

Round Top Area Chamber of Commerce
April 16, 2020 via Conference Call

CALL TO ORDER: 9:06 am

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

Regrets JB Royer

REVIEW OF MINUTES: Minutes of the March meeting were reviewed. Jon moved that the minutes be approved as presented. Ty seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

CHAMBER PRESIDENT UPDATE:

John reviewed outcome of the executive committee meeting – looking at the steps we can take to adjust expenses in response to lower HOT funds and membership dues. We have decided to keep staff in place and maintain marketing for April and May. This will be reassessed at Executive Committee meeting May 7 and further recommendations shared with the Board on May 14.

As a 501 (c) (6), we are not eligible for the Payroll Protection Program. US Chambers are petitioning the government to extend that program in the next wave. Sarah volunteered to send a letter of support on behalf of our Chamber.

Sarah suggested we look at ways to diversify our membership base, perhaps a tiered rate structure to encourage individuals in the community to join and support. Sarah agreed to join the Membership Committee, headed up by Brenda, to further develop this idea. Julie will share the details of the Chamber budgets and expenses with Sarah as she had not joined the Board when they were developed/reviewed.

Members reported that 1Q occupancy rates were down, so we anticipate a large reduction in the 1Q20 HOT funding. At this point, the agreement between the Chamber and Town of RT is in place, so we don't anticipate that the funds would be withheld. We still need to re-visit/update the agreement in follow-up to the Jan review with the Town Council.

Julie reported on the April Town Council meeting. No decision has yet been made about rescheduling the RT 150th event. However, advertisement and art contest plans have been impacted. They will revisit in May.

John reported that the marketing team's focus has been redirected to promote online sales and adapted restaurant offerings. Print advertising has been pulled back. As soon as things re-open, we'll need to re-double tourism promotions.

FINANCIALS:

Julie reviewed the financial statements for February and March. We are deferring some expenditures, however regular expenses can only be covered to 3-4 months.

We have about \$12,000 in open receivables for unpaid membership dues (approx. 60 members). We will likely have to write-off a large portion of that.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Wine Fest – Tiffany Reid – Dates are Nov 6-8. Still planning to hold it, although may need to adjust how we execute it, if social distancing practices still in place.

Christmas in RT – Ty Clark – Dec 5th, 2020. The Playbook has been prepared to facilitate transition from year to year.

DISCUSSION – STATUS UPDATES FROM BOARD MEMBERS:

Chamber members are very active and creative on social media, especially Junk Gypsies, Royers, Hermann Furniture. We need to encourage all members to coordinate social media activities and actively share.

Junk Gypsies have not scheduled a 2020 Junk-a-Palooza. They are maintaining a short-term focus.

Sarah expressed belief that we will see an 18-24 month window of significant impact on events, until a vaccination is approved. Organizations will need to be proactive to adapt the events to allow the public to feel safe attending.

Kelli and Jon shared reports on restaurant businesses. Some are doing well, others are focusing on just week-end business. Stone Cellar traffic is low. Garden Co is focusing on Schulenburg location.

Kelli shared fundraising activity led by Ballad of the Bird Dog called Support Through Community. They are selling small town revival t-shirts, stickers and bandannas. Proceeds go to small businesses and restaurants in Brenham, Belleville and Round Top.

DISCUSSION – HOW CAN THE CHAMBER SUPPORT OUR MEMBERS IN THESE TIMES:

We would like to be proactive to share information, resources, tips etc. Kelli can communicate but needs to make sure the sources she's sharing are valid and public information. Sarah suggested a resource site operated by the Texas Downtown Association.

MOTION TO ADJOURN: By Julie Wantland at 10:11 am and seconded Jon.

Submitted by: _____
Julie Wantland, Secretary