

## **Minutes of the Cowan Commercial Club**

The Cowan Commercial and Community Club met on Monday evening, August 27th, 2018 in the library section of Cowan Center for the Arts. The following members and visitors were in attendance: Mary Bledsoe, Christina Britt, David Britt, Kallie Britt, Kristina Britt, Rendi Britt, Helen Brown, Joyce Brown, Johnny Hand, Maryann Knowles, Samuel Lapp, Mark Ledbetter, Paige Jones, Steve Jones, Jim McKenzie, Ben Merrill, Ben Money, Jarod Pearson, Jeff Pennington, Kim Shelton, Tim Shelton, Bill Welch, Amanda Wiseman, and special guest speaker Gene Seaton.

The minutes from the previous meeting were presented. The minutes were accepted as read with no changes.

The Treasurer reported an operating balance of \$1728.30 and a balance of \$737.16 in the special account.

Rendi reported that the last Street Dance had good attendance, several nice donations, and excellent coverage by WZYX Radio. Proceeds came to \$211. Kim and Helen purchased a Hawaiian Ice machine and Mary authorized the purchase of a hotdog roller. These will reduce rental costs in the future and make event planning a little easier.

We are at a standstill with our 501 c 6 status because Attorney David Stewart does not handle them through his practice. Paige offered to help pull information together to see if she can help us get reactivated.

Paige and Steve Jones mentioned that they are fixing up their former Cumberland Street Bakery and moving their financial firm into that location. The members are all very pleased to see the progress and to see a new business opening in town.

Jim McKenzie mentioned that his new antique store will opening in mid-September. Mary has seen the inside and said that everybody should be impressed when they see it.

Mary mentioned that three businesses outside of Cowan purchased an advertising package through VisitCowan.com. We refer to these as "Target Businesses" because they do not have competitors in Cowan, but do want to support the town by extension and grow their respective customer bases. This great idea is helping to offset costs of the website.

Mr. Gene Seaton, Director of Franklin County Industrial Development Board, gave a presentation to the group.

Gene pointed out that Cowan is becoming a competitive location for new industrial recruitment. In fact, Cowan is a top location for select heavy industries needing mainline rail access. There is an industrial site in Cowan's growth plan with one of the largest mainline rail frontages in the entire state. This site has great potential albeit with one critical challenge: Cowan would need to invest in water and sewer capacity improvements.

Gene also pointed out that a the former Shaw Industries carpet mill is under contract. There is a real possibility that an automobile component manufacturing business could locate there and employ over 100 people.

Gene encouraged everyone in Cowan to work together toward the infrastructure improvements we need to take advantage of the growing economy and revitalize our side of the county.

In other business, Mary mentioned that the next Commercial Club meeting will take place on September 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. and that the Work Day in the Park will take place on September 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jarod Pearson, Secretary