

Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors Minutes – May 27, 2022, 7:30am
Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce Boardroom/Virtual Zoom

PRESENT: Eric Beier (Zoom), Leslie Blake (Zoom) Gary Bonick, Stacy Brown, Pierre Garcia (Zoom), Dawn Gilman, Cameron Hubbard (Zoom), Matt Horist (Zoom), Suha Hossain (Zoom), Josh Howell, Cameron Hubbard, Kathy Powell, Ken Pringle (Zoom), Kelly Roewer (Zoom), Randy Smith, Tim Urban (Zoom), Mike Wheeland, and staff members Bill Eich, Wendy Pratola, Nick Kubiak, Kristin Parkin, and guests Heather Maieritsch and Haig Haleblan.

ABSENT: Leslie Blake, Trent Gordon, Scott McKeever, Catie Schmit

CALL TO ORDER: 7:32 AM by Randy Smith

CITY OF CRYSTAL LAKE/MAYORS REPORT: Heather reported some construction updates. There are 3 construction projects going on this summer. On North Main Street at 176 the contractor is working on widening the roadway and fixing the curb on the west side and they will begin pouring the curb this coming Tuesday. June 6th the eastbound detour will go up between route 14 and route 31. It will be completely closed between Main Street and Park Blvd. This detour is to be in place for two months. Please plan for extra travel time. Once that project is complete, they will be resurfacing between Brink Street and 176. The next project is IDOT route 14 resurfacing and fixing the curbs they are currently working on the east side of the street and should be completed before July 4. After they complete the east side, they will begin the west side in July. There will be no work done on the intersection of Dole during the parade. The other resurfacing project will be on the east half of Congress parkway. Other great things are happening in the community right now. ISCC had a broker/retailer/restaurant meeting in Las Vegas recently. It is a giant networking event with over 40,000 people attending where the City of Crystal Lake markets themselves to potential retailers. Crystal Lake worked hard at this event as it has usually generated great leads for our community. Heather was there from Sunday - Tuesday and met with 54 retailers and brokers that are interested in Crystal Lake. Locally, we have a variety of spaces moving forward with occupancy. The Commons of Crystal Lake did their façade refacing project, and they have a tenant moving into the old Helzberg Diamonds spot later this year. There is also a tenant for the Great American Bagel space. At the Twin Ponds Marketplace, an auto care retailer will be moving into the old Pep Boys space, as well as two additional retailers moving into the spaces next to Office Max. It is exciting to see those spaces finally filling. The former HH Gregg also has a tenant coming in soon which is very exciting as it is a larger space and those are harder to fill. We still have two big spaces to fill. The former TJ Maxx and the former Josephs. The city is working with those landowners to create a marketing plan to help attract retailers to hopefully fill those spaces. We have some openings happening in the next two weeks. Mario's Cart which had great success as a food truck is opening a stand-alone location in front of the Walmart. The Dole and Downtown farmers markets are starting up next week also. Crystal Lake was chosen as the Hometown of the month by WGN and Haig had the opportunity to speak on the radio. The city will be sharing the marketing piece. The city is working to get a demolition permit for the former D'Andrea Banquets. There are people interested in the site. It is a rare opportunity to have frontage on both route 14 and route 31. Haig spoke briefly for 4 minutes on WGN. He was supposed to have 10 minutes, but it did not work out because the Abby Road Studios was very enthusiastic.

CONSENT AGENDA: Motion to accept by Dawn Gilman, seconded by Gary Bonick, and motion carried.

DIVISION REPORTS: Tim Urban was not present at the time of the report. Tim informed the Board that the YP's are scheduling their summer party. It is an open invitation and is usually at The Quarry or Crystal Lake Brewing. The board let Tim know that The Quarry is no longer a member. Tim noted this and let the board know that they are just starting to consider locations. Tim also let the board know that they are working on staffing the beer tent at the Lakeside Fest. Anyone who is willing and able they could use the help. Big Brothers and Big Sisters are taking Friday and handling the shift captains and volunteers. Saturday is going to be Independence Health and Therapy. Thursday and Sunday is the YP's. There are 3 different sites to sign up. Sunday is the lightest day right now. The fireworks are Sunday, so it is a great day to work. It is fun and you get free admission for the day you work and a couple free drinks. Thursday the BoDeans are playing. The YP's are looking at a change in leadership and there will be a new Chair for next year.

FINANCE: Matt presented the financial reports. The statement of financial position over previous year there is nothing big to note, the biggest change is that the AR is higher than last year. Wendy noted that Advocate finally paid which is a substantial chunk of the higher AR. No other comments. Statement of Activities shows that we are still operating at a slight loss, but the good news is that one of our biggest money-making events of the year is still coming up, the Golf Outing. That should bring us closer to break even or even a slight profit. The statement of Activities versus Budget shows that we are right on budget if not slightly ahead of budget and again, once the golf outing occurs that will look better. Wendy noted that the golf outing is usually a \$20,000 profit and everything will fall into this fiscal year. Motion to approve the financials by Josh Howell and Seconded by Mike Wheeland. Motion Carried.

Gary Bonick from the finance committee presented Ken Pringle for nomination of a PICA Award. Ken has been a long-standing member of the Chamber and active volunteer in the Chamber and community for many years with various committees and events that were

listed on the nomination form as presented. Motion to nominate Ken Pringle for a PICA award by Randy Smith, Seconded by Stacy Brown. Motion Carried.

MEMBERSHIP: Bill Eich introduced Drew Casaccio who is taking over the position formerly held by Lisa McLaughlin as our Member Services Manager. He started two weeks ago and is currently shadowing and training. Bill reported that we have 9 new or reactivated members and 7 dropped members. The dropped members are a passion of Drew's, and he will be reaching out to a lot of them in the coming months. Our Drops: Ben Volling is no longer with State Farm. Hemp stock we are hoping will rejoin down the road. Triantan was Jeff Lord's old company, and he is with Edward Jones now and rejoined. The Quarry and Restoration One Drew will meet with them. Shift Co-Working Bill will try to reach. Nancy Gonsiorek is swamped with too much business and is trying to step back. Our rate is 785 and retention rate is 99.11%. New members are: Balmin Bingham Photography, Citizens for Gloria Van Hof, Crossroads Financial/Thrivent, Tru Family Dental, Dream Vacations, Wakeup and Makeup by Ann LLC, and Edward Jones Investments - Jeff Lord. Jeff Lord may be taking over for Tim Urban as the YP Chair. Jeff is also interested in a board position in the future. Our Rejoining members are Cassidy Tire and Country Financial. Motion to accept membership by Mike Wheeland and seconded by Gary Bonick. Motion carried.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Randy noted that there are only two calls apiece this month please get out there and call these people, ask them for coffee, meet for lunch if you can. Try to get to know these people. A personal touch is needed.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: Bill Eich reported that we sent out policy changes in two areas. One is to clarify the network group policy and the kitty for carrying forward year to year and covers all current and future network groups. The second policy is a clarification of the vacation policy for Chamber staff. We had a situation come up with a former staff member it needed to be clarified that vacation time is 80 hours, but it is accrued over the year not available the first day after the anniversary. We added to the policy that staff may use one week up to six months after the anniversary date rolls over because sometimes staff are not able to use their vacation time within the year, depending on events and what other people have requested. The policy also adds a paragraph regarding comp time as the staff finds that they go over many times with weekend and evening events and it offers the staff an opportunity to take that overtime at a later date as time off. Yellow and strikethrough are wording that is to be removed and the green is to be added. The board should review the changes and we will call a vote on it next month. Mike asked about the policy change for network groups. The policy change came from a question from WEW regarding their funds and kitty. Originally WEW raised funds by offering lunches and charging a little extra for the meals because they do not charge an annual fee or activity fees. That stopped during covid when they stopped offering lunches at the meetings. So, the last two or three years, Lisa was going out and obtaining sponsorships for the group. They had been using those funds instead of funds they raised, and any funds left at the end of the year was rolled into the Chamber for operating expenses rather than kept as a kitty because it was chamber sponsorship money. This policy sets aside a kitty for the group from sponsorship funds and clarifies the role of sponsorships with the groups going forward. There will be \$504 set aside as a kitty for them to use going forward. Kathy noted that there was never any clarity before and it was marketed as a free network group and there were no fees charged, but there were benefits to the group and expenses incurred on the chamber side that were never reimbursed to the Chamber, so she feels it is important that it is clarified because they are a network group and a division of the Chamber at this point. It was asked how this policy will affect other networking groups, and Bill responded that the other network groups already have these procedures in place for their kitty funds, it was only WEW that did not have a procedure in place. Ken asked if the WEW funds were in their kitty fund now, and Bill responded that the money is set aside for them now. Kathy asked about bereavement pay and asked about changing sick time to just personal time that would include bereavement and personal time and Bill indicated that we could address that in the future. Bill asked if there are questions, please to call him or bring questions to the next meeting and at that time he will ask for a vote.

Bill noted, again, that Drew is with us now and that he looked at the position after Lisa left and made some adjustments to the position. One of the things he changed was that eblasts and marketing commission that was previously going to Lisa will now be directed to Nick. This makes sense because he is creating the marketing and having all the communication with the member regarding the marketing and eblasts. So, the direct contact going forward will be only Nick, which is much easier.

We also changed the weekly update videos and Bill is doing those now instead of the Membership Manager. You can see the changes if you look at the ones we recently did for Mainstay, In Sync, Tyler Lewke, and First Institute. We have revamped them to make them more of a commercial for the business and highlight the business and it has been great for Bill to spend time with these members and really get to know them in the process. Eric confirmed that it was a great experience. Stacy noted that she does not get weekly emails because her company blocks them. A few of the other board members confirmed that they have a problem getting the weekly emails. Bill noted that they do get notifications of invalid emails, but we do not get notices if a firewall or spam blocker is blocking us. Nick will investigate it if anyone wants to let us know that they are not getting our emails. Bill noted that these videos and what you need to know information are also posted on Facebook. Nick noted that our email list is 20,000 and we have a 30-40% open rate currently. Bill noted that we are working on cleaning up our lists and making sure we have everyone's current emails. Nick asked if any board member hears from someone that they are not getting our emails to please let him know so he can investigate it. Randy offered the suggestion that we ask people that we are calling for their current email or that we do a calling drive to ask people for updated information and be

proactive. Bill is going to be sending out a survey asking for updated information for address, phone, email, employees, etc. Where it will have all the information we have in our system and a place for them to add their changes. Wendy noted that Sierra, the Chamber summer intern, is working on a project also where she is updating emails and will be calling folks that do not have emails or valid emails. Drew noted that he will be doing a lot of running around over the next few months and that he will be not just contacting new members, but also current active members and dropped members. He wants them to know that A. they are not forgotten as active members, B. to let them know that the Chamber is here for them and introduce himself and talk about some of the great things we have going on at the chamber and C. to connect them and their needs with other members and their needs so they can help one another, because that is a big part of the benefit of the chamber, making those connections. He wants the board to know that he feels that virtual connection is fine, but facetime is still very important, and he wants to provide that. He also will be going after the dropped members to find out why and getting those reasons and seeing if we can correct them. He feels that all should be treated equal and create that community where everyone feels valued so there will not be that drop off that we are currently seeing. Dawn noted that Olive Tap and Kitchen Outfitters have new owners so he should check in with them. Drew's goal is to get in there, tell them about our mixers, ask if they want a video or ribbon cutting, and he is going to be very proactive and involved and has a big project ahead of him. He is hoping he can help bring data back on new phone numbers, emails, and people's names that we can update our records with also and create a new best practice for updating our records going forward also. Randy would like to see a short presentation for next month to see where we are next month. Randy would like to see everyone get proactive with reaching people. Bill asked if when the board is making calls or emails if they find the information is not correct if they could please contact the chamber and let us know.

Bill thanked Kathy and the ambassadors for an excellent job well done with the Annual Dinner. We had 132 guests. The board indicated the food was good and the event was beautiful. There were mixed reviews on the keynote speaker. It was useful information, but there was too much and too many slides. Haig's table thought the information was a little negative. Others felt it was too much of a dump of information. The food was wonderful though. The awards were beautiful. They were very heavy! The awards recipients were very deserving.

The annual report went out at the annual dinner if you want a copy or copies for your business, please let the chamber know. We are looking at updating our texting program, and there will be a change coming soon. It is a cost savings and a better program. We have an app that goes along with our Chamber Master software. It is called member plus and it is at the bottom of the website. It is a good app. The annual golf classic has an extra hole in one this year, a few game sponsors, and we have a few network groups along with a few more other companies doing designated holes sponsors this year so there are more chances for interaction at the holes this year which should be fun as well as opportunities for the network groups to seek out new members.

Today is the last day to register for the Independence Parade and the last day to nominate someone for grand marshal. We are currently at 74 attendees. There are not too many politicians this year, surprisingly. The parade is after the primary. We have a Mariachi band this year, a juggler and stilt walker, and of course the Jesse White Tumblers, funny little people, Volo auto museum, the Illinois Railway Museum and more. We will not be having the South Shore Drill team this year they were too expensive and not worth it. We said no to a zombie act that were creepy and not a good fit.

June is crazy busy with mixers and May is building up as well. We have mixers booked all the way through November. Kathy noted that she will assign ambassadors for those events.

Bill met with Senator Craig Wilcox and talked about getting the town halls started again along with the other local representatives. Hopefully those will be starting up soon with timely topics. Dawn noted that town halls can become real platforms for the enthused. The Chamber is hoping to reach out to other businesses in the community that are not currently members and find a way to include them in messaging of events and happenings as members of the community as well as create a full business directory of area businesses. The idea would be to possibly generate interest in joining the Chamber and at least open communication and share resources about the SBA and Grants and legislative information.

Bill had a discussion with Sue Dobbe regarding forming a partnership with the Downtown Business Association. We do have some overlap now and it would be good to have an association and we should at least have a discussion with them about possibilities. Whether it be a reduced fee to join both, or a partnership where we share marketing and connections. We are currently a member of them, and they are currently a member of us so that would technically make all their members available to be associate members under them, and entitled to a reduced fee to join us, and they are currently not aware of that. So, the discussion will be informative and a positive step.

We are looking at creating Chamber membership cards with the focus on member-to-member discounts because that is an area where we have several businesses offering discounts and members are many times not aware. Like Take 5 automatically gives 25% off to chamber members. Most members do not even know that they do that. The McHenry County Colleges will all charge in district rate for any Chamber member employee. Tropic Tan for Chamber members is an entire year for \$499. There are a lot more also. This will be a way to promote those discounts and for members to show that they are in fact members to take advantage of these discounts. We are looking at cards and key tags.

We are looking into the different group health, dental, and vision benefits through the Illinois chamber that are available for our members and creating a platform on our website where members can log on and get quotes. The savings is usually anywhere from 15-

25%. Most small businesses do not realize they have access to this. This will be through the Chamber website, and they will confirm that they are Chamber members, and we will be rolling it out and getting information out to the members as soon as we can.

ITEMS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION: Matt informed the board that the budget was presented at the last meeting and a month was given to review the information. Matt asked for questions. Hearing none, Matt asked for a motion to approve the 2022-2023 budget. Motion to approve the budget by Mike Wheeland and Seconded by Randy Smith. Motion Passed.

Nick informed the board that there were 40 responses for the vote, which was higher than last year. Last year there were only 18-20. The ballots are sent out to the primary contact for each member business. There were a couple no's, but the approval rate was 95 percent so based on that Katie O'Neil, Samantha Wagner, and Lisa Karlov will join the board on July 1.

Bill informed the board that Kim Martens would like to be granted Emeritus status. She retired from the library and will be the Ambassador Chair next year. Motion to Grant Kim Martens Emeritus Status by Dawn Gilman, seconded by Gary Bonick. Motion passed.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Kristin reported that there are a few events that did not make the sheet. The first is June 15, there is ribbon cutting for Nana's New York deli at 10am. That is a Wednesday. There will be food. June 27th is the Chamber Golf Classic there are currently 74 people registered currently. June 28th is a multi-chamber mixer at Consumer Credit Counseling Services. Northern Kane is the host.

HEARD AROUND TOWN – Memorial Day parade is Monday at 11am. June 2nd is the first Music and Under the trees with Jim and Justin. June 11 is Vets for Veterans and Blue Families at Immanuel Lutheran Church starting at 8:45am and hosted by American Legion Post 171. Woodstock Harley, Star 105.5, and JA Frate fallen heroes' truck will be there along with a classic car show. June 18th is a shredding event at Algonquin commons. June 23rd is the Mainstay's Gala 6-9:30PM celebrating 35 years. June 26th is the On Angel's Wings is having their first golf outing from 10-2 at Old Hilltop Farm and also the Patriot Run starting at MCC benefiting Veterans Path to Hope and VAC McHenry County. There is a link to register for that on the Chamber website. June 30th the Lakeside Fest begins. Nooners are having a mixer at the Chamber on June 7th. There will be a DJ and food from Grill masters Catering. There are cub's tickets, luggage, Golf Foursomes, and an Adirondack Chair as prizes. Crystal Lake Social will be serving. Beaches open this weekend. The Hemmens Auditorium is putting on "In the Heights" the 3rd and 4th weekends in July and should be a good show.

ADJOURN: The meeting adjourned at 8:48 am on a motion by Dawn Gilman and seconded by Stacy Brown. Motion passed.