

Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce & CVB
Board of Directors
August 23, 2023

The Board of Directors of the Branson/Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau met Wednesday, August 23, 2023. Chairperson Cynthia Carson called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Tom Healey provided the opening prayer.

Review of Minutes – Pam Yancey moved to approve the minutes of the July 26, 2023, meeting as presented. Steve Critchfield seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Financial Report – Treasurer Phil Cox provided an overview of the current financials. Katie Hodges moved to approve the financial report as presented. Cassie Cunningham seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Ex-Officio Reports – City of Branson – City Administrator Cathy Stepp reported the 2024 budgeting process has begun. Utility improvements are moving forward in Hiawatha Heights. She also provided a brief update on the new police station renovation.

Tourism Community Enhancement District – District Chair Derek Smith reported their September board meeting will be held at the Village of Indian Point. The contract with the BLACC/CVB has been agreed upon by both parties, but still needs to be signed.

The TCED tax renewal is to be on Taney and Stone County ballots in November. A group has been formed to advocate for the renewal. TCED board and staff can only educate.

City of Hollister – Rick Ziegenfuss reported Hollister recently updated their promotional video. He thanked the Taney County Partnership for their advocacy work on the recreational marijuana tax initiatives, which all passed. Ziegenfuss provided updates on utilities, road work, etc.

Lobbyist Update – Will Marrs with Governmental Services Group provided a brief update on this year's session and what may be coming in the next session.

Membership Report – Janet Minor reviewed the report included in the meeting packet. We currently have 882 members. Pam Yancey moved to approve the membership drop list as presented. Phil Cox seconded the motion. All approved. Motion carried.

Champions of Commerce – Grant Sloan reported on the first Champions of Commerce meeting held earlier in August. The 90-minute gathering had approximately 30 stakeholders in attendance. Conversation mostly revolved around workforce development, convention center expansion and sports facilities. Sloan said the next step is to bring actionable strategies to the board for consideration. Jonas noted he is working with the City of Branson to hold a developer roundtable.

Proactive Government Committee Update – Committee Chair Pam Yancey discussed a coordinated effort to have pro-business people attend each Branson Board of Aldermen meeting. This has been talked about for years. Every meeting at city hall is important to our community and aldermen need to hear from our businesses. We are looking to engage several people so each would only need to attend a couple of meetings each year. This is not limited to our board members. Help spread the word and encourage other pro-business people in the community to get involved. A sign-up sheet will be at the September meeting. (Monica is the contact.)

Chairperson's Report – Chair Carson provided a brief update on the Search Committee and board nominations.

President/CEO Report – Interim President Jonas Arjes reported he and Mayor Milton recently had a productive meeting. He also expressed his appreciation of City Administrator Stepp and staff meeting with him and Rachel every two weeks.

Arjes thanked staff who played a part in helping get the recreational marijuana tax passed in all five jurisdictions. We look forward to bringing that strategy to help with the TCED renewal.

There are 732 BridgeUSA (J1) students in the area. An employer forum will be held October 12 to educate employers of the process. Kudos to J.T. who is doing a great job with this program. Last year about 60 attended the community event at Moonshine Beach. Over 260 attended this year's event.

Jonas provided an update on the Holtz Builders projects in the area.

Present: Evan Bradly, Cynthia Carson, Mike Combs, Bryan Cossiboom, Phil Cox, Steve Critchfield, Cassie Cunningham, Jon Davidson, Tracey Field, Robert Griffith, Tom Healey, Katie Hodges, Mike Patrick, Steve Scherer, Scott Skoglund and Pam Yancey

Absent: Clay Cooper, Joe Loth, Bay Mourer, Raj Patel, Brad Thomas, Craig Wescott and Wendy White

Ex-Officio Members Present: Derek Smith – TCED, Cathy Stepp – City of Branson, Rick Ziegenfuss – City of Hollister