

**Membership Committee Meeting Minutes  
May 19, 2016**

**Committee members present:** John Sawyer, Robert Blair, Jackie Neal, Eric Hunt, Chuck Gibbons, Jon Greenlee, Kimberly Gomez.

**Committee members not present:** Todd Setzer, Matt Carson, Carol Fallon, Bobbei Ruswinckel.

**Staff present:** Diana Greene, Cindy Gettig, Shannon Furtick, Amanda Blomquist.

**Others present:** John Mortimer, Associate Dean, Wall College of Business, Coastal Carolina University.

***The meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m.***

**I. Welcome & Introductions**

**II. Meeting Minutes Review**

Kimberly Gomez moved to adopt the minutes as presented. Eric Hunt second. All voted in favor.

**III. CCU Business Graduates**

John Mortimer gave the committee a presentation about the Wall College of Business at Coastal Carolina University. He spoke about the opportunities for the students including Wall Fellows program, CoBE (Community and Business Engagement Institute), SEL (Student Executive Leaders) and Brown Scholars. The SEL program is the main one he wanted to tell the committee about. He said it's basically a portfolio of the best students that employers, either looking for interns or employees, could find top tier students that could fit the jobs.

Chuck Gibbons asked what credits students get for internships.

Mortimer said some are paid and some are unpaid. Some give zero credits, others give class credit. He said it's different based on the degree programs within the college.

Diana Greene said she noticed there are a ton of programs for people with high GPAs. She asked what programs there are for people who are struggling.

Mortimer said they always try to push them [students] up. He said there's tutoring available, all professors are required to have office hours and there are college-wide mentoring programs.

John Sawyer said in his time at Merrill, they've brought in interns and have had Wall Fellows. He said they were tremendous assets. He said if you're looking for interns, this is a fruitful platform. He asked the committee what they'd like to do with this information.

Greene said a Grand Strander article would be good and said Sawyer as an MBACC board member could suggest the college present to the board.

Jackie Neal said this is good information that the ambassadors could bring to members.

Sawyer asked if this could be turned into a Business After Hours or some other networking event.

**IV. New Category Requests**

Amanda Blomquist asked the committee for consensus on three new categories – world travel, candy/fudge and urgent care. Blomquist said she recommended the additions of candy/fudge and urgent care and said she didn't think world travel was necessary. The committee agreed with the staff recommendation to add candy/fudge and urgent care but not world travel.

**V. GrandStrandRestaurants.com Update**

Blomquist showed the committee a preview of the redesigned GrandStrandRestaurants.com which is a fully responsive site that launched May 23. She said she'll be working on adding a local's pick feature with the folks from Waccamaw Publishers later in the year.

**VI. Renewals Update**

Shannon Furtick told the committee renewals were sent out on May 17 with a special renewal incentive staycation package to encourage members to renew by June 30.

She said they've already received about \$9,000 in renewals.

Furtick said we have two phone-a-thons scheduled – Aug. 4 and Aug. 25 in the chamber boardroom. During the phone-a-thon, volunteers will call members reminding them to renew their membership. She said she is collecting door prizes to encourage staff and ambassadors to volunteer their time.

In March, she said we visited 439 members and in May we visited 586 delivering donuts. She said members were so happy that we were bringing them donuts instead of asking for something. We held a CVB appreciation after hours thanking our CVB members on May 2. About 85 members attended.

Jon Greenlee asked if we track this and compare it to last year. Shannon said yes, on a weekly and monthly basis. For her, she said she's looking at it daily.

**VII. Business Connection**

Cindy Gettig told the committee about a new advertising benefit for members using HTC Cable Channel 4.

She said this is a partnership with Carolina Video Group that's a great advertising opportunity for members. She said there's a \$150 package that includes a business

spotlight segment that runs for a month, plus a link to the segment that can be used on the business' website.

There's a chamber member special that costs \$50 where a 30 second TV commercial will run three times a day.

Nonprofits can be a guest on the show at no charge.

#### **VIII. Membership Survey**

Greene went through the results of the 2016 membership survey. She asked the committee members to take it home and go through it to see if there's anything we should be doing moving forward for our members. She said in general we are happy with the results, but still see room to improve.

According to the survey, the No. 1 one reason people joined was to promote their business, the second was to become more involved in the community and the third was to take advantage of the networking opportunities. As you're looking at programs in services, keep these reasons in mind.

Overall benefit/return on membership – we had 94% meets or exceeds expectations.

Overall communication with members – we had 97.5% meets or exceeds expectations. This number grows over the years, big kudos to our marketing manager Kori on doing a great job getting information out.

Opportunity to be involved – A few years ago this number looked completely different. We had about 40 percent of people who didn't think they could be involved. Now we're at 96% say we're meeting or exceeding their expectations of being involved.

Customer service of staff was 97.6% meets or exceeds.

Greene said she was surprised to see so many members report emergency management as important under the question asking how important and effective the functions of the chamber are.

Under the helpfulness of services and programs (affinity programs) she said it was shocking to see that the member-to-member discount program is considered the most helpful. She said there's a great perception that it's important, but she doesn't find a lot of people use it.

One thing stood out here is the fact that we get a ton of unfamiliar with the program. Maybe it's that we have so many? We highlight them in the Grand Strander, at new member orientation, we've done tables at events, we've even done social media posts. She asked the committee to think of unique ways to promote these programs because we really want people know about these benefits.

A member benefit expo was mentioned.

Mobile app for member-to-member discounts

Greene said something else that she saw coming up was helping members connect with the media as well as information about discounts on advertising with media. Gomez suggested adding a question at the end of the survey to see if they want more information on a specific topic.

**The meeting adjourned at 10:28 a.m.**