

Membership Committee Meeting Minutes

March 12, 2015

Committee members present: O'Neil McCoy, Matt Carson, Blake Arp, Jennifer Sweat Dellinger, Brian Ferguson, Kimberly Causey-Gomez, Mark Ousley.

Committee members not present: Charlie Belissary, Radha Herring, Eric Hunt, Jackie Neal, Bobbei Ruswinckel, Collier Schettig, Robert Stinnet, Brigitte Wilson.

Staff present: Diana Greene, Cindy Gettig, Amanda Blomquist, Kori Hippe.

Others present: Tim McCray, John Cowan, Theresa Welch

NB This meeting was originally scheduled for Feb. 19, 2015, but was rescheduled due to Horry County Schools' weather-related delays.

O'Neil McCoy called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

I. Council members, staff and guests introduced themselves.

II. Diana Greene reviewed the 2015 committee packets that explain what the chamber does, who the Board of Directors are, what the membership division does and how committee members are selected. She reminded the council of the chamber's mission. She said our job is to promote, protect and improve. I tell you this to help you as a committee because, as we go through this process together, when you're thinking about whether we want to do something, look back to that and ask is this good, does this promote, protect and improve in any shape or form? If it doesn't do any of those three things it's probably not something we want to do.

III. Cindy Gettig expounded on what the membership division does and gave an overview of the membership. She said retail, services and restaurants are the top three types of businesses that make up the chamber's membership. Nonprofits make up 5 percent of our membership. She said there's been an increase in home-based businesses and is something we will be looking into in terms of the dues structure to see if that should eventually be its own category to make sure they see the benefit of membership. More than 80 percent of businesses in our membership have less than 25 employees. Most members are in Myrtle Beach with about 15 percent on both the North and South strand and 11 percent are West of the Waterway. Last year we achieved a 90 percent retention rate. She also mentioned that an online version of chamber access has been added to the website.

IV. Tim McCray, with the City of Myrtle Beach, spoke to the council about a youth hiring campaign which aims to train and help local youth find jobs through partnerships with local businesses similar to the J-1 international student program. McCray said the city is seeking businesses to sponsor \$75 vouchers to be used to purchase clothing/uniforms for the students or businesses looking to hire full time and part-time positions.

The students will be given certification upon completion of the training program. McCray said the program's leaders will serve as mentors and references for the students.

John Cowan and Theresa Welch discussed the government bid process.

He said he is trying to educate small businesses on how the city makes purchases. Last year he said the city spent \$30 million and expects to spend more in 2015. The expenses include contracts for everything from business cards to equipment and projects, he said.

Current bids and applications are available on the city's website.

Theresa Welch said the city wants to help small businesses learn how to navigate the bid process to stimulate job growth in the area.

Cowan said there are incentives for local and small businesses.

Diana Greene asked how we could help.

Kori Hippe suggested an article in the Grand Strander.

Ferguson asked if there's any help for small businesses in the packaging of bids. Cowan said SCORE can help businesses with that.

Diana Greene said we would be interested in continuing to pursue helping the city get the word out about this and loved the idea of figuring out how to make it less overwhelming for small businesses.

Matt Carson said it would be a great tool for ambassadors.

Mark Ousley asked what percentage of bids are awarded to local companies.

Jennifer Dellinger asked about any public awareness campaigns.

The committee agreed to assist with promotion of procurement and the youth training program.

V. Cindy Gettig spoke about the Member-to-Member Expo. She said the turnout was great, and the event generated \$1,800 in revenue. She sought ideas for next year's theme.

VI. Diana Greene said the results from the annual membership survey will be back in time for the next meeting.

VII. Kori Hippe told council about new affinity programs. One is the monthly subscription to an executive leadership training newsletter. The other two affinity programs are discounted travel opportunities. She said 21 members and nonmembers are leaving March 28 to go to China. She said new for the fall is a trip to Cuba and we will continue to look at other places. Mark Ousley asked about the interest in the Cuba trip. Hippe said marketing for the trip has not yet started.

The meeting adjourned at 10:19 a.m.