

## **Marion County Chamber of Commerce**

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

**February 17, 2022**

The Marion County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors met on February 17, 2022 at noon CT at the Western Sizzlin in Jasper. The following board members were present: Erik McDaniel, Travis Hickman, Kathie Tierney, Mandy Finotti, Vicki Messer, Dave Pestillo, and Sonya Walker-McShan. Also present were County Mayor David Jackson, Michelle Story with Fade LLC, Charlie Sneed with Farm Credit of Mid-America, David Riley with Marion County News, Heather Bearden and Jenny Holder with Resource MFG, Kathie Tierney, Jim Willingham with Cable Time, and Judy Blevins, administrative assistant for the chamber.

Vice President Erik McDaniel called the meeting to order and asked those present to introduce themselves.

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

A motion was made by Travis Hickman and seconded by Kathie Tierney to accept the minutes from the January 20, 2022 board meeting. Motion carried without dissent. A copy of the minutes is on file in the chamber office.

#### **Financial Report:**

Treasurer Dave Pestillo presented the following financial reports, which had been emailed to board members prior to today's meeting: "Banking Summary – January 2022", and "Account Balances as of 2/06/2022". Mandy Finotti made a motion to approve the financial reports as presented. Kathie Tierney seconded the motion which carried unanimously. For details, see report, a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

#### **Mayor's Report**

Marion County Mayor David Jackson reported that COVID cases in the county dropped from 774 to 410 as reflected in yesterday's report from the state. Unfortunately, there was one more recorded death due to COVID.

For the first time, Marion County received a clean audit with no negative findings. This audit includes the county general funds, highway funds and school board funds.

The county is moving forward with plans for a new Jasper Middle School. The money has been borrowed and placed in a CD to be spent within the next three years. When borrowing money, a bond rating is assessed. Marion County received a AA bond rating which is great. Marion County is one of twenty TN counties with a AA rating. Only two counties in the state (Hamilton and Williamson Counties) have a AAA rating.

After years of working with CSX for a rail spur in Marion County, it looks as if the county will be able to “drive a golden spike” in late summer. It will be an immediate advantage for Colonial Chemical and for prospects interested in the Port Authority.

The county has returned an RFI on a company called Golden which is looking for a business site. Marion County has proposed land north of Tate Funeral Home. No other new RFI’s have been deemed to be appropriate for Marion County.

Mayor Jackson stated that a local company is planning a small expansion which should add an additional twenty- five employees, but the Mayor is not at liberty to disclose the name of the company at this time.

A question was directed to Mayor Jackson as to a rumor that there might be airport development in the little Sequatchie County area. The Mayor stated that a man named Greg Fuller, owner of a company called FreightWaves, has bought property in Bledsoe County with plans to create a fly- in park, a subdivision, etc . Mayor Jackson says he met with Mr. Fuller but that the Marion County airport cannot accommodate the runway requirements Mr. Fuller was looking for since the airport in Marion County has power lines which would be too expensive to relocate. Mayor Jackson added that there is a possible airport proposal in Sequatchie County. No details at this time.

A question was asked about repairs and improvements in other schools in Marion County. Mayor Jackson stated that according to Marion County School Superintendent Dr. Mark Griffith there is federal money related to COVID that can be used for Marion County Schools. Mayor Jackson deferred additional questions to Dr. Griffith.

## **Old Business**

- Career Days Program Update

Dave Pestillo reported that twenty-nine eighth graders from Monteagle Elementary School participated in the February 11<sup>th</sup> career day program at their school. Thanks to the presenters representing Chattanooga State, Fade LLC, Emendee Technology, Valmont Industries, Southeast TN Local Workforce Development, South Cumberland Chamber and Erlanger Hospital. The next career day is scheduled for March 11<sup>th</sup> at Jasper Middle School. Enough presenters have already committed to this date so that all presenting slots have been filled.

- Spencer Wayne Small Business Grant Program 2022

Applications are now being accepted through the month of February for Spencer Wayne Small Business Grants 2022. Applications and guidelines have been emailed to all on the chamber email distribution list and a link is available through the chamber’s website. To be eligible for this grant program, the applying business/organization must be a chamber member in good standing. Net proceeds from the 2021 golf tournament in the amount of \$11,312.57 have been

designated to fund the Spencer Wayne Small Business Grant Program for 2022. Copy of the guidelines, letter and application is on file with the minutes.

## **New Business**

- **Featured Member Bio's on the Chamber's Website**

As discussed in last month's meeting, Mandy Finotti is working on the featured members bio's for posting on the chamber's website. The chamber has been in email contact with our website host, WinWorld, to explore the possibilities of a slider/carousel feature whereby three members at a time would be spotlighted but with a repository of previous bio's being accessible through scrolling. The eventual goal would be to have bio's on all chamber members.

Mandy updated the board that WinWorld has agreed to develop this feature for a fee of \$75 per hour. They estimate this to be a two-hour job. When development has been completed, there will be no additional charges for this feature.

Travis Hickman made a motion that we approve for WinWorld to develop the rotating feature at a charge of \$75 per hour with a total not to exceed \$225. Kathie Tierney seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

- **Golf Tournament 2022**

At the board meeting in January, Kathie Tierney reported that Sweeten's Cove Golf Club had approached her to offer the date of June 10, 2022 for a chamber tournament if we wished to have one this year. Due to demand for the course, Kathie tentatively accepted the date on behalf of the chamber. At the January board meeting, a one-day rental fee for the course was not known; therefore, a vote was tabled until the rental fee was determined. At today's meeting, Kathie was able to report that the one-day rental fee will be \$5,000, the same as last year's fee. Kathie made a motion to approve a chamber tournament on June 10, 2022 at Sweeten's Cove Golf Club with a rental fee of \$5,000. Mandy Finotti seconded the motion. Motion carried without dissent. Chamber President Carmen O'Hagan will appoint a committee to work out details and present to the board next month. Any chamber member who wishes to serve on the committee should contact President O'Hagan or the chamber office.

- **Marathon Race Proposal**

In an email dated January 19, 2022 and shared with the board, Brett Del Balso approached the chamber with the possibility of joining with the South Cumberland Chamber in sponsoring a race (marathon, half marathon or 5K) on a Saturday morning in October 2022, specific date yet to be determined. The exact route was not developed but would be projected to be in the South Pittsburg, Nickajack Lake area depending upon the type of race (marathon, half marathon or 5K).

Mandy Finotti agreed to be in contact with Brett Del Balso to discuss in more detail and to bring additional information to the board at next month's meeting.

### **Membership Application**

Two new membership applications have been received since the last board meeting. They are Cable Time and Envy Nutrition. See applications on file with the minutes. A motion to approve Cable Time and Envy Nutrition as chamber members has come from the membership committee. Dave Pestillo seconded the motion which carried without dissent.

Note that Jim Willingham with Cable Time was at the meeting today and spoke about the business and his desire to become more active in Marion County community events.

### **Request for Donation**

No new requests for donations have been received since last month's meeting.

### **Miscellaneous**

None

### **Sharing**

Those present at today's meeting were given an opportunity to share with the group. David Riley encouraged folks to sign up for a weekly or bi-monthly podcast in which coaches from Chattanooga State will be interviewed. This will also draw attention to our local Chattanooga State Kimball campus.

Mandy Finotti informed the group that a SPARQ community mixer event will be held on February 26, 2022 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM CT at the American Legion Hall in South Pittsburg. Attendees can learn more about SPARQ and events planned for the future.

Mandy also encouraged participation in the 2022 National Cornbread Festival which will be held in South Pittsburg the last full weekend in April. Volunteers are always needed.

Mandy mentioned that Arts in the Burg is growing and may have the possibility of an intern.

Kathie Tierney stated that she has been in contact with Kate Sylvester, the Director of Community Investments & Partner Relations at United Way of Greater Chattanooga. There is a need for volunteers from Marion and Sequatchie Counties. Hopefully, Ms. Sylvester can come to a chamber coffee or meeting in the near future.

The meeting was adjourned until the next scheduled board meeting which is set for March 17, 2022.

