

Marion County Chamber of Commerce

Board of Directors' Meeting

February 16, 2017

The Marion County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors met at the Western Sizzlin at noon on February 16, 2017. Board members in attendance were President Jamie Lawson, President Elect Patrick O'Hagan, Vice President Joyce Burkhalter, Secretary/Treasurer Donna Sartin and board members Kevin Merrell, Walker Henley, Vicki Messer and Kathie Tierney.

Others in attendance included Spencer Wayne with Western Sizzlin, Andrew Lawrence with Colonial Chemical, Keisha Durham with Platinum Recruiting, Garrett Cox a financial advisor with Northwestern Mutual, Town of Kimball Mayor Rex Pesnell, Logan Morris with Adult Education, and Judy Blevins, administrative assistant for the chamber.

President Jamie Lawson called the meeting to order, recognizing guests and members in attendance.

Judy Blevins pointed out that a correction to the January 19, 2017 minutes would read on page 3, paragraph 2, sentence 1: "It was also pointed out that littering in our communities is a problem and causes the natural beauty of our surroundings to be compromised". The word "causes" replaces the word "prevents" in the original minutes.

A motion was made by Joyce Burkhalter and seconded by Donna Sartin to approve corrected minutes as stated above. The motion carried unanimously.

Financial Report:

Treasurer Donna Sartin presented the "Income and Expense Report" for the month of January 2017 and fiscal year to date, and "Account Balances Report" as of February 15, 2017. Copies were distributed to all present and are on file with the minutes.

Old Business:

A. Report from Website Revision Committee

Jamie Lawson reported that revision of the chamber website is a work in progress. The beginning stages of development can be viewed at dev.marioncountychamber.com. Note: Be advised, however, that narrative and other entries are simply place holders until information specific to the chamber site has been entered. Any recommendations can be submitted to Judy Blevins and will be reviewed by the website committee.

It was also reported that in conjunction with the new website, the chamber will have a new email address. More information will be reported when the change occurs.

B. Report from Existing Business Committee

Jamie Lawson and Joyce Burkhalter continue visiting chamber businesses. Employers are reporting the challenges of keeping good employees. There continues to be a need for workforce development.

New Business:

A. Membership Application (Please notice addendum at the end of this document.)

The chamber has received a membership application from Garrett Cox. Mr. Cox is a native of Marion County and is applying for membership as a financial advisor. The membership committee has reviewed the application and recommends that it be accepted.

Patrick O'Hagan made a motion to accept the membership application of Garrett Cox. Joyce Burkhalter seconded the motion which was approved by acclamation.

B. Anti-Littering Campaign

At the January 2017 board meeting, the problem of littering in our communities was mentioned. (See minutes from January 19, 2017.) Continuing that discussion, it was agreed that there is an opportunity for the chamber to take a lead in public awareness. Several possibilities were discussed leading President Lawson to appoint the following volunteers to a committee to research available resources, develop ideas, and report back to the board: Andrew Lawrence, Kathie Tierney, Donna Sartin and Judy Blevins.

Speaker:

Logan Morris addressed the group on the subject of adult education classes in Marion County. The classes are being held at the career center in Kimball Monday and Thursday from 9 AM until noon and 5 – 8 PM. Fran Merriman is the teacher.

Adult education is now a part of the TN Department of Labor & Workforce Development so it is very focused on graduates being ready to enter the workforce.

Mr. Morris works in a ten-county area. Statistics show that in the ten counties 53,000 people between the ages of 18 and 64 do not have high school diplomas. In Marion County that number is a bit higher than 3,100. Further, the average high school graduate makes on average \$10,000 more than a non - high school graduate. It is obvious that the need for adult education is real.

Through adult education, a person can receive a high school equivalency diploma upon passing the test. When the student passes a pre-test, the state will pay the fee required to take the equivalency test.

So, the take-away from Mr. Morris' comments is that obtaining an equivalency diploma is now easy and accessible for Marion County residents. For more information contact the career center in Kimball or call 844-688-7944.

Mayor's Report:

Kimball Mayor Rex Pesnell

Mayor Pesnell reported that soccer is a growing sport. In addition there are nine softball and baseball tournaments scheduled so far to play this summer in the Kimball park.

The Easter egg hunt will be on April 14th at 6:00 PM. It was such a success last year that they anticipate a big event this year.

The Town of Kimball has agreed to pay the match for a grant awarded to the City of South Pittsburg to extend the water lines from South Pittsburg to Kimball.

Another recent example of the towns/cities in Marion County working together is when Kimball, South Pittsburg, Jasper and Sewanee collaborated to purchase a tool useful for sewer systems in the four municipalities.

Kimball is working to clean up the Raulston Cemetery on old Dixie Highway. The next clean up date will be Saturday, February 18th. Volunteers are invited to help.

Miscellaneous:

Construction on the second building at Chattanooga State Kimball Site is scheduled to begin soon. Mayor Jackson has an architect's rendering of the plan. Welding and other manufacturing jobs will be taught in the second building.

Marion County has received a \$10,000 state tourism grant to highlight not only tourism opportunities in Marion County but also tourism in the Sequatchie Valley as a whole.

Thanks to Lodge Manufacturing for contributing over \$100,000 toward fire victims in Sevierville and Pigeon Forge.

Thanks to Colonial Chemical for donating \$30,000 to help with renovations to the Marion County Park.

Announcements

Announcements were reviewed as distributed. A copy is on file with the minutes.

Trivia Question

Question: When is 2017 spring break for Marion County Schools?

Answer: March 27 – 31

Winner: Vicki Messer

Prize was a family first aid kit.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. Next monthly board meeting will be March 16, 2017 at noon at the Western Sizzlin.

Addendum: Garrett Cox is now employed at Gentry Chevrolet, Buick and GMC. His individual membership is being withdrawn as he can now represent Gentry Chevrolet at the chamber meetings.

Minutes submitted by Judy Blevins

Reviewed by President Jamie Lawson