

Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce & Business Association
Thursday, May 2, 2024
Board Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present: James Soule, Mary Kell, Jerry Hayes, Meghann Walk, Brian Dunn, Bobby Stricker, Abby McKee

Staff: Belita Palu-ay, Julie Baker, Brian Roberts

Guests: Eileen Bobeck

The meeting was called to order at 9:02am.

Current Business

Brian Dunn shared an update on the **wine trolley**. Winery agreements have been finalized, as has the schedule and route map. Julie and Brian Roberts updated the board on the final items remaining for the trolley service relaunch. The group applauded the marketing materials, both for the trolley and everything else Maple Creative has been producing. Brian Roberts shared that maintenance has taken place on the trolley itself: new brakes, new driver's seat, detailing, paint on the bumpers and mirrors, and the new logo. 140 tickets have already been sold in only two weeks on sale, and service resumes tomorrow. The group emphasized that the downtown tasting rooms will also be featured in all messaging.

Belita shared an update about the upcoming **Parade of Inns**. Only 15 tickets have been sold, and Belita alerted the group that help is urgently needed to make the event successful. With the exception of Kubli Haus, no inns provided information on time, so marketing materials have been challenging. Maple Creative will be pushing advertising forward, but help is needed from the inns and the board to reach our 200-ticket sales goal.

Brian reminded the group of the upcoming **Annual Dinner** at Parkhurst: May 9, 6pm. Jerry will be delivering the annual address.

Jerry presented the **2024-2025 Financial Update**. Jerry shared the work that happened to support the creation of the FY25 Budget. The board unanimously approved the FY25 Budget (Abby moved, James seconded). Jerry then shared the outcome of the short fiscal year (January 1-April 30, 2024), highlighting that we are awaiting some reimbursements from the city. Overall, the short fiscal year ended with a \$33,000 deficit due to the timing of activities, most of which take place during the summer; this was not unexpected. Brian also shared that Travel Oregon will be reimbursing \$10,000 toward the purchase of the wine trolley, which is pending.

Julie shared a brief update on the **VIC Center**. The open house was successful, including around \$175. The gift basket was won by Dennis Clark, who stores the wine trolley on his property. The gift basket was fantastic, featuring donations from many board member businesses.

Brian Roberts shared that the **downtown historical trolley** is also prepared to begin service. He shared some of the maintenance and upgrades that have happened on the trolley, and there is a plan in place to keep the trolleys detailed and beautiful all summer. Brian shared that the sound system needs to be updated - it dates from the mid-nineties and was never intended to be used this way. Brian shared a bid from Pro Audio for \$2,300 to upgrade the sound system. The wine trolley sound system is excellent, and this bid would match the quality of the wine trolley sound system. In addition, a second system (Ready To Talk) is needed to allow drivers to talk over music as needed on tours; that additional system will cost less than \$675. Brian Dunn will work with Brian Roberts to make the final decisions on these systems and move forward with this upgrade.

Belita shared an update from the **Marketing Committee**, including designs for new brochures from Maple Creative. Materials are focusing on visitors. A request for proposals has gone out to multiple website designers. Belita shared that our site engine optimization is better than expected. A strategic marketing plan is underway, utilizing a PR firm and a digital marketing company.

New Business

Abby shared that Britt will be having its annual Neighborhood Impact meeting on May 15 at 8:30am. She will send out an invitation to the Chamber board, and would be grateful for help spreading the word.

Brian will begin a discussion on the updated bylaws in the next board meeting.

Belita presented a proposal for refining the Mission Statement. Based on the feedback of the marketing committee, she is asking for a slight adjustment to "Cultivating a vibrant business community in our historic landmark town." The board voted unanimously to approve this update (Jerry moved, Meghann seconded).

Brian shared the current contract with the City of Jacksonville. No action is needed at this time, and the city will be making this an action item in June. Board members are invited to review and understand the agreements between the City and the Chamber, particularly the Visitor's Information Center.

Julie shared that the invoices for Membership Dues have been emailed out. Last year we added over 30 new businesses, and at last night's WED meeting several new businesses expressed an interest in joining.

Belita alerted the board that September is a big month for grant requests. Abby will help Belita with some of the grant background work. Mary suggested a downtown beautification grant, and discussion ensued regarding flower boxes downtown. The Garden Club has been pursuing this for several years, the Boosters have been intrigued by this idea, and several other entities have expressed interest in the project. Obstacles include group buy-in on the design of the boxes, and the maintenance of the boxes.

Belita also shared that she and Julie are designing a new monthly e-newsletter. Members will be able to submit content, and instructions will be in the first newsletter. There was also an idea for Chamber members to do a narrated trolley tour on June 5, before Britt begins.

James shared that Mayor Bowen was impressed by the chamber presence at the last council meeting. James also brought up the topic of derelict buildings and discussion ensued regarding the US Hotel. Abby invited the group to The Hill is Where the Heart is on June 7. The event is a food drive for ACCESS. Brian Roberts asked for the board's assistance spreading the word for an additional trolley driver.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:42am.