**West Liberty Business Association –** Meeting Minutes

November 11, 2016, 7:30 a.m.

Liberty Gathering Place

**Present:** Officers: President Ryan Berry (Berry Digital Solutions), Vice President Chris Anders (Berry Digital Solutions), Treasurer Mark Boyer (Shine FM), Secretary Katie Neer (Solomon’s Garage), Members: Sherry Forsythe (Highland Country Store, Michelle Neer (MCC Thrift), Roberta Yoder (Bobbi’s Bungalow and Yoder Concrete), Diana Wilkins (Kara Lynn’s), Christy Huffman (County Classifieds)

**Tour of Homes Wrap-Up:** Katie reported that attendance was up by 25% at the Tour of Homes this year, with 125 people going through. Expenses were down too. Mark Boyer reported the profit was $1700. We decided to donate $200 to the Historical Society for their next phase of renovations and use the other $1500 made during this event to work on videos and other improvements on the Historic page of mywestliberty.com which will help promote the Historical Society’s renovations as well. The boosted Facebook posts we ran before the tour successfully helped promote to people all over the state.

**Christmas preview follow-up:** Last weekend was the Christmas preview. Next year we should ask Bob Rabenstein if there is any way to decorate downtown prior to that event. We also need to do more during the preview to draw traffic to downtown for those days.

**Christmas in the Village:**

* Sound System – Ryan Berry will coordinate with Michelle Neer and Bob Rabenstein to be sure we have everything worked out to play Christmas music throughout the holiday season and to announce the parade. Ryan suggested we hire some musicians to play live music on the sidewalk downtown and add to the holiday ambience on Saturdays. Ryan is coordinating this.
* Advertising – Diana Wilkins told Bob Chapman with Bellefontaine Examiner to get info to include in color ad this year from the website. WLBA will pay $150 towards that ad. Ryan and Chris will keep website, Facebook up to date promoting events. Katie will send pics to Chris. Christy Huffman with County Classifieds brought a proof to the meeting. We made a few edits to it and purchased an ad to promote WL Christmas events and shopping local for the holiday season to run for 4 weeks. The board felt this was a good use of funds. We are not printing out a flyer this year but will continue to pass out save-the-dates to customers. Katie will prepare a press release this weekend on the activities. Ryan and Chris will also do a Shop Local campaign like they did last year.
* Santa – Nancy Smith and Jim Hoffman are in charge of the Santa Claus portion of the evening
* Décor – Bob Rabenstein plans to put up wreaths / Christmas décor again this year when he can. Alicia Brehm from Hillside is planning to decorate planters year round. Diana said that she is welcome to use basic Christmas décor that Nancy and Julie purchased last year in her arrangements for Christmas. Mark Boyer and Margaret encouraged us to look into having out of town local businesses decorate empty storefronts for Christmas season, or at least for the parade. The storefronts could be decorated for Christmas past as well. They could have things set up inside or be a tempura painting on the glass.
* Luminaries – Margaret Hager will set out luminaries prior to the 5k and the parade. Chris will make a Facebook post encouraging residents to collect jugs and set out luminaries if on the parade route.
* Parade – The theme of the parade this year ties in nicely with the Bicentennial – 200 years of Christmas Past. Floats can be decorated for Christmas in any year in the past 200 years.

Diana Wilkins said John Pond will be the announcer again. We need two volunteers to line up the parade at Lion’s Park and get the order run downtown to John before the parade. John will coordinate with Katie on Facebook. Tami Wenger will choose three judges for the parade from the Bicentennial committee. Chris will follow up with her on that. The cash prizes for best parade floats will be $100, $75 and $50. Greg Blaker from Peoples Savings & Loan was chosen to be the Grand Marshall. Ryan & Chris confirmed that Greg humbly accepted the honor. Ryan will coordinate with Lowell Buck to get a car for the Grand Marshall. Katie will ask Margaret to get a gift for the Grand Marshall.

* Food – Janet Young contacted us on behalf of Church of God. They want to organize the bean soup dinner this year in the firehouse and the firemen will provide drinks. Alex suggested we provide another food option for the younger crowd, in addition to food provided by Quest and The Grove. Ryan confirmed the Flying Pepper will be set up during the parade. Chris will have some signs printed up that say “Food Truck” on them to help guide people to the food truck.
* 5k – Ryan has coordinated with Mark Nelson about the Luminaire run. Ryan will confirm that we do not order too many t-shirts this time. Mark Boyer will sent out bills to 5k sponsors when Mark Nelson provides the list.

**Bicentennial:** Businesses are encouraged to get involved planning the Bicentennial Celebration for next year. Now is the time to get involved. Businesses are encouraged to decorate like a business that was in their location sometime in the past 200 years.

**Website:** We are posting something on the website about the Turkey Raffle because we have been getting many questions about it. Chris and Ryan will reach out to Historical Society and Lion’s Club about creating subpages for their organizations since we receive many questions on the website about their events/activities.

**Other:** We will work to play music from new speakers for events downtown throughout the year.

Diana suggested we have some signs installed in the downtown area suggesting where people can park. Ryan said we will work on making that happen in 2017. We need to coordinate with Village council and police to make sure the Public Restrooms at the Town Hall are open during downtown events and busy times. We need to get new brochures printed.

**The next monthly meeting will be Thursday, Dec 8 at 7:30a.m. at Sweetie Pie’s.**