

**Round Top Area Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors Meeting
October 8, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER: 9:00 am

In attendance: Brenda Bartley (Audio), Ty Clark, Derrick Jernigan, John Lowery, Sarah O'Brien, Jon Perez, Tiffany Reid, Kelli Sanford, Kaci VanCoutren, Julie Wantland;

John welcomed members in attendance, suggesting that they introduce themselves. Board members also introduced themselves.

As part of her introduction, Katie Stanihova, publisher of Round Top Register, announced she has reached an agreement to merge operations with Paper City. She's excited about the access to more staff and resources. At this time, she doesn't anticipate changes to the format or focus of the Round Top publications.

REVIEW OF MINUTES: Minutes of the September meeting were reviewed. Sarah moved that the minutes be approved as presented. Derick seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIALS:

Tiffany presented the September Financial Report. No funds were transferred from savings to checking in September, but \$3,500 has been transferred in October. There was no fundraising revenue in September, and ~\$1,000 in new member dues. October bills have been paid and we have funds to operate until mid-November. Plans are to directly collect Wine Fest ticket sales, so that income will begin to flow in October.

Unpaid 2020 membership invoices have been removed from Account Receivables.

Jon moved that the financial report be approved as presented. Derrick seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

CHAMBER PRESIDENT UPDATE AND COVID-19 UPDATES:

John shared anecdotal data about his personal business results since May. He's been seeing record sales and transactions each month and September results were almost comparable with 2019, despite having no antique festival. He feels we're seeing some pent-up demand and energy. Jon concurred and expressed the hope that Wine Fest will benefit as well. Brenda spoke on behalf of the lodging members, indicating that many are down as much as 40% this year.

John highlighted the importance of training Chamber members to actively share social media postings to make events more successful. Social media is our most effective tool.

BY-LAWS REVIEW:

Julie recommended that a team be formed to review the by-laws and recommend any changes for Chamber member approval. She volunteered to lead the effort – Tiffany and Sarah volunteered to assist. Perhaps we can send proposed changes in the same communication in which we ask Chamber members to vote for new Board members.

CHAMBER SOFTWARE PROPOSAL:

Kelli and Sarah reminded the group about the benefits of the chamber management software package (Chamber Master) that is under evaluation. The software is used by many nearby Chambers (Brenham, Bastrop, Nacogdoches) and has benefits for Chamber members as well as the Chamber office. At the September meeting, we agreed to defer purchase due to financial constraints, but they recommend that we consider a demo in the interim. Kelli will arrange a virtual demo as an agenda item in November.

RFP FOR MARKETING SERVICES:

Sarah reported on the steps being taken to request proposals for a firm to take over marketing services for the Chamber. Design at Work plans to end its services at the end of the year. We've received a list of activities and processes that is currently performed which can serve as a basis for a scope of work. We'll also receive an inventory of the intellectual property assets which are owned by the Chamber. John mentioned that maintaining that ownership of these assets is a wise strategy – avoiding the possibility of the marketing firm using control of those assets as leverage to keep the contract in place. He recommended that the planned RFP establish that ownership control as a requirement. We plan to review the RFP in the November meeting so it can be issued with a response deadline allowing a decision in December.

John expressed the opinion that, most likely, the winning bid will be an up-and-coming new firm that is looking to establish its reputation in the field, as the amount of work done currently is more than twice what would normally be done for the fees paid. He was very personally invested in the marketing campaign designed and executed by Design at Work and is now prepared to let new leadership carry it forward.

Sarah will look into listing services that will allow us to share the RFP with potential bidders. We may have to pay a small posting fee.

CHAMBER OFFICE AND VISITORS CENTER

Henkel Square has already found a new retail tenant for the existing Chamber office and would like to allow them to move in by Nov 1. This will facilitate their transition from space at the antique fair directly to the new store. Although Kelli has been cleaning things out in preparation, the move would still be difficult in October when we are processing tickets for Wine Fest and busy helping antique fair visitors. We would like to accommodate the request and agreed that, contingent on the church being ready by Oct 15th, we would commit to being out of the space by Nov 1. A motion was made to approve the move by Tiffany and seconded by Derrick. The motion was unanimously approved. Brenda will update the Town Council in her next briefing as we operate the Visitors' Center on their behalf, utilizing HOT funds.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Wine Fest – Tiffany reported that the mayor has approved Wine Fest. Registration forms to be on the trail have been sent to Chamber members along with a request to provide door prizes. Patron ticket sales will begin shortly and the full page ad will be in the RT Register that will hit the stands soon. For Friday night entertainment, we will suggest that visitors attend the Black Cat Trio performance at the Stone Cellar. As there is no cover charge, we'll plan to provide drink tickets to the guests who purchase the two day package. Tiffany continues to work the details.

Christmas in RT – Ty is reviewing plans with the town council and mayor. Similar to Wine Fest, the final decision is in the mayor’s hands. The event will be very low key with just a few of the activities we usually have. We plan to put the banner up during Wine Fest to promote it.

I DO ROUND TOP –This event has been moved to Valentines Day, February 14, 2021.

Adopt-a-Highway – Kelli had hoped to have a trash pick-up day on Nov 3rd, after the fall show. However that is voting day and many of the tents may still be up. She will look at having it after Wine Fest.

Membership: Nothing to report.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Julie presented a document she prepared to record Board of Directors’ contact information as well as term commitments. She is requesting that Board member review the draft and give her any corrections. Once finalized, we’ll post the document on the Chamber website.
- It’s time to nominate and vote on new Board members. There are 2 slots to be filled (John and Julie’s terms are expiring). Kelli is soliciting candidates.
- Ty asked about the Shop and Savor map – as it’s out of date. Kelli is working on an update.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: By Derrick at 9:59 am and seconded by Jon.

Submitted by: _____ Julie Wantland, Secretary