

Attendees:

Melissa “Missy” Mitchell, Chamber President
Robin Schultze, Chamber Vice-President, Robin’s Nest Antiques
Carrie Christ, Chamber Secretary, Christ Bros Asphalt, Inc.
Cheri Wright, Chamber Correspondence, City Board and Alderman
Rebeca Gabel, Chamber Website, Atomy
Joe Zimmerlee, Visitors’ Center
Barbara Joy, Lebanon Winter Wonderland
Baron Rana, Dairy Queen
Jeff Thornton, Lebanon Rotary
John Wright, John Wright Realty
Mindy Schiefer, Emerald Mound Grange
Michele Erschen, McKendree University
Mike Bennett, Lions Club
Tony Barrale, Sure Shot Indoor Range
Robert Lee, individual member
Marc Hendricks, Emerald Mound Grange
Lori Hendricks, Emerald Mound Grange
Marie Fero, Lebanon Advertiser
Amanda Dontigney, Hangar 18/Merchants
Visitor: Belinda McAllister, Forward Motion International
Guest Speaker: Robert Powers, US Census

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am at the Visitor’s Center by Missy Mitchell, President. Mike Bennett led invocation. Attendees introduced themselves.

First meeting welcome to Tony Barrale Sure Shot Archery Range.

Guest Bob Powers of the US Census shared information regarding the 2020 US Census. He stated that the census taker hiring is not a threat to businesses, and he is not here to steal employees from the merchants in Lebanon. He is recruiting for census takers and has a great deal of latitude in the hiring process. The census is struggling to get a workforce because unemployment is down. He handed out packets to those present that wanted more information and asked us to post the hiring signs in our businesses. He is looking for 2000 census takers in St. Clair County. The pay is \$19.00 per hour for census takers and \$21.00 per hour for supervisors. You can go online to apply but may run in to several other agencies that are also hiring. Bob covers 5 counties. There are some restrictions on the level of disability for census takers because an individual must be able to walk the sidewalks and up and down stairs. Time sheets are completed by the census taker. A worker will be paid weekly by direct deposit only, and the pay is like other salaried positions, it is taxable. It was mentioned that anyone who lives in St. Clair County, specifically Lebanon, on April 1, 2020, they are counted for that community. That means any McKendree student, faculty or staff living in Lebanon on that date will be counted for Lebanon. This census will be highly technologized. Each worker will be issued an encrypted phone with GPS. The worker will enter the number of people/families in a household on the phone. There will be a three-day classroom training event followed up by online training. The earlier a person applies and is accepted to work, the greater the chance that their work will be near their own home.

Reports:

Secretary Report (Minutes)

- Mike Bennet made a correction to the July 16 Lions Club event. It is a blood drive from 3:00 pm – 7:00 pm (give a pint, get a pint) AND a fundraiser to help defray the cost of eSight glasses for Gavin Sperry from 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm. A portion of the proceeds from the purchase of food will go to this fund. Bob

Lee moved and Rebeca Gable seconded a motion to approve the minutes as amended. The vote carried and the minutes from May were approved.

Treasurer's Report (Handout)

- Carrie Christ presented the report. Joe Zimmerlee explained that the \$272 for air conditioner repair was to replace the old type of freon (R22) that is \$72 per pound. Last summer this replacement was accomplished and it carried through until earlier this summer. This will likely be a recurring expense until we replace the unit with a newer, more efficient model. Mike Bennett moved that we accept the Treasurer's report as presented, John Wright seconded the motion and the motion carried to accept the report.

Visitor's Center

- Joe stated that the downstairs storage closet needs to be cleaned out and organized on a shelf by shelf basis. He proposed that this be done immediately after the July meeting.
- Joe also stated that the booking for use of the downstairs of the Visitor Center is increasing. He will post a calendar on the main level where we can book events and reduce the potential of double booking the basement.
- Missy asked Carrie and Joe to track the rental of the basement and also see if our utility bills increase due to the increased rentals.
- Missy Mitchell mentioned that there will be a Visitor Center (VC) Volunteer Brunch on Tuesday, August 13 at 10:00. This will be for all current and prospective VC volunteers. Along with the brunch, there will be some training and if the shops are open when they have completed the brunch and training, they would like to tour the shops and visit with the shop owners. Merchants are invited to give Missy fliers or brochures about their business to include in the training materials. It was mentioned it might be nice to have a gift basket drawing for those in attendance at the brunch.

Brick Street Merchants

- Amanda Dontigney stated that Christmas in July will be July 20. This is the closest Saturday to the 25th and the merchants try to keep the date as close to the 25th as possible. The event involves a few Christmas items in the shops with discounts selected by the individual merchants.
- Witches Night Out: Amanda reported that we already have 27,000 hits online for this event. We didn't have that many online hits by the 2018 date of Witches Night Out.

McKendree University

- Michele stated that their sports summer camps are going well.
- Tickets to the Hett will go on sale July 1 for Friends of the Hett and July 22 for the public.
- There will be a big event on campus (First Year Introduction) on July 12, which might increase business for the Lebanon merchants.
- The University has hired a company to do a national search for a new university President

City

- Cheri Wright stated that the vacant lot that was formerly Brad and Deb's is now officially the city's property. City Hall has begun a conversation on what to do with the property. Part of the discussion is to create a public parking lot. The city paid \$40K for the demolition of Brad and Deb's building and now may have to pay another \$19-20K to make it a parking lot. The Mayor estimates that 24 cars would be able to park there. There was some discussion on how to keep merchants and residents from parking on the lot as it should be for visitors to the Brick Street. Carrie Christ stated that Christ Brothers would install Rotomill for the estimated \$19-20K. It is an oil and chip surface that will harden over time but that striping of that surface doesn't work well.
- Cheri stated that Barb Cioni's last day with the city is June 28th. The city has hired a new accountant, start date TBD.
- The city is looking for a new City Inspector.

- The brick street will be closed for the Fireman's Picnic parade on Friday July 12 and Saturday July 13.
- Cheri is the city liaison for the census. There will be more information available between now and the start of the census next spring.
- Signage for City Hall has been approved and will be painted on the east wall of the building
- Annexation has just been approved for the area just south of the four way stop at the south junction of IL 4 and Hwy 50 (where the farmer's market formerly set up). In addition, the annexation approval has been granted for the area on Hwy 50 east of town and encompasses farm land and McCleery Safe Storage.
- Missy asked about the neon signs in the historic district and despite the fact they are not approved, several businesses on the brick street have neon or lighted signs.
- Missy asked about what is being done with derelict/disrepair buildings in the historic business district. No answer for that at this time.

Website

- Rebeca Gabel stated that TechnoSolutions is going to update our website. We own our domain through GoDaddy but the updates are all pay as you go. We are not currently budgeted for the update, which will be \$150. The update is required to make our wordpress compatible with a recent push. Joe Zimmerlee moved that we approve the funds for this update. Mike Bennett seconded the motion and the motion carried by oral vote.

Old Business

- Carrie Christ stated that we need a board meeting for approval of beautification funds to purchase two trash cans for McAllister park. The board meeting will be held immediately following the chamber meeting today.
- Constitution and Bylaws-Missy asked that board members please review the current Constitution and Bylaws so that we can move forward with revisions. Cheri and Michele asked that we hold a board meeting to do this. We are looking at a date in September to get together.
- Missy asked that we have a Chamber of Commerce event/FUNdraiser get together to brainstorm ideas. She would like the current three people on the committee to get together. Belinda McAllister stated she will share information.

NEW BUSINESS

- Missy mentioned that Liz Hund with Tree Art (caretaker of the book tree close to Looking Glass Playhouse) has recommended we look for ways to use hashtags to promote Lebanon.
- Missy mentioned that we need a chamber driver for the Fireman's Picnic Parade for Friday night. Rebeca stated she has a van that can be used. Missy also stated that the link for the bands that will be playing at the picnic has been posted.
- Missy is looking at ways to promote Lebanon as a City of Arts and Education. The 200th anniversary for McKendree is coming up in 2024. Mike Bennett asked if there was any way to keep the Art Gallery open more often. Volunteers (students) from the university work in the gallery but unless there is an event such as the opening of a show, the gallery is closed. Michele mentioned that the students are not available to work the gallery during the summer because they are not in class. Missy also mentioned that we are looking at ways to increase the number of artists that participate in the Plein Air event. She stated that per Amy McLennan, our artists have been discouraged due to the low monetary amount of the prize money. Belinda mentioned that perhaps we could form a committee to promote art uptown. Michele suggested that perhaps the students could paint the utility boxes. Missy mentioned that perhaps we can get some rocking chairs and have different artists paint them, then auction them off as a fund raiser.
- Promoting Non-Profits (Rotary, Lions Club, American Legion, etc.). The chamber will help focus on this in the fall of 2019.

Around the Room

- Fit for All will be starting a Silver Sneakers class as well as a dance group for people not normally known for their dancing. Details to follow.
- The business vendor fair held this last Saturday at the Grange had two vendors and very few visitors. It was discussed that perhaps we didn't start advertising early enough. We should set a date now for next year and really do some strong advertising.
- There will be a ribbon cutting for the new shop Healing Naturally Boutique in the 100 block of W. St Louis street on July 6 at 9:00 with the store grand opening at 10:00.
- Carrie discussed the east entrance sign for Lebanon. It will be on a stone stand with a black powder coated metal flag. Our guest, Bob Powers, mentioned that the flag has only 12 stars. Carrie will ask about adding a 13th star. The sign will be placed between the two driveways of McCleery Safe Storage on Hwy 50 east of town.
- Mike Bennett mentioned they are looking for sponsors for the annual Lions Club Golf Tournament. It will be held at Tamarack Golf Club on Aug 10, 2019. They need 84 small give away bags. Missy gave him some Lebanon Chamber bags to use.
- Mike also discussed the June 29th BBQ fund raiser Gavin Sperry's computerized eSight glasses. The BBQ will be at RP Lumber and if you would like delivery, just call Mike at 618-407-5543 and he will arrange delivery to your home or business. The goal is \$6000.
- Mike discussed the July 16 fundraiser for Gavin's glasses at the Lebanon DQ. A percentage of the sales of food will go toward the glasses.
- On July 9 from 5:00pm – 8:00pm there will be a fundraiser at the Lebanon DQ for Multiple Sclerosis. Again, a percentage of the sales of food will go toward this fund.
- July 10, Josh Waltham, Leader of the Belleville Philharmonic at the Hett.
- Jeff with the Lebanon Rotary presented the information about a memorial bench. A couple of students died last year and the Rotary collected 500 pounds of plastic bottle caps that have been turned in to a memorial bench. The dedication of the bench will be August 15 outside the school library.
- Baron of DQ discussed the fundraiser for the Children's Miracle Network. It will be July 25th and \$1.00 from each Blizzard sold goes toward this fund. Last year they raised \$11,000 in this event.
- Belinda McAllister reminded us that this Friday, June 28th from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm is the children's flower planting at McAllister Park.
- Today at True Value the Grange is holding a fundraiser, 10:30 am until food runs out. Other fundraisers include at BBQ at the Grange on July 15 and a Pork Steak Dinner at the Grange on Aug 18.
- Sure Shot is holding a kids archery clinic on July 20. It will benefit the Home School Group and cost is \$40 for the day (8:00am to 4:00pm). This weekend Sure Shot is hosting a cornhole tournament.
- According to Bob Lee, a radio representative with come in July to discuss advertising.

- Meeting adjourned at 9:50am. Next Chamber meeting date is June 25.

- //signed//

- Robin Schultze, V President

//signed//

Melissa Mitchell, President