

Marion County Chamber of Commerce

Board of Directors' Meeting

September 15, 2022

The Marion County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors met on September 15, 2022 at noon CDT at the Western Sizzlin in Jasper. The following board members were present: Vicki Messer, Kathie Tierney, Donna Sartin, Mandy Finotti, Mike Birdwell, Michael Griffith, Travis Hickman, and Staci Brockwell. Dave Pestillo joined the meeting via phone.

Also in attendance were Marion County Mayor David Jackson, Rob Stickley with Big Bad Breakfast, Trey Chance with Builtwell Bank, and Judy Blevins, Administrative Assistant for the Chamber.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Mandy Finotti and seconded by Mike Birdwell to accept the minutes from the July 21, 2022 board meeting. Motion carried without dissent. A copy of the minutes is on file in the chamber office. Note: The Annual Chamber Banquet took place August 18th; therefore, there was no monthly board meeting in August.

Financial Report:

Dave Pestillo presented the following financial reports by phone: "Banking Summary – July 2022", "Banking Summary – August 2022", and "Account Balances as of 9/14/2022". Each person present at today's board meeting received a copy of the financial report as well as a copy of financial accounting of the 2022 Spencer Wayne Small Business Grants to date and a breakdown of income and expenses from the 2022 Annual Chamber Banquet to date. Motion was made by Kathie Tierney and seconded by Staci Brockwell to accept the financial reports as presented. Motion carried unanimously. A copy of all financial reports listed is on file with the minutes.

Mayor's Report

County Mayor David Jackson reported that the county received a 5.6 million dollar ARP grant from the federal government. It is being designated to expand access to public drinking water in parts of the county where it is not currently available. Half of the grant was received last year. The other half was received two weeks ago. Mayor Jackson stated that there are 7 or 8 projects being looked at. The Marion County Commission will make the determination of which projects will be included. At this time the grant stipulates that the money has to be spent by December 2026. Mayor Jackson added that due to supply issues this deadline may be challenging and that there might be a possibility that the deadline could be extended sometime in the future.

The county has also received a 3.9 million dollar TDEC non-competitive grant that came to the state through the American Rescue Plan. Most cities/towns in the county also received money from this grant although no utility districts received funds. The grant stipulates that the money must be used for already existing infrastructure problems with water/sewer. The money cannot be used to extend new lines. One of the things the county would like to do with this money is to interconnect the water systems of Jasper and South Pittsburg. Another project being looked at is to assist the Griffith Creek utility system. Mayor Jackson stated that the county commission will be having a workshop tonight to look at ways to use this grant money.

Mayor Jackson reported that the rail spur in New Hope is coming along, although it is behind schedule. The proposed date for temporary closure of Hwy 156 at the railroad crossing is the week of September 26, 2022. This will allow CSX to do construction on the railroad spur project.

Mayor Jackson stated that there are some new businesses coming to the county. Food City is coming to Kimball. The old Shoney's building is probably coming down. A Tony Roma's Restaurant is expected to be built at that location.

Old Business

- 2022 Spencer Wayne Small Business Grants

All approved projects except for Raulston Woods & Gardens have been completed and paid. The chamber has been in touch with Tab and Sarah McNabb, owners of Raulston Woods & Gardens. It looks as if they may be unable to complete their project, although some landscaping has occurred. President Travis Hickman will speak with Mr. McNabb and give an update to the board at the October board meeting.

- Advertising and Funding Budget

President Hickman stated that the committee has met and has come up with a proposal for an advertising and funding budget for the chamber not to exceed \$5000 per year. Members of that committee in addition to the chamber president are Vicki Messer, Mandy Finotti, Joyce Burkhalter and Sonya McShan. Included in the proposal are guidelines for those making requests for advertising and donations with preference for requests being made at the beginning of the chamber's fiscal year when the requests are known in advance. President Hickman explained that the request would be reviewed based on the purpose of the chamber.

Since not all board members have seen the proposal, it will be shared through email and will be included in the October board meeting agenda.

- 2022 Annual Chamber Banquet

The 2022 Annual Banquet was a lovely event in every way except financial. The "2022 Annual Banquet Income & Expenses" handout projects a loss. See report. While the banquet is not

intended to be a money making event, we would like to breakeven when possible. Next year's banquet committee may want to consider how to do that. See report on file with the minutes.

- Career Days 2022/23

Each person present at today's meeting was given a sheet with information about the chamber's career days program for 8th grade students in South Pittsburg High School, Whitwell Middle School, Monteagle Elementary School, and Jasper Middle School. This represents approximately 350 students. Dave Pestillo encourages chamber members who have not already done so to sign-up for any of the scheduled career days. See handout on file with the minutes.

New Business

- Authorization for Signatures on Chamber's Bank Accounts

With the election of a new chamber president, it is necessary for the chamber to review and update the names of persons authorized to sign checks on the chamber's bank accounts at Builtwell Bank.

Currently, Judy Blevins, Kathie Tierney, Joyce Burkhalter and Carmen O'Hagan are authorized signees. Mandy Finotti made a motion which was seconded by Mike Birdwell to remove past president O'Hagan and to add current president Travis Hickman to the authorized list. Kathie Tierney, Joyce Burkhalter and Judy Blevins would remain on the list. The motion carried without dissent.

- Election of Chamber Officers for Fiscal Year 2022/23

Mike Birdwell made a motion to elect the following officers:

- Vice President – Erik McDaniel
- Secretary/Treasurer – Dave Pestillo
- President/Elect – Mandy Finotti

Donna Sartin seconded the motion which carried unanimously. Note: At the 2022 Annual Chamber Banquet Travis Hickman assumed the role of president having served as president elect 2021/22.

- Request for Ad in "Living Here 2023"

Following discussion, Mike Birdwell made a motion which was seconded by Staci Brockwell to take a full page ad in the upcoming publication, "Living Here 2023". Cost for a full page ad is \$525 which is the same price as a full page ad in last year's publication. This magazine is annually published by Marion County News and is a collection of information about Marion County. Administrative Assistant Judy Blevins stated that it is a great magazine to mail to prospective newcomers to Marion County and to have on hand in the chamber office. The

motion carried without dissent. Mandy Finotti agreed to work with Walker Henley to develop a new graphic this year and to present that to Marion County News by the deadline date.

Membership Application

The following membership applications have been received:

- Big Bad Breakfast
- Second Chances Education Center

The chamber membership committee has reviewed two new applications. The committee recommends approving the membership application for Big Bad Breakfast. The recommendation for Second Chances Education Center is to table this application until more information can be received. The chamber has reached out to the owner of Second Chances Education Center who was unable to meet with us prior to today's board meeting.

Rob Stickley with Big Bad Breakfast was at the meeting today. Big Bad Breakfast is part of an independent restaurant group which currently has ten locations. According to Mr. Stickley, the opening date for the South Pittsburg restaurant is mid- December or the first of January. The restaurant will be at 222 East Third Street on the edge of the Lodge campus. They will be open primarily for breakfast, lunch, and brunch and will consist of a dining room, bar and outdoor covered patio. Mr. Stickley says that he is glad to be part of the area and is looking forward to becoming a chamber member.

Donna Sartin made a motion which was seconded by Staci Brockwell to approve the membership application for Big Bad Breakfast and to table Second Chances Education Center until the October board meeting. The motion was carried unanimously.

Miscellaneous Business/Sharing

Kathie Tierney reported that she has been contacted by Sweeten's Cove Golf Club and that they have tentatively scheduled the chamber's 2023 golf tournament for June 9, 2023. The chamber can always pull out if circumstances change, but we need to accept this date if we want to have a golf tournament at Sweeten's Cove in 2023. Kathie made a motion that we accept that date. Mike Birdwell seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Mandy Finotti shared that the public grand opening for the Lodge Museum of Cast Iron is scheduled for October 8, 2022 and will feature, among other things, the world's largest cast iron skillet!

Kathie Tierney said that the 12th Judicial Children's Advocacy Center will have their 2022 Fundraiser Dinner on October 1, 2022. It will be at Pat's Summitt Pavilion at Jasper Highlands. Kathie has tickets for sale. Gifts for a silent auction are also being accepted.

President Hickman reminded members that the next chamber coffee is scheduled for Tuesday, October 11th, at 8:00 AM CT. It is being hosted by the Town of Jasper at Café 41. Everyone is invited.

Mike Birdwell announced that SVEC, host of the the December Coffee, would like to invite all chamber members to attend the coffee on December 13th at the SVEC office in South Pittsburg. The breakfast is also the kick-off for the SVEC silent auction.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned until the next board meeting which is scheduled for Thursday, October 20, 2022 at noon at the Western Sizzlin.