

Albert Lea / Freeborn County
Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, October 26, 2016 – 7:30 a.m.
Chamber Board Room

MINUTES

Present: Randy Kehr, Kim Nelson, Catherine Buboltz, Kelly Anderson, Julia Thompson, George Gonzalez, Justin Oman, Amy Davis, Kathy Sabinish, Jeff Eaton, Angie Kolker

Ex-Officios Present: Chad Adams, Andy Henschel, Jon Murray, John Kluever, Ryan Nolander, Susie Petersen

Excused: Jeff Woodside, Tricia Dahl, Adenuga Atewologun

Absent:

Guest:

Consent Items

1. Chair Catherine Buboltz called the meeting to order at 7:35. Kelly Anderson of Erbert & Gerbert's was introduced as a new member of the Board.
2. The September minutes were presented. Justin Oman made a motion to approve the minutes and was seconded by Angie Kolker. The motion carried.
3. The September financials were presented. Randy reported that member dues exceeded budget as well as new member dues. Expenses are in line factoring in the two items we've carried all year (website, phone). We continue to build up with Edward Jones. Randy predicted that the October financials would look good. Julia Thompson made a motion to accept the September financials and was seconded by George Gonzales. The motion carried.

Action Items:

1. Kim Nelson moved to accept the 2016-2017 Budget and Amy Davis seconded. The motion carried.
2. Kim Nelson made a motion to accept Tricia Dahl as Second Vice Chair of the Executive Committee for 2016-2017. Julia Thompson seconded and the motion carried.
3. Kim Nelson made a motion to adopt a resolution supporting the extension of the Local Option Sales Tax for the Shell Rock River Watershed. She was seconded by Amy Davis and the motion carried.
4. Amy Davis made a motion to give the Ambassadors a cap of \$10,000 and the flexibility to choose the number and amount that they would like to give. George Gonzalez seconded and the motion carried.

• **Reports:**

County:

- John Kluever reported that, as of two weeks ago, 1700 citizens had already absentee voted. This number outpaces two years ago.
- A DNR representative made a presentation on the Blazing Star Trail at the County Commissioners Meeting. John got the impression that nothing would be happening soon.
- There is a wind farm meeting with Invenergy today. Their goal is to line up landowners this year, work on permitting next year, and have the build-out completed in 2019. Randy commented that Invenergy has donated significantly to Chamber events.
- John met with the Association of MN Counties. Each region is setting their Legislative Priorities and ours are transportation and adjusting the formula for state aid.
- The ICE contract numbers are pushing the numbers of 2012, which was our highest year. Numbers are up and there is less transport. The County has also contracted with the Department of Corrections to hold inmates for the State. There are 110-120 inmates in the facility per day and 80-85 are ICE detainees.

City:

- Chad Adams suggested that, after the election, we need to start pressing the DNR through our legislators and the Governor about how they are spending monies that were allocated to us for the Blazing Star Trail.
- The community received recognition at the Blue Zones Summit for their Tobacco Free Initiative.
- The City's legislative priorities are a bonding bill and tax bill.
- Phase I of the public works facility is moving forward.
- Chad reported that there will be a Housing Summit in January and that they are looking at single family or twin home tax abatement. Wedgewood Cove Townhomes are fully occupied and they are working on Phase II.
- The Façade Grant Program is going great and that eleven applications have been received for the Small Cities Grant monies. There are still monies left and they are able to take more applications. Most of the recipients are using the monies to do rehab work on the buildings such as roofing and inside work.
- Chad stated that the interest in downtown is more that the last couple of years combined.
- 2/3 of the funding needed for the splash pad has been raised. The City will maintain insurance on the splash pad.
- Chad informed the Board that at the end of this year the City will be starting a Façade Grant Program for South Broadway and East Main Street.

Shell Rock River Watershed:

- Andy Henschel reported for the Watershed that the Board passed a bid award for dam construction on Pickerel Lake. There is a meeting tomorrow to approve construction of the CDF site. A Basis of Design report has been submitted to the DNR and BOWSER. The Watershed received a \$1.78 million grant from Lessard-Sams.

Ambassadors:

- Jon Murray reported that the Ambassadors made three visits this month: The Watershed, Perkins, and Intego.
- The Ambassadors also held their Quarterly Meeting. They looked at the account balance and would like to give 9-10 scholarships and leave it to the Ambassadors discretion. They would also like to raise the amount of scholarships to \$1,250 and Jon asked the Board to consider taking action on this.

ALEDA:

- Ryan Nolander reported that ALEDA has closed on the property sale to MERC. He is also working with a potential client on the Universal Tire building and a local company on the Endres property. This company anticipates a large expansion and is looking for incentives.
- A distribution center is looking at our area and Ryan will send a response by Friday. There is also a retail organization looking at our area.
- An entrepreneur is moving into the incubator.
- ALEAP has six people signed up for the Annual Meeting. ALEAP will be meeting next month at the Freeborn Bank Building. They are hoping to hold the “Shark Tank” next spring.
- ALEDA is working on loans with local companies.

CVB:

- Susie Petersen reported that Autumn Blaze went very well and will be held on October 14th next year.
- The Holiday Bazaar will be December 8th.
- The Fountain Lake Beer & Wine Tasting with the United Way will be held next week.
- Susie reported on the Blazing Star Trail presentation made at the County Commissioners meeting by the representative of the DNR. \$800,000 of the allotted monies have been used and the DNR wants to use \$400,000 on mitigation of the figure 8. Susie stressed that we need to do something. We need to continue the pressure on the DNR and continue our letters of support for the Trail.
- Susie attended the Tour Minnesota meeting and they discussed Super Bowl 52 and how it will affect other areas of the state. This will be a real opportunity for us.

Riverland:

- Dr. Atewologun was unable to join us this month, so there was no report.

Chamber Business:**Committee Updates –**

- There were no questions about the updates sent to the Board.

Old Business:**Annual Meeting:**

- Randy reported that there are 180+ attendees registered for the Annual Meeting. Minnesota Energy Resources had the wrong date and have offered up their seating. If any of you have someone to take a seat for free, let Randy know. Catherine said that she would extend an invitation to Hannah Funk.
- All award winners will be in attendance. After Kristina Schoh speaks, Jon Werger will present the seal for our becoming a Blue Zones Certified Community.

2016-2017 Budget:

- The Board reviewed the 2016-2017 budget. A large part of that was focused on future staffing and increases for existing staff. It was suggested by Jeff Eaton that we seek someone whose children are now in school and needs flexibility. Many others weighed in on staffing, etc. Kim Nelson moved to accept the 2016-2017 Budget and Amy Davis seconded. The motion carried.(See Action Item #1)

New Business:**New Executive Committee Member:**

- Catherine extended an invitation to Tricia Dahl to join the Executive Committee as Second Vice-Chair. Tricia accepted. Kim Nelson made a motion to accept Tricia Dahl as Second Vice Chair of the Executive

Committee for 2016-2017. Julia Thompson seconded and the motion carried. (See Action Item #2)

Hy-Vee Business After Hours:

- Randy reported that he has heard only one reaction to the Hy-Vee Business After Hours and that was curiosity. He commented that it was an experiment and we would see how it goes. Kim asked if we could extend an invitation to the Leadership class where they would not have to pay. Randy said that he would talk to Peter about it.

Sales tax Extension Support:

- Randy explained that the Governmental Affairs committee recommended the Board adopt a resolution stating that the Chamber supports the extension of the Local Option Sales Tax for the Shell Rock River Watershed. Kim Nelson made a motion to adopt a resolution supporting the extension of the Local Option Sales Tax for the Shell Rock River Watershed. She was seconded by Amy Davis and the motion carried. (See Action Item #3)

Ambassador Requests:

- The Ambassadors are requesting the ability to award up to 10 scholarships and/or raise the amount of the scholarships. They would like to give 10 \$1000 scholarships or 8 \$1250 scholarships. Right now they give seven scholarships. After some discussion, Amy Davis made a motion to give the Ambassadors a cap of \$10,000 and the flexibility to choose the number and amount that they would like to give. George Gonzalez seconded and the motion carried. (See Action Item #4)

November Meeting:

- It was decided to leave the date of the November meeting the same: November 23rd.

Holiday Hours:

- The proposed Holiday Hours Schedule was approved by acclamation.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m. on a motion by Kathy Sabinish, seconded by Justin Oman. The next meeting will be Wednesday, November 23rd at 7:30 a.m. in the Chamber Board Room.