

## Elizabethtown Area Chamber of Commerce

### Meeting Minutes

May 14th, 2020

**Present:** Matt Denlinger, John Yoder, Neil Ketchum; Bob Enck, Michele Balliet, Bob Enck, Carissa Hollinger, Tina Lutter, Toni Tice, Keith Yocum, Emily Drobknock, Natalie Dixon, Heather Hohenwarter, Linda Lownsbery, Meghan Philips, Frank Disorientate, Deb Dupler, Sean Dolan

**Absent:** Denise Thompson, Glenn Bootay

Call to Order- Tina Lutter

Approval of April 9th, 2020 Minutes-Moved to approve by John Yoder, Second by Michele Balliet. Approved

Approval of Treasurer's Report- Matt Denlinger

- Balance sheet- the asset side we gave out \$5000.00 in grants and was accounted for in the grant budget.
- We have 2 months left of the budget year. Income statement with the project net includes a 14,000.00 profit for an event we have not had. Heather stated that there is a specific line item for money collected for the annual dinner, so that this money would not be absorbed into the operating fund.
- Treasurer's report- moved to approve by John Yoder, Second by Michele Balliet. Approved.

Old Business

- None

New Business

- Executive Director Resignation- acknowledged the receipt of Heather's letter of resignation
- Chamber Operations Continuity Plan- the Exec committee discussed with Heather last week to design and plan for different scenarios for moving the Chamber forward. Tina noted that much of the discussion was on the financial status of the Chamber and how to maintain the momentum of the chamber and the financial health of the Chamber. John Yoder reached out to West Donegal Township and was able to reconfirm the financial support from the Township to the Chamber.
- In our discussions it became apparent one of our successful roles was in providing digital media support to promote our programing and our businesses.

Proposed plan: (see formal draft in board documents)

1. We would not hire a full-time Exec. Director at this time. We are concerned about hiring a part-time Exec. Director as there are many challenges to hire someone in a part-time role. Would like to consider an Exec. Director in 6 months.
2. We would hire a part-time Digital Media position that could possibly move into a permanent position later. We would like to have this person to assist with continuity and to keep a Chamber presence during this difficult time.

Discussion:

- Carissa would like us to consider applicants because many people might be looking for positions now and if we wait we may lose good candidates. Would it be worth considering candidates now? Heather has the job description available. Heather agreed that there might be individuals who are interested in a part-time to leading to a full-time position.

- Michele - post Covid-19 will be a new reality with change. She cautions that as we search for a new Executive Director, we seek someone who is willing to accept change and that the person doesn't rely on 'how we have always done it'. A new leader needs to guide through change.
- Michele noted the changes from March to May- from having hiring shortages in March to now having an abundance of individuals who may be seeking jobs. Michele stated that someone who can lead us through change and chaos.
- Heather noted that we should look at the money we have in our budget, conserve resources and then to offer a competitive salary to bring in the right candidate.
- John noted that we have a phenomenal digital media presence. The nexus of our conversation was to focus on the virtual presence now because that's what most people see from the Chamber. Therefore, our priority was to engage/hire a Digital Media specialist first then Exec. Director.
- Sean approves of hiring a social media person prior to hiring an executive director. As a new Chamber member much of what he saw was the digital media posts and noted their importance. He agreed with the comments that Michele made, especially in a post-covid world. Hiring the digital media person will allow us to sort out the best possible fit for an Exec. Director.
- Carissa- from the downtown committee perspective: need to have an Exec. Director who has relationship skills. She expressed a concern that if we don't have an ED sooner we will lose the relationships we have built. She would really like us to consider moving forward with hiring an ED sooner than later. Carissa mentioned her Card campaign to each small business, showing the Chamber support and noting resources.
- Emily noted that it is extremely difficult for small businesses and people are in a panic mode. There are many options facing small business owners and a lot of misinformation. Having the Chamber help to clarify information and to support small businesses is extremely important.
- John stated that it is exceedingly important that all the members of this board to step up to assist with some of the roles, while we are in this transition. Our goal as a board is to be ambassadors for the chamber and to educated constituents on all the work the Chamber is doing. Often people may miss how much we are doing pending the format and use of their social media feeds. To the best of our ability we need to be champions of the Chamber.
- Tina reiterated the concern of hiring an ED at this time, pending our financial health in the future. Bob liked the idea of a DMS as temporary and would like to get the message out that we are looking for an Exec. Director. We may hire an individual or a 3<sup>rd</sup> party entity to move us forward. The new reality is that we may have many applicants who are willing to work for a short period of time as they are transitioning from positions as well.
- Emily asked if there is a list of responsibilities and tasks that would need to be continued by a part-time ED or by the Board? Tina responded that we would develop this list once we decide regarding hiring a DMS and ED.
- Heather created an Exit Plan that might be helpful in prioritizing the work than needs to move forward. Heather will work with each of the committee chairs to discuss the work needed to be completed.
- Deb agreed with Carissa that if the perfect candidate for ED presented themselves then we should move forward. However, the DMS is a priority. Any ED would need to work within our financial paradigm.
- Tina asked how we would advertise for the positions and asked for advice from the HR specialist on the board.
- Linda stated from an HR perspective she supported a digital media specialist – we need the team to provide the content for this platform. We will need to support hiring an Executive Director in time. Referrals are the strongest right now. Concern about having an outsourced person- may cost more money. Use our digital presence to advertise the positions. Toni agreed with Linda but noted that applicants may be seeking benefits.
- John Yoder made a motion to advertise both positions that they are temporary and part-time. Second by Lind Lownsbery. Approved.

- Will send out job description to the board for dissemination.
- We need to prepare a message to the full board that outlines our continuity plan.
- Heather stated we need to send a strong message about the positive benefits of the chamber and that are still working on the member's behalf. Heather has a draft of this message and will work with Tina on getting it out to our Board.
- Our next step is to formulate the messaging on continuity plan for the Board and final descriptions for dissemination.

#### Executive Committee – Tina Lutter

#### Downtown Business Committee – Emily Drobknock

- May- checked in with everyone. Mentioned Leadercast and how it's being offered.
- Wellness walk is shifting to wellness program via social media. We now have zoom interviews with health and wellness businesses and will be posting the interviews. Use the Discover Etown page and the Chamber Etown pages. Tina asked that we brand it consistently with the Chamber guidelines. Asked Heather to provide the guidelines to the chamber and to Carissa to be sure these interviews look like the Chamber.
- Introducing the faces behind businesses—introducing the chamber board members – in a who is behind the scenes.
- What is it that the Chamber needs right now- to support their business strategy. How do we come up with a digital media plan, use this to help the committee define their work?

#### Events Committee - Toni Tice

- Decided that we will not have the annual event this year but looking for 2020. Would like to plan an event in August, September. Would like to assist the businesses on how they will come back and open. Thoughts – could we have zoom events? Different sectors get together and meet. The committee will work on this

#### Elizabethtown Borough - Neil Ketchum

- Special meeting tonight to discuss various resolution related to Covid
- Refinancing of Bonds
- The 56 North Market project is on hold
- The Industrial Development Authority to leverage some money and different finance options to assist with that project.
- Conoy Crossing items are coming up on the Borough agenda
- Most of the work right now is responding to Covid-19 and the cost of the changes to submit for reimbursement. All normal functions are continuing, except public access to buildings has been curtailed to appointment only.
- We are not issuing zoning permits so some of that business is slowing down.
- Question from Heather- from an earlier zoom call- what is the Chamber role in the conversation of whether businesses should open. What is the statement of facts and how do we get a message out. What is the Borough's position? There are multiple views – local municipalities do not control the opening and closing of businesses. The insurance company controls the businesses liability insurance and how it will be impacted. Each individual business needs to make their own decisions. Local government shouldn't be involved because we don't have any controls. The resolutions that he has seen has been to support the quickest opening as soon as possible. The goal of the Borough should not complicate the opening of any businesses. Tonight, they will look at drafting a resolution and bring up for discussion at the May 21, 2020 meeting. Very complicated guidelines and laws surround municipalities, businesses, etc. The most important conversation is that the state controls the licenses for many businesses. They will be in jeopardy if opening prior to the state mandates.

#### West Donegal Township – John Yoder

- Continued operations

- Building remains closed, however if the County moves to Yellow, then the building will open to the public according to the Yellow guidelines on Monday. Did sign a resolution to the governor that asks to move Lancaster county to Yellow. Urging the governor to move to yellow, not stating that we will go to Yellow. Echoed what Neil mentioned. There is discussion that the governor's mandate is unconstitutional, and could be challenged, but this will cost a lot of money.
- Construction has opened and the parking lot at Amazon is being finished.
- The big change for the Township is opening the building on a very limited basis with limited services
- Meetings are on line and will continue until into a green phase.
- Potential impact are the local taxes- this will impact their budget. Anticipate some change in employment tax and local service tax. The county is projecting a 14% reduction which will be significant. We won't see the impact until 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. The board is looking at revising their budget in response to the change in income.

#### Masonic Village- Tina Lutter

- MV serves a very vulnerable population, so they may not follow the same timeline for gradual opening and full opening.
- Difficult time for MV because they are having to really control and limit exposure to their residents and constituents.

Mount Joy Township – Deb Dupler- had to leave the meeting prior to commenting.

#### EASD – Michele Balliet

- Board meetings are held on zoom. Averaging 8-10 individuals from the public attending.
- Board passed a preliminary budget. Less than 1% increase over the 2019/20 expenditures. Very difficult to pass a budget prior to the state passes their budget.
- The perception that schools are saving a lot of money with the closure. This is true; however, we are still operating and still have expenses associated with educating our students during this time. While we are saving money – approximately \$700,000. we have a decrease in revenues, over \$800,000. So, we are operating at a loss of \$102,000. We are trying to make up this difference.
- There is built into the proposed 2020/2021 a tax increase of 2.75%. We will still have a deficit in funding. We will need to still use some of our fund balance to balance a budget. We will use 13% to fund the gaps. Included with the new budget proposal are several reductions within the budget. With this increase we are making several reductions in staffing, deferring technology purchases, athletic and activity purchases along with supply reductions and cuts.
- If we were to have a 0% increase in taxes (with reductions in expenses as outlined above) we would run at a deficient of 1.2 million dollars.
- With the 2.75% tax increase with a median home value of \$170,000.00 the increase would be \$84.00 per household. The final budget is posted for review and will meet 2 more times to give budget updates with final adoption being the end of June
- The school is closed to the public through June 30 by Governor's orders. The election board requested to use the schools, however, WARD 3 precinct will have their voting site at the Boro public works facility instead of the school.
- May 20, 2020 will honor the spring sports teams with the LL league. Will be lighting up the stadium score board in honor of these athletes. This will be a drive-by event—no one is allowed in the stadium as we are still in the Red zone.
- Graduation will be staged for our seniors. We are holding an outdoor event which will allow individual students and their families to walk across the stage during specific times. It will be pre-recorded and then compiled as a 'seamless' ceremony and broadcast on June 2 at 7pm.

Final comments from the Board:

- John – noted that the location for District 3 of the Township has changed from MV to the lower level of the township building.
- Carissa asked who will be speaking on behalf of the Chamber? Tina will be the spokesperson. Tina and Heather will be responding to any inquiries up until Tina's final date. After which Tina will be managing as the Admin.

Adjourned the meeting without a motion by Tina Lutter as the meeting extended beyond our normal 1hour and 30-minute timeframe.