



## Board of Directors Meeting September 22, 2009

Steve thanked Jeff Connell, Connell Heating and Air for sponsoring lunch and welcomed guests. Jeff talked about current tax credits available to homeowners for updating heating/cooling systems to more energy efficient ones. Jeff also offers 20% discounts on service to Seniors and Military, and is offering special pricing to Union County residents of \$59 for yearly heating and cooling maintenance.

Larry Long and Sherry Storer from Tusculum College gave an overview of the programs at Tusculum, which has campuses in Morristown and Knoxville, that could benefit residents of Union County. These include the “yellow ribbon” for military, non traditional students and GED students. The Gateway program is designed to advance non-degreed students through an AS to a BS and then on to a MS. Mr. Long will be meeting with Melissa Carter at the alternative school to detail the programs available. Mr. Long stressed that GED students are eligible for Lottery Grant money.

Call to order by Steve Thompson, Chairman of the Board @ 12:09 PM.

Members present: Burke, Goforth, Buckner, Cooper, Mills, Roe, Thompson, Mayor Lay, Steve Hill, and Graham

Members absent: Kelly Smith, Gibson, City of Maynardville, Erickson, Inklebarger, City of Plainview, Von Schipmann, Wine

Visitors present: Susan Oaks, Anthony Shuler, Jeff Cooper, Larry Long, Sherry Storer, Ed Medford, Diane Allen, Chantay Collins, Scott Vancel, Shonda Reed

Approval of Agenda: Motioned by Wayne; 2nd by Judy. Motion approved.

Steve reported new members: Byrd’s Mortuary, Joyce Meltabarger

Approval of June minutes: Wayne motioned to accept; Judy 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: Judy reported a starting balance of \$2923.18 and an ending balance of \$7,960.20 with the general balance at \$6045.20. It was noted that the chamber executive position is now current with salary. Jeff moved to accept the treasurer's report and Larry 2nd. Motion passed

President's Report: Julie reported on the following- **Rural Technology Assistance Program Grant**- The Chamber applied for grant funding to extend broadband to underserved or un-served areas in Union County that were identified from surveys taken last October. The grant announcements have not been made and over 160 counties applied for the funding. **Hotel/motel tax**: The county commission approved a resolution to request permission of the State General Assembly to create a Private Act for a hotel/motel tax. This will be discussed at the next legislative session beginning in January 2010. If approval is received, then Union County Commission will discuss adopting the Private Act. **Retail Marketing**- the Chamber has identified 10 retail targets and has begun a mail campaign. **Site Requirements and Economic Development**: The TVA sent a site reviewer to provide analysis of our web site. Overall, we scored well, but must improve the economic development link to include more demographic data and maps. The report is available for review in the Chamber Office.

## Board Action:

### Old Business:

Julie reported the Census Complete Count Committee is comprised of Ronnie Mincey, Von Schipmann, Julie and Mr. Cameron Parrish, Partnership Specialist with the US Census Bureau. More committee members are needed, as this group serves to validate the census process in Union County. The next scheduled meeting is set for Oct 29 at 10AM at the Chamber offices.

Jennifer reported that the cost for "blue Trailblazer signs" identifying directions for shopping, groceries, dining, etc will cost as follows: \$25 for the application; \$250 for the sign and \$50 for an annual maintenance fee. It was decided that the most important location in terms of tourist information and in terms of economic benefit, was at the intersection of SR33 and Sharps Chapel Road. After much discussion as to how to pay for the sign, Steve Hill agreed to pay for the application and the sign. Steve moved to apply for and post the sign at the 33/ Sharps Chapel Road in the SR easement directly across from the intersection and Wayne 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

Steve Hill reported that he, Wayne and Mayor Lay had worked on a raffle to benefit the Chamber. Due to the complexity of the paperwork necessary to hold a raffle in Tennessee, this event will not be held until late winter or early spring. Larry moved that an application is filed in the General Assembly to allow for a raffle to be held for the benefit of the Chamber and Wayne 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed. Steve distributed a description of the raffle item. Steve recommends that another fundraising event be planned as well.

Steve reported the Chamber received a state tourism grant of \$1025 which is a 50:50 matching grant for a total of \$2050. Dwain moved that the Chamber re-advertise in the Norris Lake Guide at a total cost of \$835 for a chamber cost of \$417.50. Wayne 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Dwain moved that the Chamber produce a historic drive tour brochure at a total cost of \$550 for a chamber cost of \$275 and Steve 2<sup>nd</sup>. Both motions passed.

Steve reported that he, Marilyn, Ron, and Julie visited one potential location and Julie made contact with NSCU about moving the Chamber. Since making those contacts, Julie had someone who might be interested in renting the remaining office in the current building. Dwain asked Mayor Lay about the possibility of the Historic Bank Building. The topic was tabled pending further information.

SOC grant money has been applied to update our economic development page. Julie will bring pricing for this to the next meeting.

Steve reported that Gov Bredesen had requested a letter of support for federal ARRA broadband grant money. Since the deadline was prior to the chamber meeting, Julie mailed a letter from the Chamber. Mayor Lay reported that all grant applications must be approved by County Commission prior to submitting for review. A lengthy discussion followed regarding timing of grant due dates and scheduling of the county commission meeting. Dwain asked how other counties were mediating this problem. Dwain motioned that the Chamber draft a resolution to the county commission seeking a method that will allow Mayor Lay to submit grants that would not otherwise be on a county committee agenda due to date deadline conflicts, and that does not involve county matching funds. Steve 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

**New Business:**

Wayne reported that the Chamber had been investigating the reading mentor program in Knox County title "Read to Me." This program is organized through the Mayor's office. Wayne will follow through with contacting the individual interested in starting the program. Wayne also discussed the Tennessee Scholars Program. Susan presented the details of the program and how this will work with respect to the current curriculum changes in UCPS. The intent is to create a more rigorous program for college bound high school students and to recognize their participation. Buy in will be needed by the chamber, business leaders and the BOE. A planning meeting with Ruth Woodall will be arranged.

Diane and Jennifer discussed the upcoming Shop Union County event. Jennifer reported that Shirley Grabko had offered to sponsor the "shop bags" that the Chamber will distribute at the Heritage Festival. Jennifer then distributed a ballot for the slogan to be used for the "shop" event bags and asked the board/ guests to vote prior to leaving. Diane discussed the contents for the bags and suggested charging a nominal fee for businesses to put coupons, marketing material, etc into the bags. It was agreed that the bags and a nominal fee could be done by the Chamber.

Steve read a letter from ETTD requesting that the Chamber provide a letter of support for an EPA Brownfield grant. Larry motioned that the Chamber provide a letter of support and Dwain 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

Rebecca distributed a proposal for the upcoming 2010 banquet. She listed several speaker ideas, theme ideas, and some general thoughts about maximizing the event. Because of time constraints, this item will be discussed in more detail at the next meeting.

Steve read a letter of resignation from Mary Gibson. Steve moved to accept the resignation and Wayne 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

Steve read a letter of resignation from Kelly Smith. Dwain moved to accept the resignation and Judy 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed.

Steve presented a slate of candidates for the 2010-2013 ballot. Steve then reported that Jeff Cooper (2010) had agreed to serve out Mary Gibson's term ending in 2012. Steve Hill nominated Mr. Phillips to finish Kelly Smith's term. Wayne moved to accept Mr. Phillips on board and Dwain 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried. This leaves one remaining 2009-2012 vacancy. Steve then called for additional nominees for the 2010-2013 ballot. There being no additional nominees, Dwain motioned to accept the slate of 5 nominees and Larry 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 1:21 PM.

Next Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 20 at 12N.