

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

MINUTES

Present: Jenny Iverson, George Gonzalez, Randy Kehr, Amy Davis, Jeff Eaton, Kim Nelson, Jeff Woodside, Tricia Dahl, Justin Oman, Kathy Sabinish, Julia Thompson, Randy Cirksena

Ex-Officios Present: Susie Petersen, Leah Lawrence, Chad Adams, John Kluever

Excused: Adenuga Atewologun, Catherine Buboltz, Angie Kolker

Absent:

Guest:

Consent Items

1. Chair Jeff Woodside called the meeting to order at 7:34.
2. The January minutes were presented. George Gonzalez made a motion to approve the minutes and was seconded by Tricia Dahl. The motion carried.
3. The January financials were presented. Randy K. pointed out that membership numbers are up. We are still receiving income from the Golf Outing and special events. There is one scholarship left to pay. Overall, the financials look good; however we are still reflecting the phone system and website on our bottom line. We need to increase our income and are working on that. Kim Nelson made a motion to accept the January financials and was seconded by Kathy Sabinish. The motion carried.

Action Items:

1. Tricia Dahl made a motion to approve the 2016 Legislative Priorities and was seconded by Jeff Eaton. The motion was approved.
2. Kim Nelson made a motion to support the MN Chamber Federation Priorities. George Gonzalez seconded and the motion carried.

• **Reports:**

County:

- John Kluever reported that the people from Invenergy who are looking to build the wind farm in the southeast part of the county were in town last week. Their plan is to develop the wind farm by 2020 and sell the energy produced to Excel Energy. Excel needs to expand their alternative energy by that time.

- John also reported that a good meeting was held with Sen. Sparks and Rep. Bennett regarding Human Services and cost shifts, and changing the formula for County Program Aid.

City:

- Chad Adams reported that the City has been working with ALEDA on some prospects and that there would hopefully be some good news.
- Chad also reported that ALEAP has some grants and donations and they are putting together a future plan for networking and courses. There will be a Shark Tank like event (Tiger Cage) in the fall.
- Chad stated that the Stables Bonding Bill is before the State and set up well. Work on the area would begin in 2017 if they receive funding. Chad is hopeful that the City Council will soon approve and come up with a timeline for the Watershed sales tax renewal. The Blazing Star Landing is also included in the Bonding Bill request; however he feels that it is a long shot.
- The Freeborn Bank Building RFPs have gone out and there are five prospective developers actively looking at the building.
- The City will find out next week or two if they are approved for the grant for market rate housing for the expansion of Wedgewood Cove Townhomes.
- The City and County have received state and federal funds for work on Bridge Avenue. Work will begin in 2021.

Shell Rock River Watershed:

- Leah Lawrence reported for the Watershed. She informed the Board that Brett Behnke has spoken for the Watershed at the last City Council meeting.
- Leah also said that she attended the Social Media Breakfast and that the Watershed is now on Twitter.
- The Watershed Annual Meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on March 10th in the County Commissioners Board Room.

Ambassadors:

- Randy K. reported that the Ambassadors have a visit here today with Kiwanis.

ALEDA:

- Ryan Nolander was unable to attend but sent the following update: They are in the final stages of hiring for their Business & Marketing Manager position, they currently have 4 outside projects in different stages that they are responding to, a couple local companies they are working with on future expansions and planning, and they are revamping the ALEAP program to increase participation.
- They are also spending time preparing for their annual audits next week and for the final JOBZ audits coming up in March that are due April 1st. The

JOBZ program officially ends this year. Jeff W. asked how many jobs were created under this program and Chad responded 680 jobs.

CVB:

- Susie Petersen reported that the Big Freeze was a huge success. Cargill donated 495 pounds of food and over \$400 to the Salvation Army. It was a beautiful day and they were able to hold the radar runs. The chili cook-off went well as did the kid's games, geocaching, snowshoe shuffle and polar plunge.
- Eddie Cochran Weekend will be June 10th and 11th. The White Sidewalls will play at a street dance.
- June 21st, the City will be holding the Paddle, Pedal, Run in the place of the triathlon. It will be more family friendly and teams are encouraged.
- The Splash Pad was approved by the City Council and the group is fundraising. In the meantime, the City has applied for a grant from Blue Cross/Blue Shield for pop-up splash pads at the Just Play! Event and Wind Down Wednesdays.
- There is fundraising underway for the downtown flowers. Now that Main Street and more of Broadway are completed, there is more area to cover. They are working on banners for downtown with the downtown logo as well as banners for Wind Down Wednesdays. Healthways has offered some Blue Zones banners as well.
- Susie reported that the Lakes Foundation meets today and they will go out and help spread the word for the Watershed on the sales tax renewal. She informed the Board that the previous City Council meeting was on You Tube and encouraged them to watch. Randy K. pointed out that our support for the extension is included in our Legislative Priorities.
- Susie also called attention to the Cargill Cares program in which Cargill employees volunteer throughout the community.

Riverland:

- There was no report.

Chamber Business:

Committee Updates –

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

Old Business:

EOS Update:

- Randy K. reported that the program was lightly attended and well received. There were a lot of good take-aways.

Clean Energy Revolution Update:

- This event was also lightly attended. It was covered by KIMT and was in the Mid America Chamber Executives newsletter as well.

Ag Lunch:

- Randy reported that we are still waiting on word from the Governor's office about a speaker. He is hopeful that it will be the Governor or Lt. Governor. The luncheon will be held on March 15th and the response to sponsorship requests has been great.
- The Farm Family of the Year will be picked at today's Ag meeting. Riverland's Ag Summit date has been moved until the fall.

SE MN Together:

- Randy K. reported that this group, working together on workforce issues, will be meeting from noon until 4:00 p.m. on Thursday. It is the day before he leaves on vacation, so Dawn Thompson will take over for him at this event.

New Business:

Go Buy Local Proposal:

- Randy K. reviewed a proposal that the Chamber received. It is an ad program and he feels that it is not something that fits in with us because of cost. They are not working with any other chambers and he feels the program is not framed well enough.

Legislative Priorities:

- The final draft of the Governmental Affairs Committee recommended Legislative Priorities was reviewed with the Board. Included are the City of Albert Lea's bonding requests, support for the positions of the Greater Minnesota Partnership, support for the renewal of the Local Option Sales Tax for the Watershed, and support for the Minnesota Initiative Program.
- Tricia Dahl made a motion to approve the 2016 Legislative Priorities and was seconded by Jeff Eaton. The motion was approved. (See Action Item #1)

MDMA Joining Community Conference:

- Randy K. informed the Board that the Minnesota Department of Military Affairs will be holding a conference at the end of March.

Session Priorities:

- Randy K. let the Board know that there are still two spots open at the table for Session Priorities on March 8th. Kim Nelson expressed interest.

MN Chamber Federation Priorities:

- The Board reviewed the MN Chamber Federation Priorities.
- Kim Nelson made a motion to support the MN Chamber Federation Priorities. George Gonzalez seconded and the motion carried. (See Action Item #2)

Review Retreat Action Steps:

- Randy K. reported that the sub-committee met with Ambassadors. He also stated that they opted not to change from the green jackets. They are actively recruiting new Ambassadors and Kim stated that Jon and Ryan felt that they could communicate Board positions well throughout the community.
- Randy K. stated that we are getting interesting data from the website with pretty impressive numbers. Randy C. reported that he has signed up two new families directly because of the banner ad on our website and it has only been up a week.
- Randy K. said that we have featured some service clubs in Business Monthly and will continue.
- The Young Professionals network was going to be championed by Hillary Korpi however she has been busy with their new restaurant and has not been able to take the reins.
- Rent savings are being put into the account for our future building.

Other:

- Randy K. reported that our mail slot is in and they are working on the tile at the entrance.
- Julia Thompson informed the Board that someone is selling sports cards for the high school. She asked where they were located and they cut the communication. It is not a local business and ALHS has nothing to do with this. Julia made the point that we do need to shop locally and if there is a question as to the business' origin, ask and make sure. Donate to the Salvation Army because it stays local.

Donations to other drop boxes and those who have curb-side pickup do not stay in our community.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50. The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 23rd at 7:30 a.m.

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