

Albion Chamber of Commerce-Board Meeting Minutes – October 9, 2023

Members Present: Chris Magnuson (P), Sharon Leitch
Kay Craig, Steve Hook, Mariah Keirn, Jordan Hartieroad
Absent: Pattie Gatman, Carla Fiandt (VP), Sandy Petrie
Guest Members: None

Meeting was called to order at the Central Noble board room by Chris at 12:02 pm.

Minutes/Treasurer Report: Minutes from the September 11, 2023, meeting was reviewed along with the treasurer report. Mariah made a motion to approve the minutes of the September meeting and accept the treasurer's report. Sharon seconded; motion approved.

Treasurer's Report:

Beginning Balance (8/1/23): **\$12,259.71**

Revenue: **\$0.00**

Expenses: **\$900.00**

Town of Albion—Baby Box donation - \$500.00

Noble House—30th anniversary donation - \$100.00

Sugar Grove Church of God—Addiction bible donation - \$300.00

Bank Balance (10/2/23): **\$11,359.71**

(Note: Distributed budgeted donation of \$500.00 to Albion STAR Team after meeting)

Correspondence:

Received the following thank you letters: (1) Noble House for our 39th anniversary donation of \$100.00 (\$45,000.00 raised prior to a match); (2) Hickory Recovery Center for the case of bibles, \$300.00 donation; (3) Town of Albion, \$500.00 donation for Safe Haven Baby Box.

Old Business:

Halloween Party Oct. 31, 2023: Carla reports that all is well with planning. The event time has been moved to 6:30 pm – 8 pm from 7 pm – 8:30 pm to provide more access for people done with Trick or Treating. May encourage more families to attend.

Christmas in the Village, Saturday, Dec. 2, 2023: Mariah with help from the Central Noble School, is planning this year's event. The event will remain the same but change to a Saturday to avoid Friday conflicts. Jamie Howard will be assisting Mariah. This year's theme is "Giving Back in the Village." Kevin (REMC) made the comment to Mariah that moving the event to Saturday may reduce public participation. A planning meeting is scheduled today, Oct. 9th, at 4:30 pm at the Central Noble Administrative Office's board room. The school would like to encourage kids associated with sports activities and volunteers to be in the parade—this is a way to give back to the community for their support throughout the year. Will be having Lori Gagen update the Chamber website and event form. Will be reaching out to past parade participants starting in October. Already sending out emails to students and communication on Facebook.

Small Business Saturday/Townwide sales Nov. 25, 2023: Pattie wasn't present to report. However, Chris informed the board of what she heard from Pattie. The project is a go. The event will run from 10 am – 2 pm. Pattie is preparing prize baskets and give aways. The downtown businesses are eager to participate.

Town-Wide Garage Sales to continue: Chris led discussion amongst the board about their desire to keep having this event. This event will be held on May 2,3,4, 2024. The consensus was unanimous. Chris stated that she is aware of other Chambers supporting similar events in their communities. Chris will become chair of the Town-Wide Garage Sales, logistics will be handled quickly with her Excel spreadsheet and map production. On

May 11th, the Chamber has their Good Will Donation Truck, Albion Town-Wide Clean Up, and Electronics Disposal (supported by Noble Co. Disposal) at the Town Hall.

Good Will Truck vs. Arc Taking event over: There was discussion on whether to do away with Good Will in exchange for making donations to local charities/organizations, with various names spoken—Helping Hands (Rome City), Bargain Shop (Kendallville), Common Grace Ministries, Cougar Closet (clothes), Miracle Tree, ARC, etc. Potential problems discussed include logistics, how to get donations to these groups, how to store them until they are distributed, and having people pick up their stuff. Kay Craig is the chair for the Truck Donation and suggested moving this activity to The Arc's parking lot. She is willing to try this idea out and to see what donations others may need and then take. It was decided to do away with the Good Will truck and move the event to The Arc's parking lot.

4-County Chamber Membership Update: Chris provided the Board and mainly for Jordan's sake a review of the situation with the 5-County Chamber membership receiving a letter (Sept. 19, 2023) sent to them by the Kendallville Chamber, written by Julia Tipton, proposing a \$35 per member fee payable to Kendallville (for operational expenses). Chris shared how the other four County Chambers led by Avilla's Chamber President Kevin Kelly met to discuss how to move forward while continuing a group relationship without the Kendallville Chamber. The 4-County Chamber will not be paying the \$35 admin fee. Kevin has created a 1-page membership application form. Chris read a list of eleven Albion Chamber members who are current members of the 5-County Chamber until the end of 2023.

New Business:

New Members: Chris shared with the Board how she has been giving out Chamber memberships to new businesses that include free memberships throughout the rest of 2023 and all of 2024. Some of the new businesses include Danijo's Thread Shop, Lucus Deck Reality, Dude's Corner and Taylor Homes, both in the same building, and Butterfly Alley Gifts.

Courthouse Square Fountain out of commission: Chris shared with the Board that the water line has been damaged, possibly by on-going construction, and therefore, no water will be supplied to the fountain throughout 2023 and 2024.

Chamber not doing enough for members: Patty discussed with Chris her belief that the Chamber isn't doing enough for its members. Chris reminded the Board that Industries pay \$12/year and others pay \$5/year per 125 members (most of those being out of town). It was suggested due to the current treasury balance we may consider providing two free meals at the Annual Chamber Dinner. The cost for this option will be investigated. It was mentioned that we should give donations to support businesses instead of non-related causes, such as the donation for bibles. We could support craft activities. The Chamber could offer quarterly luncheons like Whitley Co. does and provide training, such as HR topics. The Albion Chamber used to hold monthly open meetings, with lackluster attendance. It was also suggested we create a membership survey with Lori Gagen's help. A sub-committee could help create questions (this will be added as a future agenda item). Chris does provide a value-added service of resharing social-medial posts on Facebook. Jordan said she could help with this. Chris will make Jordan another FaceBook admin for our page.

Announcements/Functions/Dates/Events:

The Fire station will be holding a pancake and sausage fundraiser this Saturday October 14. Kay also asked if there is a problem with homelessness in the community. The Arc has had people camping in their back yard and have had catalytic converters stolen off of vehicles.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 1:02 pm.

Next Meeting: Next meeting will be November 13th at noon at the CN Central Office board room.

Submitted: Steven Hook