

**BRILLION CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
BOARD MINUTES**

February 18th, 2015

Braun's Deer Run

12:00 PM

1) CALL TO ORDER:

Jason Ruebl called the meeting to order at 12:06 PM.

ROLL CALL: Present were Jason Ruebl, Bill Veit, Todd Brehmer, Jennifer Kolberg, Doug Neils, Mark Vechart, Wendy Allen & Vineta Cuane-Meyer. Also present were and Michelle Ruebl, Cheryl Welch & Nick Madison-nonvoting. Absent was Gary Kabat.

2) APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Motion – Mark Vechart made Motion to Approve Agenda. Seconded by Doug Neils. Call vote taken. Motion carried. Agenda Approved.

3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES –February 18th, 2015 Chamber Board Meeting.

Motion –Jennifer Kolberg made motion to approve Minutes. Seconded by Doug Neils. Call vote taken. Motion carried unanimously.

4) PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Jason Ruebl

All reports today are included in the agend, no extra report this month.

5) SECRETARY-TREASURER REPORT:

Michelle Ruebl presented the February Secretary and Treasurer Financial Report. Quickbooks balance sheet could not be printed due to computer issues.

Motion –Bill Veit made a motion to approve the February Secretary & Financial Reports. Seconded by Mark Vechart. Call vote taken. Motion carried unanimously.

6) COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. Business After Five: Business After Five for Join Me Realty has narrowed down schedules of all of the agents and have a final date picked. Thursday April 16th. Mark Vechart asked if it will be join with Bullseye. Michelle Ruebl stated that it is not, however Kim Simmons will likely have her area open if anyone would like a brief tour. Brillion Nature Center & Village Hearthstone are on the list for this year yet.

B. Beer, Wine & Cheese Mark Vechart mentioned that he has not seen much for advertising on this. He thought there were more email and reminders last year. Cheryl Welch said it is on the Public library's message board. Todd Brehmer said he thought he saw it on EconoFoods billboard as well. Nick Madison stated a handout it was in with the pizza sales from the Optimist Pizza Make recently.

7) NEW BUISNESS:

A. Next Meeting: March 18th – Brillion Nature Center – Hunan Chinese Restaurant

B. Welcome new Board Members. –With nearly a fully staffed Board meeting took time to introduce ourselves to the new Board members.

C. Membership Renewal – Michelle stated that we have had 24 associate members out of 144 letters sent renew. We have also had 60 out of 94 letters sent to regular members renew so far. She does plan to send the second notice out as soon as the computer is fixed and Quickbooks is functional. Each member is entered into Thunderbird (new only), updated in Quickbooks, Updated in the mail chimp database and updated on the website. Michelle asked the Board if they want 2nd letters sent out to the Associates. Todd Brehmer talked about the cost of postage and how the deadline for Open enrollment is now over anyway. Mark Vechart asked about possibly emailing all of the members. Michelle Ruebl stated that emails are on some fo the applications, however not in a ready database to use. It would be fairly manual. Doug Neils mentioned that it with Open enrollment closed he doesn't see anyone else responding anyway. Jennifer Kolberg stated she is not in favor of sending more resources to the Associates if they haven't responded. Michelle Ruebl also stated that typically the insurance companies call or email to verify they are still members.

Motion: Mark Vechart made a motion to send a 2nd mailing notice to the Associate Members that did not renew yet. Bill Veit seconded the motion. Mixed results verbally. Jason Ruebl asked for a hand vote. 3 voted yes, 3 voted no. Jason Ruebl, President broke the tie with a Yes vote. **Motion carried.** He also made his opinion noted that if the results are insignificant this year, that we do not do a second mailing next year. Mark Vechart reminded Michelle Ruebl of an email about the membership letter not coming to his attention. Michelle stated she can investigate once computer is running again. Doug also mentioned he doesn't think the renewal is coming to his attention. Michelle Ruebl mentioned to the group that we do have a brochure but it is slightly outdated. The Board asked for it to be reviewed for next month. Cheryl Welch also asked if there were any handouts we can give her for sharing the membership opportunity. Michelle Ruebl will check into it.

D. Budget 2015 Review. – Budget appears correct. Todd Brehmer asked to hold off on budget vote until computer is discussed. He would like to see the cost added into the budget as a one time line item.

E. Computer: Mark Vechart asked Michelle Ruebl about the warranty. Michelle stated it is her understanding that the computer has a 1 year warranty with it. Any other warranty beyond that would come at a cost. The IT Dept could quote a service plan for the year or they can charge by the hour if a problem arises.

Motion was made by Mark Vechart to get a new computer from the IT Dept with a maximum of \$700. Doug Niels seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Bill Veit recommended that the budget accommodate upgrades if they are needed. Jennifer Kolberg recommended to allow for up to \$750. Mark Vechart amended his motion to change to \$750. **Motion carried**

D. Computer

Motion: Todd asked for an amended budget to include the compute for \$750. Doug seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

F. Annual Chamber Bucks Review. Bill Veit mentioned that he has seen the demand for the Chamber Bucks go way down. They had been abused in the past, which is the reason the discount was given a few years ago. Michelle Ruebl stated she does not know how much the Credit Union has. She stated that Scrip is no longer sold at the Credit Union so its something we should check into for Chamber Bucks as well. Jason Ruebl offered to talk to the financial institutions.

G. Bill Veit. Bill Veit had agreed to take Jason Levash's remaining term for this year. However he is announcing that Bank Mutual is closing by the middle of May. He will no longer be able to stay on the Board once he relocates. He is unsure of where that will be at this time and it could happen sooner. Michelle Ruebl did talk to some members already. She encouraged the Board to think of some people that may be interested in finishing out this term.

H. City Council Meeting Discussion. Jason Ruebl stated he had this added to the agenda as a result of a call from a business owner, Mike Buboltz of Hardware Plus. He raised concerns due to an article in the paper from the last city meeting. The RDA was approved to use \$200 in a previous City meeting. It was brought back up recently and the council rescinded the funds. Mayer was not at the meeting this occurred at hence it was put back into the last meeting. This brought controversy on why the board is voting again on something they just voted on. It became a heated discussion. Within this discussion it was stated by an alderman that the downtown was dead. The city should no longer be focusing on downtown and should only be focusing on Hwy 10. Mike would like support from the Chamber and fellow businesses owners to attend the next City meeting. Mike is willing to do the talking. Several have moved from downtown: Endries, Groskopp and now Bank Mutual will be closing. Todd Brehmer asked that we be clear on Chamber intent. Is it for the Chamber to show the Council support for downtown? Bullseye has traffic, kreative knots seems very busy as well. Bill Veit stated the Chamber has spent money on the developing of downtown in recent years to show support to the city. Todd Brehmer feels we should support the Chamber. Mark Vechart mentioned it was only one city council member who stated such and we should remember that one voice may not reflect the whole city. Mark Vechart recommended the President of the Chamber be there to show support for all of the businesses. Cheryl Welch has followed up with some of the council members and they were more upset about the process than the funds. Larry, the alderman, is adamant that downtown is dying based on observations from prior travels. Citizens and businesses have strongly responded to this article. The RDA met afterwards and they have a strong desire to recreate the downtown. Hoping it is only one council member who will resist. Cheryl said there will likely be a good turnout at the next meeting and would appreciate Chamber support. She would like us to encourage people to support the growth of downtown by getting assistance on a construction page. Louis said she would like to see us support something concrete like updating downtown rather than feelings on what someone said. Tom Kees, Brad Grant and John School donated towards the planters which superseded the amount the city council had previously approved and then disapproved. A new baskets are created, the old wooden baskets are being replaced. Cheryl feels that the outcome will become a positive one. Jason Ruebl will send a President letter to the membership for supporting the downtown.

8) OLD BUSINESS:

A. Dues Letters 2nd set – Could not send out due to computer.

B. Chamber Audit: Chamber Audit officially passed.

9) City Updates -

A. Committee -2 Members and Hotel Cheryl Welch stated that we need from representative from the hospitality which will be Wendy Allen. Will also need 2 from the Chamber of Commerces. 2 people will be assigned from the city side. It is a small committee. 70% of funds collected from room tax are to be spent. The committee would choose how to spend this. 30% then will go toward administration costs with the city. Mark Vechart asked if some of it can be reallocated from our budget. Louis Kolberg is already on the committee. Cheryl Welch would like 2 more names from the Chamber. Todd Brehmer asked what the projected amount time will be needed for these meetings. Cheryl said they plan to meet every other month. Jason asked if we have anyone here that is willing to step up or someone from the general membership? Todd Brehmer state that as long as it doesn't interfere with tax season. Cheryl Welch also met with planning commission on a Special Meeting. They recognize 7 problematic areas: streets & roads, groundwater, residential housing, socioeconomic scale & commercial. Connecting downtown to Hwy 10. Industrial side –bring leaders in from the four major manufacturers together to create an industrial park. RDA is working on downtown and connecting to Highway 10. Goal si to have less empty buildings. Looked at assets-which fall around recreation. We have a strong manufacturer base. We are 20-30 miles from everywhere. Nature Center, parks, lakes, trails, close to Manitowoc and Green Bay, conservation club, Trip J's has hunting. We can use recreation theme as a way to bring more people to visit Brillion. We need office space for our industries; IT's, Accountants, etc. Stores to support the niche such as antiques, sporting goods, etc. Places people can shop. Next step is to bring all the players together on March 9th 6:30pm. RDA is meeting with the city council. They are asking for approximately 6 Chamber members to participate in the planning. Cheryl Welch will be the facilitator. 90 minutes will be planning to move to the next step. Michelle Ruebl asked who is all participating. Cheryl responded with the City Council members, RDA and chamber members.

B. Adopt-A-Basket covered in earlier discussion.

10) School District Update – Nick Madison – Nick stated that as a Board we have to have a growth mindset. We need to stay focused on that. Our strong public schools play a large role in that. The school is concerned about the Governor's budget. Revenues will be drastically cut to meet the demands. Last time payroll and benefits were cut. \$130,000 is expected to be cut this year which is equivalent to 3 teachers. Nick said that while they are cutting public schools ye they are increasing vouchers. They are also cutting Open Enrollment fees from districts who have their students move to other ones. Governor outlawed the tests which the schools have prepared for in the last 4 years. Huge negative factor on the schools. The referendum passed and new bids came in. Construction will start in next few weeks. School is focusing on manufacturing aspect. Manufacturers are concerned because they need skilled workers. Not everyone needs to go to college for a degree. Most kids really enjoy the STEM. Design and fundraising is underway. Will be great place to learn manufacturing at a young age.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion Mark Vechart moved to adjourn. Seconded by Vineta Cuane-Meyer. Call vote taken. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:43pm

Respectfully Submitted

Michelle Ruebl, Secretary/Treasurer – Brillion Chamber of Commerce