

March 26, 2020

## Lebanon Chamber of Commerce Meeting Minutes

### Attendees:

Atomy/Victorian, Missy Mitchell ( <b>President</b> )	Lebanon Rotary Club, Jeff Thornton
Robin's Nest, Robin Schultze ( <b>Vice-President</b> )	McKendree University, Michele Erschen
Meridith Funeral Home, Brenda Pehle ( <b>Secretary</b> )	Rocking R, Linda Reibold
Atomy, Rebeca Gabel	Tiadaghton House, Holly Lovell
Cedars of Lebanon, Kari Welker	Visitors' Center, Joe Zimmerlee
Farmers & Merchants, Michaela Johnson	Wright Realty, John Wright
First Federal Savings, Tiffany Suydam	
Fit 4 All, David Tate	
Forward Motion, Belinda McAllister	

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 am via Zoom by Missy Mitchell, President. Robin gave the invocation.

### Reports:

#### **Secretary's Report**

(Attachment)

- February's minutes were approved with the addition of Denon Minney's last name (John/Belinda).

#### **Treasurer's Report**

(Attachment)

- In Carrie's absence, Missy reviewed balances: \$1,326.34 in checking, \$21,971.99 in Money Market, \$20,531.10 of it Queen of Hearts money. Carrie had noted in an email message that \$7,900 had been collected in membership, an increase from recent previous years. Missy explained that Chamber income is deposited into the interest earning MM Fund and transferred, as needed, to cover operational expenses. Approved (Belinda/Linda).
- Reviewing recent activity, a suggestion was made to try to negotiate a better rate for internet or switch providers.

#### **Visitors' Center**

- Joe is checking mail regularly. Missy asked volunteers to stay home, though some are still coming in the back door. Business across the street has a key to access bathroom. A red flag was raised to restrict further usage as insurability and cleanliness could be compromised during the crisis.

#### **City**

- No official report.

#### **McKendree University**

- Students who are able to go home have been sent away. Those who can't go home have been asked to shelter in place. Food service is still being provided for this group. Remaining coursework is being done on-line. All events have been cancelled including Commencement, although leadership is working on a way to honor the occasion.
- No employees have been let go; all who are able are working from home.

#### **Merchants**

- May Market has been cancelled; vendors are being refunded although some are saying to hold payment for next year's event. Unfortunately, promotional flyers had already been run.
- Shop keepers are looking out for each other; few businesses remain open.

## **Website**

- Members can visit and set up their page; contact Rebeca if you are looking for guidance. Training for administrators for content and use is still to be scheduled.

## **Upcoming Events**

- Tour de Stooges is still on at this time.
- Garden Club Tour has been cancelled because of the pandemic.
- Classic Car schedule is tentative. Suggestion was made to hold a 50/50 even if called off, or do something to support and help businesses make a come-back from the fallout of the crisis. Belinda relayed that Friends of McAllister Park was sharply criticized for posting donation option when event got called and warned of possibility of backlash for seeking funds when so many will be economically hurt by CoVid-19.
- 5K and Golf Tourney are still being planned at this time.
- Fire Department is going to have their Good Friday (April 10) Fish Fry as a drive through only.

## **Old Business**

- Business Over Breakfast last Friday was cancelled. Ribbon cutting set for today is being postponed.
- The purchase of new Christmas lighting has been tabled at this time. While ideas/comments are encouraged, the priority of the Chamber will be to aid and assist local businesses to get back on their feet after the virus contagion period.
- Agenda items are welcome by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday for inclusion in that month's meeting.

## **New Business**

- A Bill passed the Senate through the night promising \$350 billion for business stabilization. It is expected that SBA will post loan application forms and terms/interest information with a three month deferral on loan payments for small businesses and local banks will be entrusted to manage these loans.
- With great need for encouraging messaging, it was suggested a positive message be run on the Square's electronic board. Winter Wonderland is going to put lights back up at the Park. Another idea is to put up cheerful signage for motorists to see at the Rose Corner.
- Illinois Southwestern Tourism contacted Missy for update on businesses.
- Residents Larry and Julie Ford inquired about putting a library box up outside the VC doors; this will not be pursued at this time for liability and health safety reasons (Rebeca/Belinda).
- Shop keepers are invited to put a Teddy Bear in their storefront window in support of a social media activity.

## **Around the Room**

- Brenda said restrictions on people gathering for funerals is having a pronounced impact on families; reaching out, when you know them, can help them to feel supported. Funeral Home is appreciative of College Hill Cemetery workers who are on the ball to work helpfully and efficiently to maintain physical distancing and shorten time at the gravesite.
- Holly is going to use time that the shop is closed to work on Chamber website page.
- Linda is going to put a Teddy Bear in her shop window.
- Reflecting on the blow to local businesses, John suggests Chamber be brainstorming and strategizing for recovery plan to get people back to Lebanon as soon as it is possible.
- Rebeca has more details to share about the Golf Tourney and invited attendees to remain on zoom after the meeting to discuss and develop a working committee.
- Jeff said amid shutdowns for the corona virus crisis, he has seen 2000 applications for big item purchases, which he is encouraged by.
- David said he is considering waiving membership costs short-term for people until they are re-employed. He has been most heartened by the recent Teachers' Parade, to wave and honk at kids along the bus route.

- Belinda said she has moved Forward Motion on-line, which may well be permanent. Face time counseling and coaching is a viable alternative to face-to-face meetings.
- Tiffany suggested being aware of lower interest rates available now for refinancing and borrowing.
- Michele mentioned the need to keep pandemic front-liners in our prayers.
- Robin is sheltering with her Dad and had to close the shop the week before the State Order, and is encouraging all to do best they can in these hard times.
- Missy wondered what the current needs are for food, household items, and health/utility assistance at Matthew Ministries.

Meeting adjourned at 10:16am.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 23, 2020 at 8:30am.

//signed//

Brenda Pehle, Secretary

//signed//

Missy Mitchell, President

**Note:** Chamber news and minutes are distributed via Constant Contact. Please add [chamber@lebanonil.us](mailto:chamber@lebanonil.us) to your contacts to ensure delivery. Contact Rebeca Gabel, [rebeca.gabel@gmail.com](mailto: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/>
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