

Lebanon Chamber of Commerce Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Atomy/Victorian, Missy Mitchell (**President**)
Christ Bros. Asphalt, Carrie Christ (**Treasurer**)
Meridith Funeral Home, Brenda Pehle (**Secretary**)
Atomy, Rebeca Gabel
Cedars of Lebanon, Lori Thrutchley
Cedars of Lebanon, Kari Welker
Emerald Mound Grange, Mindy Schiefer
Farmers & Merchants, Michaela Johnson
Farmers & Merchants, Nathan Parchman
Fit 4 All, David Tate

Forward Motion, Int., Belinda McAllister
Lebanon City Council, Cheri Wright
McKendree University, Michele Erschen
Member, Janet Schmitt
Member, John Wright
Rocking R, Randy Reibold
Visitors' Center, Joe Zimmerlee
Guests:
City of Lebanon, Mayor Wilken and Dale Kyrouac
Teddy Sells

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 am by President Melissa Mitchell. Joe Zimmerlee gave the invocation, and introductions followed.

Mayor Wilken introduced Dale Kyrouac, who was hired to be the City's new building code enforcement officer and inspector. Mayor Wilken also announced a recent decision to initiate inspections of commercial buildings in addition to the required approvals for residential occupancy. This action follows the explosion at 108 W. St. Louis St. in November, calling attention to the need for more safety awareness and measures to minimize, if not prevent, such accidents in the future. Mayor Wilken indicated that Dale is presently assisted by a licensed inspector until Dale's certification is complete.

Dale addressed the Chamber, citing 24 years firefighter experience with the Collinsville Fire Department, including chief, and 10 more years as head of the Toyota Fire Department and Security Force. He said that demolition of the damaged building is projected to be about two days; interruption to the Brick Street will be better known after an upcoming meeting, and the State has not yet concluded its investigation into the cause of the explosion. Dale said he has been working with John Wright regarding inspections of businesses and will be taking things one step at a time, working toward self-compliance and optimal safety and cleanliness of commercial spaces.

John inquired about the grocery store building progress and projected opening.

Asked to name key areas of focus during the final year of this term in office, Mayor Wilken identified: economic and TIF expansion, stating that submitted programs bode well for the future; community development, to raze dilapidated structures and build new, possibly through Habitat; and the Library's move, which is essential to economic development. Belinda McAllister added that for these projects, the City is seeking outside/VA community funds some of which are available without the City having to directly apply for grants. With direction from the Southwest Illinois Leadership Council, Lebanon has identified four priorities: community development, public infrastructure, historical preservation and celebration, and modernization and rebranding of Lebanon as a city of arts and education.

Lastly, Mayor Wilken reported that he met with County Board Officer Mark Kern to address flooding on Hwy 50 for the economic and safety problem that it poses for Lebanon and the region.

Reports:

Secretary's Report

- Minutes from the November 21, 2019 meeting were approved (Rebeca/Joe).

Treasurer's Report (Handout)

- Carrie reported the 2019 Sales Tax report has been filed; they are seeking an accountant and open to suggestions; the Annual Report has been sent off; she has prepared a project balance sheet and identified one correction; and she will have a budget to present to the Board next Tuesday for approval. Report approved (Michele/John).

Visitors' Center

- Joe said Christmas has been put away and Valentine's decorations are out. To Carrie's report, he pointed out that one CPA bid \$300. to manage the Chamber's accounts; a second CPA gave an estimate of \$1200. The 2020 Events Calendar (handout) is ready to print, and the Car Cruise Contract for this year has been signed. Tourism Magazine has room in its Spring/Summer issue, but two events don't justify purchase cost of an ad. It was suggested that George Fero be asked to give input with Stooges run. To date there are 39 renewed/new members, including two Star members; we are encouraged to think outside the box to attract additional members, i.e. florist, and other services utilized within the community. Missy added there is need for additional volunteers to staff the Center's desk.

City

- No report.

McKendree University

- Michele announced preview dates of February 17 and April 18, reminding us that these days bring hundreds of people to town, and if merchants want to, they can provide coupons for distribution to participants. Spring Break will be March 9-13, May 9 is Commencement. McKendree will host a regional Spelling Bee, dates TBA.

Merchants

- The next event is Chocolate Rendezvous, on February 8.

Website

- See Old Business.

Upcoming Events:

Dave is considering a 5K event this year. Mindy said the Grange would offer their facility as the start/finish place; Cheri gave a reminder that the City must grant permission for any event, at least one month in advance of the date.

Apex will host Business After Hours; all members are encouraged to host a Chamber gathering.

Friends of McAllister Park are holding a community fundraising raffle on April 30.

Letter for street closure is due February 15; Cheri will submit it to streets/alleys.

Old Business:

Thanks to Cobblestone for hosting Membership Breakfast on December 3; the gathering yielded new Chamber members and was a great time for folks to get better acquainted, visit, and enjoy one another's company.

The Chamber voted unanimously to approve and adopt the revised Constitution and By-Laws presented by the Board (Michele/Cheri), which will be filed in the Chamber Book of Records.

Workshops, to promote business and develop skill sets, can be scheduled through the year, and sponsors/presenters are welcome to use the Visitors' Center without charge.

The Board will be considering the services of ChamberMaster, a software that is utilized by 1 in 3 Chambers across the country. Rebeca explained that the current website is manual and static, and ChamberMaster offers a robust and interactive media far beyond our present capability. She mentioned the cross data operation is exceptional and data analytics allow members to see and better gauge public inquiries. Discussion will continue, in depth, at next Tuesday's Board meeting.

New Business:

The Mayor and Street Superintendent Jody McNeese have requested a letter from the Merchants in the 100-300 blocks, identifying all their concerns pertaining to pending street closure for street pavement replacement this summer.

Missy would like to appoint committees to update the Chamber's map of Lebanon and its advertisers, and discuss potential fundraising ideas.

Meeting agenda items are welcome and should be submitted to Missy by the 2nd Thursday of each month.

Around the Room

Rebeca offered a look at Atomy for their full product line in addition to the skin care line.

Carrie will be applying through Beautification for trash can lids.

Janet said Winter Wonderland lights are still being taken down and put away.

Michaela announced Farmers & Merchants universal banker opportunities for posting Chamber events/McKendree careers. They also rolled out a no cost new line of credit for repairs/vacation/boat purchase, etc.

Dave expressed concern for how much to invest as a business person and as a man with a young family in a town where school enrollment continues to fall, and a visitor's first impression is formed by the bankruptcy billboard on Hwy 4. He's like to see time devoted to serious discussion about image and growth for Lebanon.

Cheri mentioned Hund B & B on Center and Meyer Streets is open.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 27, 2020 at 8:30am in the lower level of the Visitors' Center.

Meeting adjourned at 9:39 am.

//signed//

Brenda Pehle, Secretary

//signed//

Missy Mitchell, President

Note: Chamber news and minutes are distributed via Constant Contact. Please add chamber@lebanonil.us to your contacts to ensure delivery. Contact Rebeca Gabel, rebeca.gabel@gmail.com, if you need to be added to our e-mail list. Share our Lebanon Chamber Webpage and Facebook Page so that we can get the word out on all events:

- ❖ Lebanon Chamber Webpage: <http://www.lebanonil.us/>
- ❖ Lebanon Chamber Facebook: [www.facebook.com/lebanonchamberof commerce](https://www.facebook.com/lebanonchamberofcommerce)