

Springdale Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors Minutes – March 19, 2019

The March meeting of the Springdale Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors was held on Tuesday, March 19 in the Zachary Conference Room of the Springdale Chamber. Board members present at the meeting were: Murry Cline, Sam Hollis, Mike Morgenthaler, Perry Webb, Joel Kelsey, Danny McGinley, Sarah Brothers, Kent Williamson, Doug Sprouse, Greg White, Jason Appel, Clinton Bell and Tex Holt. Leadership Springdale guests included Jeffrey Busch (United Bank), Zach Fittro (Dayco Products), Bryan Johnson (Black Hills Energy) and Ashley Keeney (NWTI). Whit Shepard of Convergent Nonprofit Solutions was also present as a guest.

Staff members present included Rhonda Hughes, Sarah Gordley, Bill Rogers, Scott Edmondson and Aerial Courdin.

Chairman Cline called the meeting to order and introduced visiting guests.

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

In a review of financials, the Board heard the organization was seeing good results from a reorganization of its membership sales and retention process. Sixteen new members joined in February with only three dropped members. Early March numbers show 11 new members with several businesses considering joining and five drops – half the number dropped in March a year ago. The financial dashboard for February showed a loss but one less than the same time period in 2018. The Board was reminded the Chamber typically posts a profit in only four or five months of the year. Approximately \$23,000 remains to be received from the Ignite Springdale campaign as the Chamber is in the early stages of considering a new capital campaign. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes and the motion passed.

Webb explained the Chamber is back to being fully staffed after losing three staff members a year ago and not immediately filling those positions. There are 16 Chamber employees with the two most recent hires having duties in sales and video communications to support increased sales.

Whit Shepard, of Convergent Nonprofit Solutions, addressed the Board about his company's ongoing work for the Chamber to conduct one-on-one interviews with approximately 60 members regarding their opinion of and willingness to support major initiatives that have been refined through numerous Board and member input. Shepard's company will compile the input received and deliver a report to the Chamber in May or July that details the fundable priorities of potential investors for a new capital campaign. With Board approval, the next step would be to advance to a fundraising period to support those initiatives.

In workforce, the Board heard the Chamber made \$13,789 profit in its workforce magazine partnership with the Fayetteville Chamber. Plans are ongoing to produce a Springdale workforce magazine in 2019 as well as partnering with Harrison to produce a magazine for that community. The Chamber recently released two reports it commissioned Ted Abernathy's company to conduct on diesel technician supply and demand and actions recommended to improve workforce delivery in Springdale. Both reports received strong media coverage. Abernathy, while in town for the press conference, also met with leadership of the Northwest Arkansas Council and NWTI. A skills and needs survey was sent to 405 Chamber members in early March with results expected by April.

In government affairs, the Board heard the biennial legislative reception held in January was very well attended and showed a \$7,092 profit. The proposed constitutional amendment Sen. Lance Eads sponsored that would implement a ½ cent sales tax for road construction has been approved and will be considered by

voters in November 2020. Approval of a bill that would generate additional sales tax for highway repair and maintenance is expected. The Chamber continues to monitor and await approval of a U.S. Senate resolution in support of Marshallese living in the United States that has the potential to create opportunities for groups like the city of Springdale, Springdale Schools and healthcare providers to access discretionary federal funds in support of services currently being provided to Marshallese residents. The Chamber is also engaged in efforts that would lead to a higher Census count of local Marshallese residents for the 2020 Census.

In communications, the Chamber has boosted the number of Facebook followers by 2,100, far exceeding its original goal. Efforts to employ unique communications tools to generate new member leads have also been successful. As part of the Chamber's contract with the Springdale Advertising & Promotion Commission, Chamber staff will attend five trade shows in 2019, including specific efforts to promote outdoor recreation travel and small business meetings. The A&P Commission expects a new tourism app promoting Springdale to be ready in May.

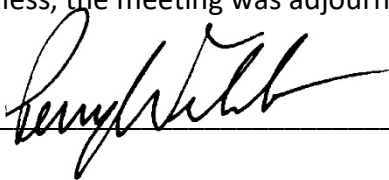
Springdale continues to lead the state in low unemployment with a current rate of 2.5%. Sales tax revenue remains strong with a 6% increase year-over-year in the first two months of 2019 and a 2.7% increase in February collections when compared to the same month a year before. Two manufacturing projects are currently being worked as well as a potential industrial park land sale. Work to complete the improved Hwy 265 that runs alongside newly acquired industrial park property in northeast Springdale should be complete by mid-summer. Bids for construction of a new street providing eastern access to the Turnbow Avenue industrial property are expected to be let this summer.

In events, the Board heard the Annual Meeting posted a \$74,000 profit and the Chamber had received positive feedback from the innovative audience survey used during the event. The fourth Experience Springdale fast-track immersion class has been completed with a new class planned for April 23. The Chamber is hosting a bomb threat seminar conducted by an FBI special agent April 2. The Leadership Springdale class is hosting a cookout fundraiser April 5 at the Rodeo Grounds. The Chamber's golf tournament will be held September 23 and the annual Teacher Appreciation Day will be August 8.

June 1 is the date set for the Downtown Springdale Alliance's street dinner. The Board heard the Chamber is assisting the DSA with marketing and development ideas and has established a strong working relationship with Jill Dabbs, the DSA's new director. The Chamber and the DSA recently hosted 31 downtown merchants for a Q&A opportunity to keep them informed and to temper any frustrations felt by not being aware of planned development. Another meeting that will include Mayor Sprouse is set for April 8.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by: _____



Date: March 19, 2019