

Minutes of the Cowan Commercial Club

The Cowan Commercial Club met on Monday evening, April 22, 2019, at the new Simpler Times location with the following in attendance: Mary Bledsoe, David Britt, Kristina Britt, Kallie Britt, Rendi Britt, Helen Brown, Paige Jones, Avery Kelleher, Lisa Kelleher, Mark Ledbetter, Ben Money, Jarod Pearson, Kim Shelton, Cindy Sherrill, and Amanda Wiseman.

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

The minutes from the previous meeting were read aloud. Three minor errors were noted. The minutes were then accepted as corrected.

Mary introduced Cindy Sherrill and Paige Jones as two of our newest members.

The Treasurer reported a balance of \$1,804 in the main account and \$737 in the special account. It was noted that we received four new membership dues since our last meeting!

Mary gave a brief introduction to our flag project with a proposal to place 150 small flags in the park area for Memorial Day and Flag Day. After some discussion the members agreed that we may need to increase that number. Jarod moved that we authorize the committee to purchase up to 200 flags. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Mary and Page gave us some updates on the process to become a 50 c 3. The application will require a \$600 processing fee. Jarod suggested that we forgo action at this meeting and make our decision later in the year. Part of the reason for the delay is to give us time to assess our need to be involved in grant writing for the city.

Mark explained that the tourism grant that the city is working is awarded to the city itself and does not require a 501 c organization. Mark explained further that this grant could be extremely helpful in helping us develop Cowan's downtown area as a proper trailhead for the Mountain Goat Trail. There could be other grant opportunities down the road.

The members agreed to table the issue for now and revisit at a future meeting. Furthermore, the members agreed that Cowan Commercial Club and the individual businesses need to write a supporting letter for the grant application package. Jarod agreed to draft the letter and get it out to everyone this week.

Mark asked that each member of Cowan Commercial Club read the economic impact study on the Mountain Goat Trail Alliance website. Doing so will help us get a better understanding of the benefits of the project.

Mary brought up the ongoing discussion for improved signage to benefit the businesses in town. Mary, Paige, and Kristina looked at the possibility of an interstate sign; however, the price is beyond our budget. An interstate sign requires an \$800 installment plus \$500/month. In contrast, a state "brown sign" would require a \$500 initial payment and no payments thereafter.

The brown sign, however, requires that our tourist attractions meet certain conditions, such as accessible restrooms.

Jarod asked that we re-visit our proposal to upgrade and improve our existing signs of the east and west ends of town and to coordinate with Cowan Railroad Museum as they are already looking at doing a similar project. The members agreed to look at a proposal at our next meeting and hopefully make a decision to go forward.

We normally do not meet in May due to the Memorial Day holiday. Considering our need to vote on a sign proposal and make plans for Flag Day, Mary asked that we schedule a meeting for May 20th, 6:00 p.m., at Simpler Times.

The meeting concluded with encouraging discussion about new businesses in town. Paige gave us an overview of the bakery. Avery and Lisa gave an overview of Sweet Ellie's and All Blown Up. Jarod mentioned that Sernicola's sold last week and the new owners are implementing their business plan. We are hoping to hold some ribbon cuttings soon.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

L. Jarod Pearson, Secretary