

*Albert Lea / Freeborn County*  
*Chamber of Commerce*  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
Wednesday, September 28, 2016 – 7:30 a.m.  
Chamber Board Room

**MINUTES**

Present: Randy Kehr, Kim Nelson, Catherine Buboltz, Tricia Dahl, Adenuga Atewologun, Julia Thompson, Randy Cirksena, Justin Oman, Amy Davis, Kathy Sabinish, Jeff Eaton, Angie Kolker

Ex-Officios Present: Brett Behnke, Ryan Cafourek, Jerry Gabrielatos

Excused: Jeff Woodside,

Absent: Jenny Iverson, George Gonzalez

Guest: Peter Streit

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**Consent Items**

1. Vice-chair Catherine Buboltz called the meeting to order at 7:31. Peter Streit of Hy-Vee was introduced to the Board.
2. The August minutes were presented. Amy Davis made a motion to approve the minutes and was seconded by Tricia Dahl. The motion carried.
3. The August financials were presented. Randy K. informed the Board that we had passed our yearly goal in August for membership, and that new member numbers are going extremely well. The computer/website/phone expenses go away next year. He also reminded the Board that September will have three payrolls. Overall, things are trending the way that we want them to go. Kim Nelson made a motion to accept the financials and was seconded by Randy Cirksena. The motion carried.

**Action Items:**

1. Justin Oman made a motion to approve Hy-Vee's Business After Hours fundraiser and was seconded by Kim Nelson. The motion carried with Randy Cirksena abstaining.
2. Randy Cirksena made a motion to accept Kelly Anderson onto the Board of Directors and was seconded by Kathy Sabinish. The motion carried.
3. Tricia Dahl made a motion to move forward with the job share with ALEDA and Justin Oman seconded. The motion carried.
4. Julia Thompson made a motion to approve the tentative operating budget with a final budget vote at the October Board meeting. Amy Davis seconded and the motion carried.

• **Reports:**

**County:**

- John Kluever was not able to attend as he was dealing with the flooding issues and Open Enrollment meetings for the County.

**City:**

- Jerry Gabrielatos reported that the City is dealing with flooding issues. They have been working hard every day to update the community. There was a staffer from Sen. Klobuchar's office here yesterday to survey the damage. Catherine commented that the City did a wonderful job of getting the word out during the flood.
- Tomorrow there will be an open meeting regarding parking restrictions downtown.
- From 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM tomorrow there will be an Open House at the City Garage to help show why it needs to be updated. There will also be another Open House from 9AM-Noon on October 1<sup>st</sup>. The City is looking to update the garage in two phases.
- Jerry, Ryan Nolander and Randy K. are working together to get a program together with area businesses and Riverland Community College, North Iowa Area Community College and Waldorf College regarding interns for area businesses.

**Shell Rock River Watershed:**

- Brett Behnke reported for the Watershed that there was a meeting about the EAW portion of the dredging and that they laid out what the Watershed had accomplished so far in getting to this point. On October 1<sup>st</sup>, there will be a listening session that will lay this out as well. The Watershed Board will review the responses from the DNR and MPCA and Brett expects a "No" vote from the Board on an Environmental Impact Statement.
- The Watershed is also dealing with the flood impact and anticipates damages in the range of \$300,000 - \$350,000.
- The Shell Rock River Watershed Board presented a preliminary budget that included a proposed \$1 million levy. The reasoning for the levy is that it would cover any gap in funding if the sales tax extension does not pass or does not get legislative approval. It will also allow building of reserves.
  - There is a very concerted effort on the part of the Lakes Foundation to inform the community and urge them to vote for the sales tax extension. Brett said that the Watershed is very mindful of the business community and that they are not happy about having to levy, but they need to move forward and their Board is looking ahead with foresight. Flood Hazard Mitigation dollars should be available, but they will only cover half of the cost of regional retention ponds.
  - The Watershed needs to balance local politics with needs. They need to stay focused on why the Watershed is here. By law, they cannot lobby

for the sales tax extension. Brett stated that he would be in St. Paul tomorrow with Lessard-Sams. He also stated that the Board should feel better about the levy after the election.

- Randy K. commented that the funding gap is only \$300,000 if the sales tax extension does not pass. Brett responded that they can't count on the Legislature passing a tax bill, so they could have six more months of funding gap. He reiterated that the Watershed Board is doing their due diligence.
- Randy K. stated that the impact of the levy would be significant on businesses and homeowners. He asked if they could make up the \$600,000 they need in smaller bites. Brett said that it would not work to do it that way and that the line of thinking is that the \$600,000 portion of the levy will go away – just not this year. It is an investment in our future.
- When asked if the levy could impact the vote for the sales tax, Brett responded that it probably would.
- Randy C. asked about using the newspaper to answer questions about the situation. Brett said that they are working with the Tribune to have either a monthly or bi-weekly article.
- Peter commented that dredging the lake and the work that the Watershed is doing and has done is huge for businesses in this town.
- Randy K. told Brett that the Chamber needs information so that they can tell our members what it all means and why. We can help spread the word. The Governmental Affairs Committee is looking at recommending that the Board support the sales tax extension, but wanted information on the levy first. Randy feels that they will be sending the recommendation to the Board for their next meeting. Legislative approval is needed to implement a local option sales tax and there is always the chance that the approval will not be given. Having a positive vote from the community will carry much weight with the legislative request.
- Brett stated that the Chamber has always been a great supporter of the Watershed over the years and expressed his appreciation. Randy K. asked Brett to let the Chamber know sooner when there are informational meetings so that we can get the word out.

#### **Ambassadors:**

- Ryan Cafourek reported that the Ambassador Golf Outing is wrapped up and they did better than last year. It was the best ever and everything ran very efficiently. In the last month, they have visited Edward Jones-Angie Eggum, Ben Bartelt State Farm, Agilis, Broadway Bike Company, Zimmerman, Steel & Gray, the YMCA and Freeborn County Historical Museum. Today they will visit Fleet Farm Supply and Kwik Trip. Next week's visit is to the Shell Rock River Watershed.

#### **ALEDA:**

- There was no report.

#### **CVB:**

- Randy K. reported that on October 15<sup>th</sup>, there will be an event held downtown called Autumn Blaze. It is a downtown family festival and street dance. Attendees are asked to bring their own tables and chairs.
- The Splash Pad fundraising has raised around \$79,000 so far. ITC just donated \$25,000.

#### **Riverland:**

- Dr. Atewologun reported that the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Ag Summit will be held at the Hormel Institute on November 16<sup>th</sup>. The topic will be “Leveraging Ag Innovation for Global Good”. Dr. Atewologun will send out information and they are looking for sponsors.
- Enrollment is up 1.5% which is good news.
- Last week was “Welcoming America Week” at Riverland. The Mexican Consul from St. Paul attended.

#### **Special Presentation-Peter Streit, Hy-Vee:**

- Peter attended the meeting to talk about the November Hy-Vee Business After Hours. He began by explaining to the Board just how expensive it is to put on the type of Business After Hours that Hy-Vee does. It is an expensive event and to produce an event like this and not charge a fee is no longer feasible. He has considered how to make this good for the Chamber, Hy-Vee and the community.
- Hy-Vee just received the MN Business of the Year award for the Special Olympics. 4% of Hy-Vee’s staff have physical or developmental disabilities and they would like to turn their After Hours into a fundraiser for the Special Olympics by selling tickets for \$25. Tickets would be discounted to \$20 for Chamber members. \$5-\$10 of each ticket sold would go to the Special Olympics.
- Randy C. commented that he did not think that it would work and suggested that they ask for donations. Kim was of the opinion that this could be huge. A lengthy discussion ensued. Dr. Atewologun said that Riverland would like to help and asked if Hy-Vee was willing to open this to other businesses to join in. Peter said that they would.
- The point was made that, in order to charge for a Business After Hours, it would have to be charitable. Nuga suggested that the Chamber restrict the number of After Hours that could be charged for and they would be given out on a first come-first served basis. We would have to get the word out about this and could announce it at the Annual Meeting. Tricia suggested telling members that this is a test and Jeff E. said that we should make a final determination at the December meeting.

- Justin Oman made a motion to approve Hy-Vee's Business After Hours fundraiser and was seconded by Kim Nelson. The motion carried with Randy Cirksena abstaining. (See Action Item #1)

## **Chamber Business:**

### **Committee Updates –**

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

## **Old Business:**

### **Leadership Participants:**

- Randy reported that there are 22 participants. Two missed the first day and we are attempting to create a shortened version of the first day for them.

### **Annual Meeting Additional Speaker:**

- Kristina Schoh will be the speaker for the Annual Meeting. Additionally, we have received the results of the Healthways-Gallup poll that showed significant improvement in Albert Lea. As part of the Annual Meeting, Healthways would like to present Blue Zones Certification to the community. It will be a community celebration. This will be a huge economic development tool and Randy K. thanked the business community for their part in this accomplishment.

### **Minnesota Supreme Court:**

- Randy reported that, as of this time, there are almost 150 people registered for dinner. Registration has been taken down from our website, so if you want to attend and have not registered, please call or stop by the Chamber.

### **Southwest Education Initiative:**

- Randy K. and John Double are looking for businesses willing to spend 30 minutes, two times a month for one month, to talk about their businesses and possibly have some kind of interactive program with students.

## **New Business:**

### **New Board Member:**

- Randy K. reminded the Board that Randy Cirksena's term on the Board is up and he had electronically sent to the Board an application from Kelly Anderson of Erbert & Gerberts. He has not been able to contact Jenny Iverson, who has a new job in Austin; however we only need one new member. He pointed out that Kelly fills a niche that we really don't have filled and recommended to the Board that they invite Kelly to join them. Randy Cirksena made a motion to accept Kelly Anderson onto the Board of Directors and was seconded by Kathy Sabinish. The motion carried. (See Action Item #2)

### **2016-2017 Budget:**

- The proposed budget for 2016-2017 was reviewed. Randy K. pointed out that there will be income from a new member directory and there is no dues increase. Since the meeting was running long and the Board has received electronic copies of the proposed budget, Randy asked that they look them over in detail at home. The Board can approve a tentative operating budget and finalize the budget in October. Julia Thompson made a motion to approve the tentative operating budget with a final budget vote at the October Board meeting. Amy Davis seconded and the motion carried. (See Action Item #4)

### **Share with ALEDA:**

- Randy K. reported that the ALEDA Board approved the plan to share Noelle. The Chamber would convert her to part time and have her in our office two days a week. This will give ALEDA time to see if she will be a fit for what they want to do. A decision should be made by January 1<sup>st</sup>. Her schedule would be worked out two weeks at a time and she could spend more time here if needed. They are waiting on the final endorsement from Ryan's Board. Tricia Dahl made a motion to move forward with the job share with ALEDA and Justin Oman seconded. The motion carried. (See Action Item #3)

**The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m. The next meeting will be Wednesday, October 26th at 7:30 a.m. in the Chamber Board Room.**