

**Springdale Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors Minutes – July 11, 2017**

The July meeting of the Springdale Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, July 11 in the Zachary Conference Room of the Springdale Chamber. Board members present at the meeting were: Brent Hanby, Hex Bisbee, Mike Morgenthaler, Murry Cline, Perry Webb, Derek Gibson, Bob Arthur, Danny McGinley, Rev. Don Elmore, Patty Hatfield, Tex Holt, Tom Sledge, Billy Sweetser, Mayor Doug Sprouse, Clinton Bell, and Rich Davis. Jeff Fender and Derek Harrison of S.F. Fiser & Company and Aimee York of BlackHills Energy were special guests. Staff members present included Rhonda Hughes, Sarah Gordley, Jim Ed Reed, Bill Rogers, Lance Eads and Scott Edmondson.

Chairman Hanby called the meeting to order and introduced the special guests.

Hanby presented to the Board a nomination by the Executive Committee to elect Murry Cline to fill the vacant position of Treasurer of the Board. A motion was made and seconded and the motion passed.

Fender presented the Board with his firm's audit report completed June 26. He noted that a clean management letter was issued, noting no significant issues with regard to internal financial controls of the Chamber. He highlighted key elements of the audit including \$683,000 in total assets and \$402,000 in cash holdings. He explained the Chamber experienced a \$76,000 loss in 2016 but that was a reflection of a transfer of Ignite Springdale funds. He said the Chamber had no outstanding debt in 2016.

The Board reviewed minutes of its May meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes and the motion passed.

Through June, Webb explained the Chamber had a \$61,000 net loss but it was significantly less than the budgeted loss of \$160,000. He noted that membership sales and retention are on the rise. Better closing rates are being seen following some recent sales training the staff participated in and that's an area that will be closely watched in the coming months. A motion was made and seconded to approve the financials and the motion passed.

In department reports, the Board was provided recommendations from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as part of its recent 5-star accreditation by the organization. It was explained the Chamber had perfect scores in three of the nine categories – human resources, technology, and facilities. Only minor recommendations were made in the other categories. Webb said one area that will require additional conversation is a recommendation for the Chamber to retain more cash reserves than it currently retains. Currently Springdale has \$400,000 in reserves and he said that amount might need to increase to the \$600,000-\$700,000 range. U.S. Chamber staff congratulated the Chamber on the quality and completeness of its application.

In Development, Reed said membership sales are on the rise with six sales in the shortened three-day work week after the Fourth of July. He credited the recent sales closing training with those results. Sponsorships for the year have exceeded \$600,000 and should soon pass 84% of the Chamber's budgeted goal.

In Events, the Cargill Spring Golf Classic netted \$36,700 with 45 teams after being rescheduled because of rain and the Leadership Springdale class is nearly full for 2017-18. The \$115,000 sponsorship goal for the Sam's Furniture Teacher Appreciation Event could be surpassed within the next week and sales are about to begin for the Dec. 6-8 CityFuture 5 planning event for Chateau on the Lake in Branson.

In Workforce, the late-June ACES conference for Springdale educators saw an increase in participating teachers and representatives from the business community. Work continues in the sales, writing and translation of the AIM workforce magazine that will again be distributed to Springdale schools. Chamber-funded research on the demand for diesel technicians being conducted by Ted Abernathy is expected to be complete by mid-September. Webb said there are 900 diesel technician jobs now available in Washington and Benton County – a significant number but less than expected. He said that number will increase in the next decade as retirement impacts the sector’s job market. He also noted that Lance Eads is one of 12 people to be nominated to participate on a Workforce Work Group that will re-write workforce training standards for the state of Arkansas. Four Senators, four representatives and four at-large volunteers comprise the group.

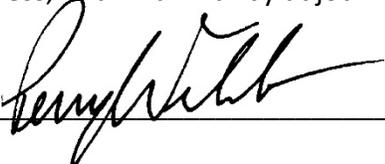
Twenty two people have registered to attend the Chamber’s Washington D.C. Fly-In September 10-12. Webb explained he had recently returned from Washington D.C. where he was able to meet with several federal officials in the area of FEMA, education and transportation, laying the groundwork for federal grants the Chamber is working to obtain in partnership with the City of Springdale, Springdale School District and other community partners. Specific ideas potentially helpful to Springdale Schools and the City came from meetings with the head of Career and Technical Education for the Department of Education and the Trump Administration staffer charged with writing the pending \$1 trillion transportation bill.

While sewer lines to the new industrial park in north Springdale is scheduled to be completed within the next two weeks, staff continues to work on the relocation of Highway 265 – an important access to the industrial land recently purchased by the Springdale Public Facilities Board. A strong number of manufacturing, retail, restaurant and downtown inquiries continue to be managed by staff. Edmondson noted the latest unemployment rate for Springdale of 2.2% had been announced earlier in the day.

In Communications, strategic work to increase the Chamber’s reach with social media has begun to pay dividends with as many Facebook likes for each of its two accounts in May and June as they each had in the four previous months combined. The Chamber’s efforts to partner with the Rodeo of the Ozarks and its marketing were helpful and there are plans to expand those measures next year. Implementation of an online registration module, which generated strong response for a Cal Ripken baseball tournament being hosted this week in Springdale, will be extremely useful for future events.

In Board comments, Hanby noted the outstanding ceremony on the Fourth of July to honor Walter Turnbow and the new downtown park named after him and the Fallen Veteran’s Memorial. Sprouse said the City Council is expected to approve that night a resolution supporting the collection of online sales tax – an effort being duplicated by cities across the state in an effort to generate the support necessary for Governor Hutchinson to call a special session.

With no further business, Chairman Hanby adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by:  Date: June 11, 2017