

Chamber of Commerce Meeting Minutes

11/4/2014

Foristell Chamber of Commerce met at the T/A restaurant in Foristell, MO on November 4, 2014. Chris Gaines led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Aaron Baker gave the invocation. Chris Gaines called the meeting to order.

Minutes: Meeting minutes from October were approved as stated.

Treasurer's Report:

1) Account balance as of November 4th, 2014 was \$2,543.19. The treasurer's report was approved as stated.

2) December 12th is the upcoming Open House for the City of Foristell. Members approved a donation of \$200 towards the event.

3) The Chamber received a request for donation of \$100 from the Salvation Army. It was discussed that while many felt this was a worthy cause, the Foristell food pantry may better serve people in our area. A motion was approved to give \$100 to Our Shepherd's Food Pantry operated by the Foristell Christian Church.

City Report:

1) Voting is in full swing today and City Hall is very busy.

2) The Foristell Park is open and operating, with hopes that in the future more land may be donated by Ted Kinster.

3) City is in the process of setting the budget for 2015.

4) December 12th will be date of the annual Open House at City Hall. Donations are being accepted for the Salvation Army toy drive. The Chamber usually donates a basket for the Open House party. Tickets will be ready at the December meeting for members to sell to raise money for the Open House.

Wentzville School District:

1) Jessica Karll, a teacher at Discovery Ridge Elementary won the Milken Award, a prestigious national teaching award given to fewer than 40 teachers nationally.

2) A Timberland student was elected as the DECA state president.

3) Holt softball advanced to the State level and won.

4) Official student count for this school year is 14,781; up 550 students from last year.

Wright City School District:

1) Fall sports have come to an end. Basketball practice has begun.

2) Operation Backpack program has been a success and saw over 6,000 food items donated. Over 40 families were served by this program.

3) Early Childhood Center location has been staked; construction will begin soon.

Our Shepherd's Food Pantry:

Donations are in great need as the holidays approach. Food can be dropped off at the pantry, or at the City Hall. The food pantry serves 50-60 families.

Warren County Fine Arts Council:

November 21st @ 6pm will see the fall event for the WCFAC, hosted at the FMB Bank in Warrenton. There will be beer tasting, an auction, silent auction, and 50/50 drawing to support the council.

New Business:

Discussion centered on the possibility of merging the Forstell chamber with another larger, existing chamber (Wright City or Wentzville). Membership is down and a merge may create advantages for our existing active members. Here are some advantages and disadvantages discussed:

Advantages:

- From a business standpoint, being part of a larger Chamber means more people with which to network.
- For the last 3-5 years, we have focused on regional growth, but change may be necessary because of decreasing members.
- Being part of a larger Chamber may make local businesses more relevant.
- Consolidating may provide more opportunity to network businesses, and have a stronger presence, especially as Forstell Chamber has been unable to continue to meet at Porlier. A consolidated meeting place may provide stability.

Disadvantages:

- Being a smaller chamber, we may be losing Chamber members as some choose to attend and be active in larger chambers to "get the most bang for their buck". Consequently, this may be one of the reasons for our lower membership. However if we merge, some members may choose not to merge and just "quit" altogether.
- Is this the right timing?
- There will be many details that need to be ironed out. Bylaws may need to be consulted.

Action Points from this discussion:

1) Chamber board, or their representatives, need to meet with the Wright City Chamber and begin this discussion of possibly merging.

2) Chamber board may need to develop a questionnaire for chamber members to determine if the merge is in their best interest, and discover the best way to meet members' needs should this move forward.

Announcements:

1) Ken won the 50/50 drawing and the money was donated back to the chamber.

2) Members were encouraged to bring in items for the Christmas Basket to the December meeting.

3) Next meeting will be held on December 2nd, 2014 at the T/A. Speaker is TBD.

Submitted by Aaron Baker on behalf of Ray Alexander.