

Marion County Chamber of Commerce

Board of Directors' Meeting

October 20, 2022

The Marion County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors met on October 20, 2022 at noon CDT at the Western Sizzlin in Jasper. The following board members were present: Mike Birdwell, Michael Griffith, Travis Hickman, Staci Brockwell, Dave Pestillo, and Erik McDaniel.

Also in attendance were Marion County Mayor David Jackson, Michael O'Hagan, and Judy Blevins, Administrative Assistant for the Chamber.

Note: later in the meeting, President Travis Hickman appointed Michael O'Hagan to fill the board position being vacated by Carmen O'Hagan. This appointment will expire at the end of the current fiscal year at which time the appointment will be subject to a vote by the chamber at their annual meeting in August.

Even counting Mr. O'Hagan, the board lacked a quorum. Therefore, an evote will be requested.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Erik McDaniel and seconded by Mike Birdwell to accept the minutes from the September 15, 2022 board meeting. Motion will be sent for an evote. A copy of the minutes is on file in the chamber office. Passed unanimously by evote. See results on file with minutes.

Financial Report:

Dave Pestillo presented the following financial reports : "Banking Summary – September 2022", and "Account Balances as of 10/18/2022". Each person present at today's board meeting received a copy of the financial reports. Motion was made by Michael Griffith and seconded by Erik McDaniel to accept the financial reports as presented. Motion will be sent for an evote. A copy of the financial report is on file with the minutes. Passed unanimously by evote. See results on file with minutes.

Dave also called attention to the final financial report for the 2022 Annual Chamber Banquet. The final report shows that income from the banquet was \$9,400 with expenses being \$10,078.55, resulting in a net loss of \$678.55. The changes from the last report show that we were unable to collect \$100 which had been anticipated in the projected income. There was also an increase from the projected cost to the actual cost for cleaning the napkins and tablecloths. See report on file with the minutes.

Mayor's Report

Marion County Mayor David Jackson addressed the board and visitors. He provided updated information regarding a \$500,000 ARC grant toward the nursing program at Chattanooga State. Mayor Jackson stated that the rail spur in New Hope is almost completed and will be a major help in transporting goods and supplies to and from Colonial Chemical.

Marion County is always looking for new industry/businesses. A packet of information regarding the port authority site has been sent to a prospective new business. An additional packet of information highlighting a different location has been sent to another prospective business with a site visit expected. This business sells directly to customers and would have eighty-five employees.

Mayor Jackson confirmed that the Town of Kimball is expected to approve construction plans soon for a Food City in Kimball.

The Marion County Finance Committee has approved a nine million dollar loan to help build a new Jasper Middle School. This will not result in new taxes for citizens of Marion County. The total cost to build Jasper Middle School is estimated to be \$33 million dollars.

The 5.6 million dollar ARP Grant discussed at last month's chamber meeting will be used for ten projects designated by the County Commission. The 3.9 million dollar TDEC grant to be used for water and/or sewer infrastructure problems is still in discussion.

Mayor Jackson stated that there will have to be an addition to the county jail sometime in the future.

Mayor Jackson complimented the management at Marion County Park. New additions being looked at include a possible ice rink and arts and crafts activities at the park.

Later in the meeting under miscellaneous business/sharing, Mayor Jackson was asked if there was any known proposal to address the increase in traffic problems on I-24 to and from Marion County and Chattanooga. Mayor Jackson agreed that it is a problem but that any major change would probably be years from now.

Old Business

- 2022 Spencer Wayne Small Business Grants

All grants have been paid except for the grant approved for Raulston Woods and Gardens. Grant guidelines stipulate that the chamber will not make payment to either the grantee business or vendors until the product (project) has been completed. Guidelines also state that all approved products or projects will be completed by June 1, 2022 unless an extension is approved by the chamber.

There have been several contacts between Raulston Woods and Gardens (Tab and Sarah McNabb) and chamber representatives (Judy Blevins, Travis Hickman, Carmen O'Hagan). A time extension was given, but it appears that Raulston Woods and Gardens is not going to be able to complete their approved project. However, part of their grant included landscaping which has been completed. The chamber has receipts from Lowe's and Lapps Greenhouse for mulch and flowers which the McNabbs purchased. The receipts total \$376.28.

Following discussion, Michael O'Hagan made a motion that the chamber pay for the landscaping cost (\$376.28) and that there will be no other payment made since the McNabbs are unable to complete their project within the grant guidelines. Michael Griffith seconded the motion. An evote will be requested. Note: the additional grant money designated for Raulston Woods and Gardens will remain in the grant account to be added to the 2023 grant program.

President Hickman noted that at the November board meeting he would like for the board to set a start and end time for the 2023 Spencer Wayne Small Business Grant Program.

- Advertising and Funding Budget

The advertising and funding budget proposal was discussed at the September meeting and then was sent to all board members via email asking that they review and suggest any changes to the proposal. See email dated September 23, 2022. In reply to the email, no revision was suggested and all responding board members agreed with the proposal as written. Note: Mandy Finotti was not at the meeting, but she did make a motion via email, "I make the motion to implement the advertising and sponsorship guidelines in the attached document. Anything outside of this would need further approval by the board." The attached document was a copy of the guidelines which is on file with the minutes and which has been distributed to board members via email and in the handout packet for today's meeting. Travis Hickman seconded the motion via email. Due to the lack of a quorum at today's meeting, an evote will be requested. Passed unanimously by evote. See results on file with minutes.

- 2022 Annual Chamber Banquet

Final income and expenses report from the banquet was presented by Dave Pestillo. See second paragraph under Financial Report with today's minutes.

- Career Days 2022/23

Dave Pestillo updated the chamber on the first career day program of the current fiscal year. Career Day for 8th graders at South Pittsburg High School is scheduled for Friday, October 21st, with fourteen presenters confirmed at this time. Additional career day dates are 12/9/22 – Whitwell Middle School, 2/3/23 – Monteagle Elementary School, and 3/17/23 – Jasper Middle

School. To sign-up to become a volunteer presenter, contact the chamber office or Dave Pestillo.

New Business

There was no new business on today's agenda. However, during discussion it was noted that the Dell printer in the chamber office has been discontinued. This was discovered when attempting to order printer cartridges. While the printer is working well, a message has recently been appearing which indicates that the "belt unit is close to life." (Note that this is the printer located by the desk in the chamber office and not the Lanier copier/printer purchased through Beeler in December 2020.)

Dave Pestillo made a motion to purchase a copier/printer to replace the Dell copier/printer in the \$400 - \$500 price range. Michael Griffith seconded the motion. All present at today's meeting were in agreement with the motion, however, an evote will be requested. Passed unanimously by evote. See results on file with minutes.

Membership Application

The following membership applications have been received:

- The Goat Bar and Grill
- Mountain Man Real Estate & Development, PLLC
- Second Chances Education Center

The chamber membership committee has reviewed the new applications and recommends that all three applications be accepted for membership. Note that Second Chances Education Center was tabled from the September meeting due to lack of information. Since that time, additional information has been received and reviewed by the membership committee who recommends that Second Chances Education Center be approved.

Michael Griffith made a motion to approve the membership requests from The Goat Bar and Grill, Mountain Man Real Estate & Development, and Second Chances Education Center. Erik McDaniel seconded the motion. An evote will be requested. Passed unanimously by evote. See results on file with minutes. Membership applications are on file in the chamber office.

Miscellaneous Business/Sharing

President Hickman announced that a letter has been received from Judy Blevins to the board of directors indicating her intent to leave the position of chamber administrative assistant at the end of December 2022. President Hickman appointed Michael Griffith, Michael O'Hagan and Stacie Brockwell to form a search committee to look at the current requirements of the job and to take steps necessary to find a replacement.

It was announced that Colonial Chemical plans an open house sometime in mid-November. This will be in recognition for the opening of the rail spur. The chamber will share additional information when details have been confirmed.

Colonial Chemical is also sponsoring an event at the American Legion Hall in South Pittsburg at noon on Veteran's Day, November 11th.

Things to look forward to: The Bass Championship Tournament is coming back to Marion County, scheduled for May 4 – 6, 2023. And the 2023 Cornbread Festival will be on the last full weekend in April.

Sequachee Valley Electric Coop will host the next chamber coffee which is scheduled for December 13th, at 8:00 AM. Everyone is invited to attend and to participate in the annual Christmas silent auction sponsored by SVEC.

Packet handouts from today's meeting listed upcoming events and flyers. See copy on file with minutes.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned until the next board meeting which is scheduled for Thursday, November 17, 2022 at noon at the Western Sizzlin.

Note: Results of Evoting – All motions approved.