

MINUTES
January 12, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.
Virtual Meeting

CALL TO ORDER– Joleen Larson called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

Members present: Joleen Larson, Kerri Olson, Mike Miller, Jodi Nelson, Mike Pepin (joined at 8:42 a.m.), Amy Halvorson, Terry McKay, Russ Korpela

Members Absent: Lori Moran

Others present: Brandt Johnson, Jon Smits, and Sam Wessel

Agenda/Meeting Minutes

Minutes from 12-18-2020 were reviewed. M/S McKay/Miller to approve minutes: unanimous.

Financials

Kerri Olson briefly reviewed the budget approved for 2021 and said the BID Board is in the positive for Jan. 2021.

Joleen Larson asked how much money the BID board has to spend on a downtown project and Olson said the BID Board has a pot of \$10,000. Larson asked how much was carried over from last year and Olson replied that \$2,800 was carried over.

Russ Korpela said they waited to submit items based on the outcome of this meeting but were planning to submit \$2,000 instead of \$6,000 due to reduced expenses the Chamber had and contribution for winter project. Olson said that those expenses would lead to \$800 being carried over into Jan. 2021. Korpela said it was to cover staff time, gift cards, promotions, etc.

Terry McKay asked North Town submitted for a sign grant and Sam Wessel said they are going to wait till it is warmer out and do it then.

“Show love, shop small” Business Project Discussion

Larson began by saying at the last meeting they discussed about starting a promotion/program much like what the Chamber did for the holidays. Korpela discussed how their promotion worked and how they utilized gift cards for local businesses. Korpela continued by saying that it could be anchored by an event such as “14 days of love local” and broke down how that type of event could work such as purchasing gift packages directly from the businesses and not asking for a donation. Korpela said that 3 Schweet Sisters has proposed a chocolate crawl which is estimated to cost \$1,500 and the Chamber can finance half of the event if the BID Board would help promote the event.

Korpela continued by saying he discussed with Larson about a card program to hand out to essential workers to thank them in which planning could be ready by next week (1/18/2021).

M/S Halvorson/McKay to fund \$500 for the River Falls Chamber of Commerce’s “Love Local” program:

unanimous

Discussion Regarding Unused 2020 Funds

Larson and Amy Halvorson talked about a potential gift card program with the River Falls School District and local businesses. Larson said this wouldn't be chamber checks, but rather purchasing from retailers in the BID boundary. Korpela said front line retail workers such as grocery workers could be included, and Halvorson said it could be introduced in phases where the school workers could be first and then those front line retail workers next. Korpela said the Chamber would be happy to support monetary and with staff time but would not be able to do a \$5,000 match. Olson said she worries a little bit about some businesses having hard feelings where a \$10, \$20 gift card wouldn't be applicable for their particular business and Larson said there probably would be but that is it should be the business/building owners interest to see local businesses succeed.

Olson asked if \$10 would be enough as an appreciation for the teacher and businesses which McKay said it would be used just as a gift card where people can hold onto it and spend it when they want. Korpela advocated for \$5,000 for the first round that way the group can evaluate the COVID situation. Olson said the group usually gets its funding allocation from the City in mid-Feb. McKay asked how it should be distributed and it was suggested to have this be a separate item from the "love local" program.

M/S Halvorson/McKay to fund \$5,000 for a gift card program: unanimous

Discussion on preparing Downtown for Summer

Larson said it will depend on the vaccination rate and more discussion will need to be done in a few months. It can be reviewed every month.

Discussion on potential BID Appointees

Larson talked about getting other people involved with the Board. Wessel said the new North Town Cleaner and the Fox Den owner would be good members. McKay will reach out to Sarah at North Town and Larson will reach out to the Fox Den owner, Heather. Korpela said Dr. Christian from the chiropractor clinic would be good to join the board as well.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held February 9, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

M/S McKay/Pepin to adjourn; unanimous vote at 9:25 a.m.