

Albert Lea / Freeborn County
Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, August 24, 2016 – 7:30 a.m.
Chamber Board Room

MINUTES

Present: Jeff Woodside, Randy Kehr, George Gonzalez, Kim Nelson, Catherine Buboltz, Tricia Dahl, Adenuga Atewologun, Kathy Sabinish, Jeff Eaton

Ex-Officios Present: John Kluever, Ryan Nolander, Susie Petersen, Jerry Gabrielatos

Excused: Angie Kolker

Absent: Jenny Iverson, Julia Thompson, Randy Cirksena, Justin Oman, Amy Davis

Guest:

Consent Items

1. Chair Jeff Woodside called the meeting to order at 7:32.
2. The July minutes were presented. Tricia Dahl made a motion to approve the minutes and was seconded by Kathy Sabinish. The motion carried.
3. The July financials were presented. Randy K. commented that everything is moving along nicely. There will be a good revenue stream in the next month and there is a good amount in the Edward Jones account. He went over the details on the Golf Outing and commented that we always do better when it is held at Wedgewood Cove. Randy also pointed out that Leadership tuition is still coming in and we are getting back to where we want to be. Dr. Atewologun made a motion to accept the financials and was seconded by Catherine Buboltz. The motion carried.

Action Items:

1. Kim Nelson made a motion to have Randy K. inform the Social Media Group that the Board decided that, even at \$500, this was too much for an unbudgeted item for the Chamber to be able to do. Kathy Sabinish seconded and the motion carried.

• **Reports:**

County:

- John Kluever asked what has been heard about school beginning early. Has there been much blowback about the MN State Fair from 4H? Kim responded that she has not heard much specifically about the fair and that most of the negative comments have just been about the general change. Presenting at

the State Fair does not count as time off for students, it is being treated as a school activity and is an excused absence.

- John reported that interviews for the County Attorney position have been completed. There were five candidates and the County Board of Commissioners will hold a workshop Tuesday to discuss the interviews and make a decision.
- The Commissioners will meet about the budget on September 6th, 13th and 20th. They will have the budget set by September 20th. John anticipates a slight levy increase to cover the losses at DHS. There will be no increase in the highway budget and they will know better about the General Fund after tomorrow when they get an idea of insurance costs.
- John also wanted to remind everyone that the JOBZ program is going away payable 2017 which could mean a revenue increase of \$300,000+ for the County.

City:

- Jerry Gabrielatos reported that the lack of a Special Session of the Legislature impacts Riverland and housing bonds, among other impacts.
- The City Council repealed the Downtown Parking District and are open to ideas about downtown parking.

Shell Rock River Watershed:

- There was no report.

Ambassadors:

- Randy K. reported that there is a Golf Outing meeting today and that the Ambassadors are booked for visits all through September and well into October. The Golf Outing was very successful.

ALEDA:

- Ryan Nolander reported that the City Council approved the lot split at the Habben Industrial Park for MERC to build and office.
- There is a local company looking to purchase the Endres building.
- Downtown is staying busy and there continues to be interest in properties there.
- Two businesses are “graduating” from the ALBDC Incubator which opens some spaces. There is already a new business set to move into one of the spaces.
- Ryan reported that they held a strategic planning session in August with their Board. Chad Adams and Randy K. were also a part of this. It was decided that their main focuses for marketing should be ag business, advanced manufacturing, data centers and food business. Ryan has been working with the City and is meeting with the County Board of Commissioners next week.

CVB:

- Susie Petersen reported that Wind Down Wednesday went really well this year. They sent a survey to vendors and have one for the public. They went out via Facebook. Susie also stated that the County Wellness Committee gave lunch tickets to employees to use at the last Wind Down Wednesday and it went really well.
- The CVB is working with the City on a fall festival on October 15th from 11:00 a.m. – Midnight that will include a craft brews and wine walk.
- They are close to halfway there on fundraising for the Splash Pad and would like to break ground this fall.
- Susie also reported that Movie Night in the Park went really well as did the tour she gave to the District 241 teachers.
- Youth for Christ is buying another downtown building and Copper Kitchen is closing as Joey was offered a great position in Wells and there have already been 12 inquiries about the space.

Riverland:

- Dr. Atewologun reported that classes have started. Enrollment in Albert Lea is much higher than last year and they have some wait lists. Overall, enrollment is down 1% from last year. The year has started well and they are very excited.
- Riverland is revamping the Massage Therapy and Wind Turbine programs, so those programs are not available at this time.
- The Collision Repair program is moving to Albert Lea's campus to better fit with the Automotive program.
- Riverland has a new hire, Kelly McCalla as Dean of Academic Affairs – Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences, Sciences & Math. They have also hired Dr. Susan Lisa Slaughterhausen for one year.
- Riverland is working on their 2018-2020 capital bonding request which includes monies for a FAB Center (Food, Agriculture and Biology) and Dr. Atewologun stated that they will need the whole community behind this request and the possible commitment of local funds. He will have a pre-design to show soon and Ryan asked that he pass on the pre-design to ALEDA, the Chamber and CVB when he has it.
- Jeff W. asked if there is a student housing problem in Albert Lea and Dr. Atewologun said that was and they have a 3-5 year plan that will address this issue and boost enrollment.

Chamber Business:

The Board went into an Executive Closed Session at this time.

Committee Updates –

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

Old Business:

Leadership Participants:

- Randy reported that there are 22 participants and they are a well-rounded group. The Kick-off went very well.
- Randy stated that he will miss the October Leadership Day as he will be in Fort Worth for the Blue Zones Project Summit.

Annual Meeting Speaker:

- Randy K. has confirmed Kristina Schoh as the speaker for the Annual Meeting. She will make it fun and interactive and her topic will be about working with different age groups.

Minnesota Supreme Court:

- Randy reported that the Supreme Court will be visiting Albert Lea on October 5th and 6th. There will be a dinner for the public at Wedgewood Cove on the 5th and registration for the dinner has gone live on our website. On the 6th, they will be at Albert Lea High School to hear oral arguments in a real court case for students in grades 10-12.

School Board Support:

- Randy K. reported that the letter about the School Board had overall positive comments. We did not take sides and encouraged them to move forward. He thanked Tricia for her assistance with the letter.
- The forum for the School Board candidates will be October 20th. There are three openings for 10 candidates.

Southwest Education Initiative:

- There has been no progress made this month as Southwest was preparing for the start of the school year.

New Business:

Julie Wright Event:

- Randy K. reported that this event was brought to us by the Social Media Group and would be a daylong event, an implementation boot camp, on how to tell the story of your business. They are looking for sponsorships. You can be a “Naming Sponsor” for \$1000 and there is a lower level (\$500) sponsorship. The workshop itself costs \$197 for the early bird registration and is \$297 otherwise. All of the monies collected would go to Julie Wright. Much discussion took place with all agreeing that this was outside of what Albert Lea would pay for a daylong workshop. Kim Nelson made a motion to have Randy K. inform them that the Board decided that, even at \$500, this was too much for an unbudgeted item for the Chamber to be able to do. Kathy Sabinish seconded and the motion carried. (See Action Item #1)

New Application:

- Randy K. informed the Board that changes have been made to our printed Membership Application. It is much easier to read and cleaner. We still encourage applying online, however. We will also do online registration for the Annual Meeting this year.

Board Member Renewal:

- Randy K. informed the Board that Randy C. asked if he could continue on the Board. His term ends on September 30th. According to the Chamber Bylaws, no Board member may serve more than two consecutive three year terms. The only exception is a Board Chair who has reached his limit while Chair. His/her term may be extended by one year to serve as past chair.
- George Gonzales is coming to the completion of Kade’s term and has agreed to stay on the Board.
- Jenny Iverson is now working at the Austin Post Office, but would like to stay on the Board to represent retail. Randy K. talked to her about the possibility of joining a member service club or taking out an individual membership. If this does not work out, the Chamber will find a replacement.

Other business as yet unknown:

- Randy K. informed the Board that the Planning Commission approved signage for 314 South Broadway. He presented the Board with two images, one with just the sign and another with awnings. In order to get the nicer frontage, they will need \$600 and will then be able to receive matching funds from the Broadway Ridge Grant.

- Peter Streit presented an idea to Randy K. regarding the November Business After Hours. Hy-Vee is being named the Business of the Year for the Special Olympics. Peter would like to open Business After Hours to the community in November and charge \$20 to attend – less for Chamber members. All monies would go to the Special Olympics. There was a lengthy discussion of this idea and the Chamber will investigate further and decide next month.
- Randy K. urged those present to contact the City Engineer if they feel the airport building is important. The City must do this next year or they will lose federal funding.
- Randy K. was contacted by the Lake City Chamber, who was referred to us by MnDOT, about visiting for an informational tour of South Broadway and our “road diet”. We are the first MN city to go to MnDOT with a full redesign. They brought 28 people with them on August 4th and toured South Broadway, had lunch at Wedgewood Cove with a Q & A period and walked downtown. On Monday, Lake City voted for a full redesign by a 5-2 vote.
- The Gallup-Healthways Wellbeing Index has been completed and the national Vitality Leadership Team will hear the results in the City Council Chambers on September 6th.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 a.m. The next meeting will be Wednesday, October 26th at 7:30 a.m. in the Chamber Board Room.