

West Liberty Business Association – Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2016, 7:30 a.m. @ Liberty Gathering Place

Present: Officers: President Margaret Hager (A Needle Pulling Thread), Vice President Diana Wilkins (Kara Lynn's), Treasurer Julie Bodenmiller (Civista Bank). Members: Sherry Forsythe (Highland Country Store), Ryan Berry (Berry Digital Solutions), Chris Anders (Berry Digital Solutions), Tami Wenger (Gloryland Ministries, Project Teddy Bear), Rebecca Marker-Smith (Green Hills), Michelle Neer (MCC Thrift), Malia Hughes (Realtor, Marketplace), Nancy Spragen (Library), Mark Boyer (Shine FM), Jayne Griffith, and Cindy McClure.

Minutes: The February minutes that Katie emailed out was approved with one clarification. It was asked if we were limited to 8 centerpieces total; answer was it didn't matter.

Financial Report: Julie provided the current Financial Report dated March 1, 2016. The current bank balance is \$3274.99. The outstanding check for Honest Print has been cleared up. We still have an outstanding one for Larry Steider from the 5K race. Margaret will check with him on that.

Julie also provided a copy of the financial audit. She then mentioned that we had previously changed our reporting year from the calendar year to an April 1 fiscal year. She suggested that we change the beginning date to March 1 because all previous activities are wrapped and we start having expenses for the annual meeting/next fiscal year in March. There was no dissention on this change.

The new street banner has arrived and is in the possession of Bob Rabenstein. He should be hanging it soon.

Website: Chris Anders shared and passed around some sheets with analytics from the website pages with questions about how much detail should be included in the annual meeting mailing. It was suggested pages 1 and 3 be included, with detail pages for each web page at the station for bidding on the ad for that page. Ryan asked if we should adjust minimum bids for the pages to match the traffic we have had in the last year. Everyone agreed that made sense. It was asked if businesses that cannot attend that evening can still bid on an ad. The answer was an emphatic yes – they need only email/call Ryan or Katie. We also had discussion on some businesses bidding on more than one page – a first choice and a second choice. Ryan said it's a little cumbersome, but yes they can do that. He and Katie sorted it out last year.

Annual Meeting: Rebecca reported the buffet-style meal with two meats, two vegetables and more is \$10.50 per person. Last year we charged \$18 and had about 40 people. This year we are trying to get sponsors; to date we have \$340 – \$250 from The Peoples Savings & Loan, \$50 from Civista Bank and \$40 from Colton Lowry at Edward D Jones. We decided to try to get a few more sponsors, and the Association will pick up the remainder of the cost. We think more people might be willing to come if the meal is free to them.

We made a few minor changes to the tentative agenda. Tami Wenger or Colton Lowry will be speaking about the Bicentennial Committee. Their meetings are the last Tuesday of each month, 6:30 at the Town Hall. They would like more input with ideas on their Facebook page. Chris will work with Tami on a tag.

We will now have River Current coverage for the annual meeting and other events – Tami Wenger is now reporting for them.

Suggested officers for next year are:

President – Ryan Berry; Vice President – ?; Secretary – Katie Neer; Treasurer – ?

Spring Fling: Advertising is set. The Grove will have live music indoors; MCC Thrift will pipe music on the street. Coffee Matters and MCC Thrift will be offering discounts. Some stores are staying open late for the event. We need to do more promotion next week on the hat thing; Chris will work with Diane and others on that. Diane has some extra hats for \$4 donation and a box of “stuff” to decorate with if anyone is interested.

Street Markets: Several ideas were kicked around including:

- Staying open later
- Having an indoor location in the event of rain. (The Grove will only hold about 8 vendors. The Violet’s Attic building will be empty as of May 1st. Cindy McClure will be having a cash and carry business in there.)
- Outside is best for visibility. Vendors may need to bring an awning.
- We need consistency and to stress that the market will be held rain or shine.
- Last year ran from June 5 through August 14, but with rain for seven consecutive Fridays, it fizzled.
- Last year we charged \$5/night or a discount if prepaying for the entire season.
- It was suggested once a week might be too much. It might be better to have once a month and make it special.
- We could also make it be a charity fund-raiser for the fire department, etc.
- Problem – no electricity on the streets.
- Could also do a Shop Hop with a punch-card type of thing to get entered into a drawing.
- Food vendors were again discussed. Several food vendors were mentioned; they are all different types of food from what is available in town. Someone mentioned that the type of people to purchase food from the vendors are not the same crowd that would sit down to a meal at the local restaurants. So there shouldn’t be a competition thing between them.
- Michelle could pipe music from MCC Thrift Store.
- The Grove could do something??
- May need to have the sign patched if we don’t do it weekly.
- Richard Garland is a good resource for this.

Margaret said we need someone with a passion for this that will take the ball and run with it. Jayne and Cindy are willing to do so. They will contact vendors and come up with a plan by the next meeting.

Fire Sales: Last year we provided the Porta-Jons and a map marking those and food, with some coupons at the top. The coupon vendors remarked they had no response from the coupons. It was suggested the coupons might be valid not just the day of the sales, but good through the street market dates. That might bring some people that are concentrating on the sales back into town at a later date.

Save-the-Date Cards: It was suggested we prepare Save-the-Date cards again; the response on them last year was very favorable. This year we should consider having them ready by the sale date (May 21) and promote all the summer events as well as the ones for the rest of the year.

Business Changes: It was reported that Violet's Attic will be closing; Cindy McClure will be having a cash and carry business there. Rumor has it a motorcycle shop will be coming to the former Honest Print site. We still have several empty spots downtown. Some of the business owners are concerned that when things are just starting to pick up we might be taking a downturn again.

Our next meeting will be April 7 at 7:30 a.m. at Liberty Gathering Place to wrap up things for the April 19th annual meeting.