

Kountze Chamber of Commerce
City Hall
March 9, 2017

Attending: Cindy & David Reed (Angel Gardens), ReJena Bolton (County Health Inspector),
Shelly Dilbeck (HCHD), Linda Miller (BBVA), D'Ann White (WhiteHall Crafts),
Lauri Thompson (State Farm), Kathy von Feldt (Benchmark Plumbing)

Lauri Thompson called the meeting to order at 2:10 pm.

Kathy von Feldt led the invocation.

Minutes were reviewed. D'Ann White mentioned that she made a few spelling corrections after sending out the minutes for review: should have read Mary Jo Bitong. Motion to accept by Daid Reed, and seconded by Linda Miller. All in favor, motion carried.

Treasurer report given by Kathy von Feldt. Current balance was \$22,649.89. There was one check to David von Feldt. When she sent him to pay postage to mail the IRS package, the post office would not allow him to pay with her card, so she had to reimburse him for the postage.

IRS update by Kathy von Feldt---The Chamber has had their 501c-3 status totally re-instated. The IRS backdated the status and there were no penalties.

Dues---By general consensus, it was decided that if the electronic invoices have not been sent out by the end of March, we will send out paper statements this year. Kathy von Feldt reported that it is just taking time to get the Quickbooks system set up.

Old Business

Office Worker---Lauri Thompson had spoken with Experience Works about a senior employee, but we had to have our non-profit status, so she can now pursue it. The name of the program has changed to MET, which is under the same umbrella as the Headstart program. They currently have six positions in Hardin County and are all filled. We are on a waiting list to be a host agency.

Mary Jo Bitong has been doing community service work for her National Honor Society and has been working hard. She spent thirty to forty hours entering names into Quickbooks.

Lauri Thompson opened the floor for discussion about hiring a part time office worker. Linda Miller suggested trying to find someone that would be willing to work on an as needed basis.

Chamber Banquet

- Lauri Thompson asked if we would like to sell ad space in our programs for this year. Linda Miller suggested waiting until next year, as there was not enough time to sell the ads and then design the book this year. D'Ann White volunteered to design the program.
- Entergy would like to be a sponsor for the banquet.
- Kountzechamber.com has a list of current members and new members. Linda Miller moved that as an incentive to new members, that we give two free tickets to the banquet to all new members that join from the time of this meeting. David Reed seconded the motion. All in favor, motion carried.

- Tickets are donated by Advertising Creations. Lauri Thompson presented a mock-up for review. Ticket prices agreed by general consensus: \$25/single, \$40/couple, table \$200 for 8 people. At the door: \$30/single, \$45/couple.
- Stone Creek Lodge is allowing us to rent the facility for the \$300 cleaning fee.
- Diane Wilson has agreed to do the decorations and table cloths. Suggested theme “Spring Fling,” and she will decorate in spring colors.
- Caroline's Barbeque agreed to cater. The price is per plate but we have not yet received the price.
- David & Becky Coudrain will be performing at no charge. The Chamber agreed by general consensus to provide their meal. The band will play while guests are getting their plate.
- Speaker: James Ware, Vanessa Holmes, and Erica Harris could not come. Speaker will be Beaumont Chamber president, Regina Lindsey. She was past EDC member in Silsbee and has agreed to speak on “Supporting Local Business and Economic Development in Hardin County.”
- Lauri Thompson will contact Babin's and White's offices to ask them to present certificates to the award recipients from the state representatives. She will also ask Mayor Fred Williams to present awards.
- It was decided by general consensus to table other plans for a planning committee.

Award Recipients

- John Ferguson is working on Teacher of the Year nominations. Linda Miller will take care of getting something for the nominees and award recipients. It was decided by general consensus to have a budget of \$50 for each award.
- At this time, no nominations have been submitted for Citizen of the Year or Business of the Year. D'Ann White reported that last year, Floyd Boyett nominated Glen Cook, but the nomination was submitted after nominations had been closed. Therefore, the board members decided to accept his nomination for this year.

Blueberry Festival June 3, 2017 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

- Purple Hulls are officially booked.
- It was decided by general consensus that there will be no ticket charge.
- Booth space can be rented for \$25 (non-electric). There are also 6-7 electric spaces that can be rented for \$50 each.
- David Reed will set up music, port-a-potties, and call the fire department to help with parking.
- Big Thicket has agreed to come.
- Linda Miller stated she would like to see a sign at the park for Blueberry/Bluegrass Festival (in the location where the Music Fest sign used to be.) Lauri Thompson said she would take care of it. “Blueberry & Bluegrass Festival” sponsored by Kountze Chamber & EDC
- ReJena Bolton volunteered to send an email to restaurants & vendors.
- David Reed would like to sell popcorn, cotton candy, and snow cones.
- Suggestions include:
 - Blueberry Pie Contest
 - Blueberry Farmer of the Year
 - Breakfast for Blueberry Farmers before the event

- D'Ann White was appointed to contact the Blueberry farmers and invite them to the festival. David Reed has already contacted Etheridge Farms. It was decided by general consensus to not charge the blueberry farmers for booth space.
- ReJena Bolton suggested having a sponsor banner with all the sponsors listed that donated over \$500.
- David Reed will ask Rusty Mott to be Master of Ceremonies.
- It was decided by general consensus to invite the fire department to sell drinks (and only them)...no other vendor can sell drinks.
- Tracy Davis talked to Lauri Thompson about doing an ad for the Blueberry Festival, and she will contact David Reed.

New Business

Business visits---Linda Miller suggested visiting businesses in person. Linda Miller will work on organizing who to visit and Lauri Thompson will assist her.

Meeting---ReJena Bolton suggested that a noon meeting would be a better time for businesses, maybe from 11:30 a.m.- 1 p.m. By general consensus, it was decided to move the April meeting (April 13) to 11:30 am at Mama Jacks.

Commercials---The EDC has agreed to fund 50% of the cost for 24 businesses for 6 months. The Chamber board has decided to help any new businesses as a business incentive (\$525/EDC, \$262/business, and \$262/Chamber). Those businesses on the waiting list are Angel Gardens, Reed Mini Storage, Hardin County Motors, Emergency Power—John Baker, Weimers Wrecking Yard, Etheridge Farms, Wildwood, and Plumbing Services. (Not all of these are Chamber members and will have to join first before the Chamber can help them.) The original 18 businesses would need to pay half the amount with the EDC paying the other half (\$525/business). Tracy Davis will call all 18 businesses that had previously done the commercials.

Lauri Thompson moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Linda Miller. All in favor, meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm.