**West Liberty Business Association Meeting 9-8-16 @ Liberty Gathering Place**
(Attendance: Ryan Berry, Chris Anders, Tami Wenger, Mark Boyer, Sherry (Highland Country Store), Margaret Hager)

**Labor Day Festival recap**
Improvements – People didn’t come up to the table because we weren’t selling anything. Had to work to get them to come up and talk and visit. Would like to move down to the corner of Main and Ballpark for more traffic. Ryan talked to Emmett with the Lions Club about possibly moving into the shelter house with the Lions Club to improve communication. Ryan suggested putting a float in the parade for MyWestLiberty.com rather than get a booth next year if we aren’t able to get a more prominent booth spot.

Business in the downtown shops was way up on Saturday evening. Weather was perfect. Festival seemed to last longer each day, especially Monday. Large crowds still around as late as 4pm on Monday.

**Feedback from Facebook Post “What do you want to see in downtown West Liberty?”**
Lots of interest in fast food options, burgers, Starbucks, light lunch options, few mentioned going to Bellefontaine to eat, but coming to West Liberty to shop because there’s no good lunch options. Also a few mentions for village pools/splash pads. An auto parts store mention. More pizza. Drive-thru option. Bookstore. Craft/Quilting store.

**Tour of Homes**
One house just dropped out due to an unexpected surgery by the homeowner. Tami volunteered to reach out to the Castles to see if they would be a last minute replacement. Also might ask Marie’s if they’d be willing to open their factory for the Tour of Homes. Subcommittee meeting later this week on Friday evening, but they’re a little behind because of a couple of key subcommittee members being unavailable recently. Plan to get a story in the papers ASAP to request more volunteers and promote it. Also planning on putting ads in area newspapers again. Ryan and Chris suggested putting more money towards Facebook sponsored posts this year than in year’s past because of the targeting options. Subcommittee still needs to decide on a price for tickets.

The Greenhouse reached out and asked if they could handle the flower pots year-round and Ryan told her yes.

**Surplus Money Ideas**
There is a growing surplus of money each year because of the successes of our recent events and advertising efforts. It’s been awhile since we talked about how we could spend these additional dollars to support/increase business in West Liberty. Currently, there is over $5,000 available in the WLBA account. Here are some ideas presented at the meeting: new West Liberty maps (already in production, should cost in the neighborhood of $300), better Christmas decorations, more Christmas lights, more Facebook ads and promotions around our events, produce promotional “Visit West Liberty” or “West Liberty History” videos, Give the Bicentennial Celebration a boost, What can we do to make the Bicentennial Celebration like an additional Labor Day Festival, but downtown to the benefit of our member businesses all weekend long? Talk about closing down the street in front of the firehouse like they used to for community movie nights in the mid-2000’s and making that the Bicentennial headquarters. Ryan will attend the next Bicentennial meeting on Aug. 29th and present some of these ideas and gather more info for the next WLBA meeting. There was also suggestions that if the Bicentennial Celebration is a success, creating a new annual event downtown hosted by the WLBA, such as a Community BBQ, or tying the local farmers and agriculture into a meal, Farmer’s Market or something similar with a festival feel with live music, food trucks, games, etc.

Next WLBA Meeting is the 1st Thursday in October (the 6th), rather than the 2nd due to the Tour of Homes meeting on Friday and Saturday (the 14th and 15th). That should give us time to do some last minute promoting of the Tour of Homes and make one last call for volunteers. Meeting starts at 7:30 a.m. at Sweetie Pie’s.