

Marion County Chamber of Commerce

Board of Directors' Meeting

June 16, 2022

The Marion County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors met on June 16, 2022 at noon CDT at the Western Sizzlin in Jasper. The following board members were present: Sonya Walker-McShan, Vicki Messer, Mandy Finotti, Erik McDaniel, and Travis Hickman. Lacking a quorum of board members, an evote will be requested on each motion made in the meeting.

Marion County Mayor David Jackson and chamber administrative assistant Judy Blevins were also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Travis Hickman and seconded by Mandy Finotti to accept the minutes from the May 19, 2022 board meeting. Motion will be sent for an evote. A copy of the minutes is on file in the chamber office.

Financial Report:

In the absence of treasurer Dave Pestillo, Judy Blevins presented the following financial reports: "Banking Summary – May 2022" and "Account Balances as of 6/15/2022". Most entries were routine monthly items with the exception of the following expenses 1) Career Days 2022 -23 – Barker Advertising for 350 fidget spinners with chamber logo to be given to each student participating in Career Days 2022-23, 2) Office Expense – charge from Beeler for copies made, and 3) under income, a balance adjustment of \$3,000 to correct a banking mistake (see May 19, 2022 minutes for further explanation). Motion made by Sonya McShan and seconded by Vicki Messer to accept the minutes as presented. Motion will be sent for an evote. A copy of the financial report is on file with the minutes.

Mayor's Report

Marion County Mayor presented the following information:

- Due to the tragic car accident on South Pittsburg Mountain last month, Senator Todd Gardenhire has visited the site and has requested that TDOT look at ways to improve the safety in that area. It is expected that TDOT will at least install guardrails. Mayor Jackson expressed gratitude for the interest and follow-up done by Senator Gardenhire.
- Beth Jones is retiring as Executive Director of Southeast TN Development District. Her replacement will be announced at a meeting on June 28, 2022.
- Rachel Hackworth is the new Executive Director of SETHRA. She will begin on August 1, 2022 and will be housed in the Dunlap office.

- Marion County Budget for the next fiscal year has been completed. The budget is approximately twelve million dollars with no new taxes included.
- Food City has committed to building in Kimball. Clearing of land has already begun. Food City complex is expected to include a grocery, a pharmacy, a fuel station, and a Starbucks. It is anticipated that as many as 150 jobs will be created. The decision to locate in Marion County was made possible in part by a PILOT (Payment In Lieu Of Tax) grant by the county. The City of Kimball has committed to \$500,000.
- Bradley Baxter has been hired by Marion County to relieve a backlog of septic tank inspections.
- Marion County News is sponsoring a forum for county mayor candidates on June 28th at Whitwell Middle School. Everyone is invited to attend.
- All county and state offices will be closed on Monday, June 20th, in observation of Juneteenth.

Old Business

- Golf Tournament 2022

Judy Blevins reported that the 2022 Marion County Chamber of Commerce Golf Classic was a great success. The weather was beautiful! Nine teams played in the morning round with ten teams playing in the afternoon. A handout was given at today's meeting. It listed sponsors and volunteers with thanks from the chamber to everyone who participated in any way in order to make the tournament a success.

All related expenses have been paid, but there is still some income to be received. A complete accounting of income and expenses will be presented at the July board meeting.

- Spencer Wayne Small Business Grants

Since last month's report, one more grant project has been completed and payment made. TN River Gorge Trust received payment for water quality testing and training equipment for the approved amount of \$1,500. Two approved grants are still outstanding. The grant account balance as of June 16, 2022 is \$4,289.19.

- Advertising and Funding Budget

No report.

- Update on Website

Mandy Finotti has been working with WinWorld to develop a slider option for viewing chamber member highlights on the chamber's website. Mandy sent an email to board members showing two main options for consideration. After discussion in today's meeting, a motion was made by Mandy Finotti and seconded by Travis Hickman to go with option #1 as outlined in the email

sent to board members. A further part of the motion would include a redesign of the membership page by moving the highlighted portion to the top of the page in order to make it more visually directed for the viewer. The membership listing would be below the highlighting. Mandy would like to confirm with WinWorld that the proposed redesign would not be expensive. Motion will be sent for an evote.

New Business

- Annual Chamber Banquet

The banquet serves as the annual meeting of the chamber and includes a vote on new board members and a changing of presidential leadership. It is usually held on the third Thursday of August. In recent years, the meeting has expanded to include dinner with entertainment, a speaker, and a drawing for donated gifts.

For the last few years, Jasper Highlands has allowed us to use Pat's Summit as the location for our banquet. Since the Top of the Rock Restaurant opened, one stipulation has been to use Top of the Rock for food catering.

There was discussion as to other places in the county that could accommodate a group of 200. Raulston Woods was mentioned as a possibility although that might not be big enough.

Ultimately, it was recommended that the banquet committee meet soon to explore options and to begin preparation for the banquet. Mandy Finotti and Vicki Messer both volunteered to be added to last year's committee. Carmen O'Hagan will be contacting the committee soon.

Membership Application

No new membership applications have been received this month.

Miscellaneous Business

No additional business.

Sharing

There is a ribbon cutting ceremony scheduled for Tuesday, June 21st, at 9:00 AM CDT. Invitation was included in today's packet and has also been emailed to the chamber's distribution list.

Sonya McShan asked where a list of Marion County businesses could be obtained in order to reach out to non-member businesses. Mayor Jackson directed her to the Marion County Clerk's Office.

Sonya also announced that on this Sunday afternoon there will be a Juneteenth celebration at Moore Park in South Pittsburg from 4:00 – 10:00 PM CDT. It is a free event. Everyone is invited. There will be entertainment as well as a presentation of the history of Juneteenth.

Mandy Finotti announced that as part of the TN River Towns Program through SPARQ, on July 16th, there will be a kayaking event (Pitt to Port) on the Tennessee River from South Pittsburg to Bridgeport. A safety overview will be presented and transportation will be provided from Bridgeport back to South Pittsburg.

Note: after the meeting, we obtained additional information from Walker Henley giving the link to Facebook [on Facebook](#), and to the SPARQ website [SPARQ website](#). The event begins at 9:00 AM CDT. All loaner kayaks are now spoken for. Participants are encouraged to bring their own paddle craft (canoe, kayak, SUP), water, and a life vest. It's an easy 6.2 paddle – 2 to 3 hours (according to Walker). Volunteers with a couple of motor boats could help transport from Bridgeport.

The meeting was adjourned until the next scheduled board meeting which is set for July 21, 2022.