

Albion Chamber of Commerce-Board Meeting Minutes - September 11, 2023

*Members Present: Chris Magnuson (P), Sharon Leitch(T)
Pattie Gatman, Steve Hook, Carla Fiandt (VP), Mariah Keirn
Absent: Kay Craig, Sandy Petrie(S), Jordan Hartleroad
Guest Members: Lori Gagen, Jacob Ihrie*

Meeting was called to order at the Central Noble board room by Chris at 12:00 pm.

Minutes/Treasurer Report: Minutes from the August 14, 2023, meeting was reviewed along with the treasurer report. Mariah made a motion to approve the minutes of the August meeting and accept the treasurer's report. Carla seconded; motion approved.

Treasurer's Report:

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

Revenue: **\$0.00**

Expenses: **\$0.00**

Bank Balance (9/1/23): **\$12,259.71**

Correspondence:

No correspondence shared.

Old Business:

Halloween Party Oct. 31, 2023: Chris discussed needing help with this year's party. Chris finished and submitted the Albion Town Special Event application. Carla will purchase stuff, obtain judges and an emcee. Most board members said they will be there to help. The event time has been moved to 6:30 pm – 8 pm from 7 pm – 8:30 pm to see if attendance improves.

Christmas in the Village, Saturday, Dec. 2, 2023: Mariah shared how the Central Noble School is taking over event planning from Tammy Luce. 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.**" The ongoing construction at the County Courthouse may pose some limitations with the event. Bathroom facilities will likely be off limits. Mariah will be contacting Gary Leatherman. Will likely be purchasing some port-a-potties. Businesses will be solicited. Lori Gagen or Jamie Howard will be updating the Christmas in the Village Facebook page. Doc's Hardware Rental will serve as Santa's visiting spot. Mariah has already filled out and submitted the Albion Town Special Event application. Tammy will be helping with event planning and sharing her knowledge. Steve Hook said he would help with the parade lineup.

Small Business Saturday/Townwide sales Nov. 25, 2023: Pattie reported on her project for Small Business Saturday. The event will run from 10 am – 2 pm. She is proposing a \$650 budget and receiving help from the Albion STAR Team for a banner. She would like to make this an annual event. She is working with Lori Gagen to prepare a map of downtown businesses planning on participating in this event. The map front has business locations and, on the back, contains squares for businesses along with their hours of operation and QC codes. This will serve as a punch-card system and bingo board. She wants to make sure new businesses are included on the map. Also include info on what the Chamber does for businesses.

The Townwide Garage sale was discussed next. Pattie isn't in favor of the Chamber sponsoring this event. She shared how other Chambers don't run these events, but are community run. Chamber Board members shared their opinion of still wanting to support the Garage Sale. Years ago, there used to be "Sidewalk Days"—we need to reconsider this event. Mariah motioned to approve the \$650 budget. Pattie seconded the motion, the motion passed not unanimously. Pattie proposed we host a late winter event for businesses to network and plan for the upcoming year. She proposes a budget of \$1000.00. No motion considered.

Hickory Treatment Center Bible Fundraiser: Chris shared that the old nursing home within the North Ridge development is being used for recovering addicts. She was approached by Fred Languor who volunteers his time there. They need special addiction bibles, \$25 per bible, for their residents. Steve motioned to donate \$300. It was seconded by Chris, motion passed with 2 opposed and 4 in favor.

New Business:

Presentation by Town Manager Jacob Ihrie: Jacob provided ongoing project updates:

- S Orange St will be reconstructed from Hazel St to Summit (3–6-month project in 2025-26). Old businesses along S Orange St that have basements will need shored up.
- (2) A Baby Box is planned for the Fire Dept. via an Indiana Homeland Security grant. Still need to raise an additional \$3,000. This will be the 104th location within the State. Locations having baby boxes within the County include Ligonier and Kendallville. Thanks goes to Noble County Sheriff's Dept. The Chamber Board considered a motion to donate \$500 toward the baby box. Motion passed unanimously.
- (3) Unlocking Housing—New housing expected within the next 6 months to a year within the Village of White Oaks subdivision, Albion. This provides a 2.1% housing stock increase. A program called Housing Hub, "720 Club," provides homeowners with financial assistance when they apply for their first USDA loan. Home prices average \$275,00 in the Village of White Oaks. Jacob said we have great potential for providing homes for those living outside the County. Jacob's goal for Albion is 300 new homes over 30 years.
- (4) Façade Grants—provided a grant to the Public Defender's Office.

Letter from Kendallville Chamber: Chris talked about a letter she and the other county Chambers received from the Kendallville Chamber written by Kendallville Chamber Board of Directors proposing a \$35 per member fee (for operational expenses) per Chamber for an All-Noble County Membership. The main benefit years ago for joining Kendallville's Chamber involved insurance discounts. This is no longer offered. Next week, the other four County Chambers lead by Avilla's Chamber President Kevin Kelly will meet to discuss how to move forward while continuing a group relationship without the Kendallville Chamber. The Albion Chamber Board is not interested in pursuing Kendallville's plan.

Noble House 30 Year Anniversary: Chris shared information on an upcoming fundraising event called "Denim in Diamonds" celebrating Noble House's 30-year anniversary. Chris suggested the Board make a one-time donation. Chris made a motion for \$100 which was seconded by Carla. Motion passed unanimously.

Announcements/Functions/Dates/Events:

None discussed.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 12:55 pm.

Next Meeting: Next meeting will be October 9th at noon at the CN Central Office board room.

Submitted: Steven Hook