walker McShan, Joyce Burkhalter, and Travis Hickman to serve on a committee to develop ideas for an advertising/funding plan for the chamber.

Membership Application

The following businesses have applied to become chamber members. The chamber membership committee has reviewed the applications and recommends approval for all:

- S & K Brothers Inc (Huddle House)
- Dunkin Donuts
- Kimball Speedy Lube

Travis Hickman made a motion that S & K Brothers (Huddle House), Dunkin Donuts, and Kimball Speedy Lube be approved for membership in the Marion County Chamber of Commerce. Dave Pestillo seconded the motion. A copy of each application was included in today's meeting packet and is on file in the chamber office. **An evote will be requested.**

Miscellaneous Business

None.

Sharing

The following miscellaneous items were shared by persons present at today's meeting:

- There was a recent groundbreaking ceremony for the River Gorge Ranch, a new development on Aetna Mountain.
- The 25th Anniversary National Cornbread Festival is April 23rd and 24th in South Pittsburg. Everyone is invited to come.

- Colonial Chemical in New Hope will be picking up trash in June as part of their Adopt-a-Highway initiative.
- May 2nd through May 7th is TN Tourism Week. The chamber will have a display at the Welcome Center on I-24 West in Marion County.
- During the month of May, Erlanger Hospital will participate in National Health Observances Month with emphasis each week on a designated health care topic.
- The chamber's career days program schedule for the next school year is as follows: South Pittsburg High School (October 21, 2022), Whitwell High School (December 9, 2022), Monteagle Elementary School (February 3, 2023) and Jasper Middle School (March 17, 2023). This program is targeted toward 8th grade students in Marion County Schools and seeks to have presenters from a wide variety of business and community. Volunteers are asked to mark their calendars. For additional information or to sign-up as a volunteer presenter, contact Marion County Chamber of Commerce Board Member Dave Pestillo.
- The chamber received a letter from Whitwell High School Counselor Michelle Pestillo, thanking the chamber for gift cards for their students who improved in at least one subject area on the ACT. See April 2022 minutes. Thank you letter is on file with the minutes. A copy was included in today's meeting packet.
- On behalf of WEPG/The River, Travis Hickman thanked the chamber for their grant to the station. Equipment has been purchased and is in operation. Travis reports that it has opened up new opportunities and enhancements for county-wide communication.
- Chattanooga State is sponsoring a free outdoor movie night at the Kimball campus on April 27th. Gates open at 6:30 PM CDT with the movie starting at 7:00.
- The local Rotary Club is a sponsor for "Sleep in Heavenly Peace Program" which builds and distributes beds to those in need. A local Rotary contact is Norm Flake. The chamber can share information about the next build-a-bed event through the chamber's email distribution if requested to do so.
- First Volunteer Bank is changing names. The new name will be Builtwell Bank and will take effect several months from now. While First Volunteer is still a "hometown bank," concurrent with the name change will be the acquisition of six more branches in Georgia. During introductions, Joyce Burkhalter introduced First Volunteer employee Trey Chance, who has assumed the role as Market Leader. Joyce's new title is Vice President of Business Relationship. She will be a roving employee visiting bank branches.
- After years of planning and negotiating, Colonial Chemical, state and county officials recently broke ground on the Nickajack Rail Spur which will enable Colonial to send and receive via CSX rail when completed.

The meeting was adjourned until the next scheduled board meeting which is set for May 19, 2022.