

**Kountze Chamber of Commerce
Regular Meeting
City Hall
February 11, 2016**

In Attendance: Daniel White (WhiteHall Crafts/FBC), Larry Shows (UMC), Rusty Mott (Mott Supply), Brad Stokes (Stokes Tire Pros), Thomas Cryer (Brookshire Brothers), Barry Michael (KEDC), Elaine Allums (Photography by Sunset Lady), Linda Miller (BBVA Compass), Kathy Von Feldt (Benchmark Plumbing), Lauri Thompson (State Farm), D'Ann White (WhiteHall Crafts), and special guest speaker, Tracy Davis, from K-JAC NBC

Lauri Thompson called the meeting to order at 2 p.m.

Rev. Larry Shows led the invocation.

D'Ann White read the minutes. One correction: Elaine Allums agreed to handle the nominations for the Teacher of the Year award only. Thomas Cryer moved to approve the minutes with the correction, seconded by Elaine Allums. All in favor, motion carried.

Treasurer's report given by Kathy Von Feldt. Balance as of December 31, 2015 was \$8491.39. The January statement ending on January 31, 2016 totaled \$8984.52 (for the Citizens Bank Operations account). Additional dues have come in , but they have not yet been deposited. We have four bank accounts, including the Citizens Bank Operations account; the other accounts are:

1. Citizens Bank "Hardin County Music Fest"--- \$0
2. Education First Checking "Music Fest"---\$316.83 (as of December 31, 2015)
3. Education First Savings "Music Fest"---\$20,520.99 (as of December 31, 2015)

Lauri Thompson stated that she thought there might also be another Citizens account "Birding in the Big Thicket" with a \$0 balance. Daniel White moved to approve the Treasurer's report, seconded by Brad Stokes. All in favor, motion carried.

Old Business

Website report given by Daniel White. There are currently three domain names:

1. www.kountzechamber.org---This is the current domain.
2. www.kountzechamber.com---This does not expire until January, 2017, but does not point to any server.
3. www.hardincountyfestival.com---This is still active, but has last year's information and needs to be updated.

Daniel White's recommendation is to keep the festival domain (since it is for festivals in general) and point it to the Kountze Chamber domain. Jerry Spring with Spring Print are maintaining the domain name registration free of cost. Web hosting for the kountzechamber.org site is by Debra and Douglas Moore, owners of WebPro500. Daniel White was able to remove the old information and update the website with basic skeleton information. Lauri Thompson stated that she had received a call from a new member questioning why their business was not on the website. Daniel White has not had the opportunity to update the membership list on the website, however he does have a calendar page and a historical page updated. \$120 for web hosting is due on April 15, 2016. The kountzechamber.org domain will expire in August, 2016, and the kountzechamber.com domain will expire in January, 2017. Daniel White suggested keeping the kountzechamber.com domain for a while because the maps have kountzechamber.com printed on them. Hardincountyfestival.com is with Spring Print for the web hosting. Daniel White is still expecting a call from Douglas Moore. Spring Print will work on pointing the domains to the kountzechamber.org website.

Facebook page report given by Daniel White. He just received administrator access on February 10, 2016. He wants to get the page set up and then he will work on getting the Facebook group established. D'Ann White asked if we need to have volunteers to serve as additional administrators on the page. Lauri Thompson volunteered to serve as a second administrator.

Banquet---Elaine Allums spoke with John Ferguson about the Teacher of the Year award. John Ferguson stated that he thought he was supposed to cook the food for the banquet. Rod Hutto clarified that the Chamber bought the food last year, and Mr. Ferguson cooked it. Banquet was held at the Music Hall last year. Elaine Allums is handling the ballots for Teacher of the Year with Mr. Ferguson. Ballots for Business of the Year and Citizen of the Year are

mailed separately. Lauri Thompson suggested emailing the ballots to the current membership. Thomas Cryer suggested emailing the ballots to have some nominations, then pick the top three nominations and send the ballots with the top three nominations for the membership to vote on. It was decided since there is only one member without email, that email is the preferable choice of communication. Elaine Allums suggested setting a deadline. The banquet will be tabled until the next meeting, while we work on the ballots. Elaine Allums suggested having the date for the banquet set at the March meeting. Thomas Cryer stated that in May the schools will have other banquets we will need to work around.

Tracy Davis from K-JAC gave a presentation on the commercials. She played several examples of the commercial that she put together for the Jasper Chamber of Commerce. Tracy Davis stated that she had put together a proposal for Lauri Thompson, but had problems printing it, so she would deliver it to Lauri at a later date. Her suggestion for opening the commercial is "Explore Kountze, Texas, the Gateway to the Big Thicket, Where Nature Smiles for Several Miles." Her suggestion for the commercial ending is "Kountze, Texas, EDC, and Chamber of Commerce for local businesses." Jasper has been doing these commercials for six years. NBC does all the production. She tries to match businesses with similar businesses and products. The commercial runs over the course of the month, and it is guaranteed so many spots in each program over the month (approximately 23-25 spots within morning news, noon news, Today shows, 1 prime time spot, 6 p.m. news, etc). Businesses can also put the whole commercial group on the website or only their 15-second spot. This will also help bring search engine optimization up. Elaine Allums asked what Tracy does about non-profits; Tracy Davis will have to check into that. Lauri Thompson asked if the Chamber had to commit a dollar amount or per group. Linda Miller asked how far are our funds going to go. Lauri Thompson clarified that the idea is that the Chamber and EDC will partner with the businesses on an ongoing basis because we are a small town with small businesses. Lauri Thompson then suggested that we may have to limit it to six businesses a quarter in order to not overtax the Chamber funds. Barry Michaels stated that the EDC needs the proposal with solid numbers before they can commit. He also suggested the Chamber could set a ceiling of so many groups, and then if other businesses want to participate, but the Chamber has already reached the ceiling, then they can still participate, but at full price. Tracy Davis explained that she will charge the businesses at the time of production, and then the Chamber and EDC will be billed. It was decided that if businesses call Tracy Davis about the commercial, that she would direct them to the Chamber to sign up. Lauri Thompson suggested that members have to be active in the Chamber for a set amount of time, before they can participate in the partnership.

New Business

Directors---Lauri Thompson stated that the original Articles of Incorporation states that we need fifteen directors, and the 2009 By-laws states that we need 5 directors. Lauri Thompson asked Elaine Allums if she would agree to serve as a director, and Elaine agreed. Daniel White and Thomas Cryer also agreed to serve as directors. Larry Shows also agreed to serve as director. This was approved by general consensus.

By-laws---Linda Miller moved to change the bylaws to require a minimum of one director and a maximum of four directors, seconded by Brad Stokes. Discussion: Elaine Allums stated that we need to present any by-law changes to the full membership for a vote by the membership. Linda Miller asked if we would be in compliance with the current by-laws if we have less than five. Elaine Allums stated that the number five was the maximum directors allowed. Linda Miller withdrew her motion.

Lauri Thompson presented that the purpose of the Chamber as presented in the Articles of Incorporation states "to acquire, preserve, and disseminate valuable business information, and generally promote the interest of trade and increase the facilities of commercial and industrial transactions in Kountze, Texas, and its trade area." The 2009 by-laws states that the purpose of the Chamber is to "increase community pride through events also with outreach, including awards to the Business of the Year, Teacher of the Year, and Citizen of the Year." Larry Shows stated that he did not see a conflict between the two documents. Rust Mott stated that he preferred the broader statement defined in the Articles of Incorporation. Larry Shows moved that an email ballot be sent to the membership to vote that the purpose defined in the by-laws be changed to the original purpose as stated in the Articles of Incorporation. Rusty Mott seconded. All in favor, motion carried. D'Ann White will email a ballot to the membership to vote on this by-law change.

Accounts---A discussion began about the need for so many accounts to be opened. Thomas Cryer and Elaine Allums recommended closing the accounts at Citizens bank that had a \$0 balance. Elaine Allums so moved, Daniel White seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Signers---Kathy Von Feldt, as the new treasurer, needs to have signing capability. Thomas Cryer agreed to be the seconded signer on the accounts. Thomas Cryer moved to remove all previous signers from the accounts, seconded by Rusty Mott. All in favor, motion carried. Daniel White moved to add Kathy (Kathleen) Von Feldt and Thomas Cryer as the new signers to the accounts. Larry Shows seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

Local Book Ad---This is a free ad in the phone book. The regular price for this ad is \$1305.00 per year, but they are waiving the cost. This ad includes two listings in the white pages, two yellow page ads, and a blue page listing. Lauri Thompson stated that we would need to update the information. Elaine Allums suggested adding "Gateway to the Big Thicket." It was decided by general consensus to place the Local book ad.

Spotlight of the Week---The board discussed highlighting businesses on the Facebook page each week. Daniel White explained that we can even link the business Facebook page back to the Chamber Facebook page, and bookmark the post where it will stay at the top of the page for the week. Kathy Von Feldt explained that this will be a random selection by the Facebook administrators. Daniel White stated that businesses need to email him their website address and Facebook links. D'Ann White suggested that the businesses also include a little blurb that they might want published on the Facebook page. Daniel White also stated that he can include the business websites on the Chamber website. Kathy Von Feldt asked if we need special permission to publish website links. Daniel White responded that websites fall under public domain, so no additional permissions are necessary to link to them sites.

Phone Calls---

- Hardin County News (Dulce Browning) contacted Lauri Thompson about the Music Fest. Lauri gave her information about the Banquet and told her about the Music Fest being canceled.
- Lauri Thompson also stated that she receives many calls about the Kirby House Murder Mystery. Rose Hall has agreed to handle Kirby House calls. Daniel White also suggested that we link the Kirby Hill House on our website and Facebook page.
- David Wonders, magician, called about performing at a festival or events, if anyone needs a magician.

Ad Associates---Jeff LaComb brought an invoice from Ad Associates to Lauri Thompson's attention for \$760 because they previously promoted the Music Fest. They agreed to discount \$500, so the total would only be \$260. Upon further investigation by Lauri Thompson, the charges on this invoice includes an standard size sponsorship letter, and page for links, as well as emails and phone calls. Ad Associates is the same agency that handles city events and the Trade Days. Lauri Thompson felt these charges were extreme, and she told the agency's representative that if he would like a continued business relationship that he would write-off the invoice, which he agreed. Rod Hutto told Lauri that the invoice had already previously been paid.

Stockshow---Thomas Cryer stated that the FFA show will be held before our March meeting. He moved that we participate in the Buyer's Auction with \$100, seconded by Elaine Allums. All in favor, motion carried. The check will be sent to the Kountze FFA.

Rusty Mott announced that his business will be having a Super Second Saturday every month, in case other businesses would like to also offer sales. He is offering an All Day Sale on the second Saturday of every month, as well as having Customer appreciation day with hot dogs, etc.

Rust Mott moved to adjourn, seconded by Elaine Allums. All in favor, meeting adjourned.