

**Bridgewater Area Chamber of Commerce Board Meeting, Virtual
September 10th, 2021 8:30am**

Attending: Dan Hennessy, Jim Brown, Jayme Rhyno, Shawn Patterson, Debra Porter, Leitha Haysom, Rae, Brooke Nodding, Bruce Anderson, Lee Wallet, Cheryl Fougere

Regrets: Blair Lipsett, Liam Finney

Call to Order: 8:33 am

Additions to go under New Business: Email from Blair Lipsett re: a program from the Department of Health. Supplying Chambers with Covid Test Kits. Through Public Health - not exactly sure how it works, but **Dan will look into it.**

The role of our secretary - Josh has left the position.

Correspondence:

Federal Government Funding. Came through Sam Eisenor at The Breaker. Funding to local chambers from promote shopping locally. What is required of the Chamber to participate? We held our own shop local event and only 25 people took advantage of it. Will make inquiries about the program.

Bursary Winner - Jonah Hyson of PVEC - he did start university and his bursary of \$400 was mailed out, he was appreciative. His picture has been on the website for the past month.

Minutes: Approved

REPORTS

Education: Brooke - nothing new to report. Paul Pickering was going to come to this meeting to go over the Diversity in the Workplace session - he will be coming to the October meeting. Three part presentation on Diversity in the Work Place - the first one garnered very little interest, so has been postponed. Paul would like to present to the board in person at our October to clarify what he can offer to membership.

Government Involvement: Bruce, Jayme and Leitha met to discuss a Labour Market Survey. Shortages in many sectors. Many small businesses are hurting. Clearly affecting us. So - how does the Chamber move on this? Discussion led us to a three pronged approach:

1. Canvass for support - get information from businesses about how it's affecting them, and send that info back to municipalities and governments. Drive awareness. We NEED to request a labour market survey. **Bruce, Jayme, Leitha will meet with Dan and Jim to discuss confirm content of the survey, Rae will help with layout and social media.**
2. Reach out to the community as a Chamber (job fair?) to schools about opportunities in the area. PVEC, NGRHS. Queens County as well? Would they be interested in hosting something? Focus on grade 11 and 12. Hosted by Board Members but we NEED to involve businesses and organizations because it's their potential work force. **Dan will reach out to guidance teachers/schools to start this conversation.** There are also Co op programs available through schools that perhaps we could highlight or partner with. NSCC? We have

an in at NSCC so **Blair can spearhead this**. Start this channel - we are planning something- do you want to work with us.

3. Advocacy around housing, child care, and other barriers to employment. Hold an event and maybe partner with another service provider to highlight this? Eg Employment Solutions and ISANS. Faye? Initially contact Faye Patey with ISANS and Jim Keye from Nova Scotia Works to discuss, find out if they have plans/programs in place. Request meeting in October or November. **Who is taking the lead on this?** Develop key discussion points. Then contact our local government representatives: Mayors Mitchel and Bolivar-Getson, MLA/Ministers Druhan and Corkum-Greek. We need to have some solid information and data before we move forward.

Community Engagement: Debra - nothing to report! Summer holiday means no one has been getting together. Hoping to hold a meeting next week.

Rae did meet with Josh and Brian in July - big plans for a Facebook campaign with a scheduled series of posts. But with debates, Josh leaving, website, newsletter etc. Rae can't take it on. Brian could do some video help/support to showcase members... **but we need more volunteers to spear head and take this on**. Maybe Jennifer Naugler could do some of this videographer... hired support? Can we start that conversation again? We do have some capital and would be nice to use that to support our membership.

We also need a plan - how to best highlight our members, promote their businesses. **So maybe we need an expert! Ask for proposals? We want a marketing campaign**. So need to be clear about our ask, and this will be addressed at the CME meeting.

Rae - Please get involved and interact with the website! It's really dynamic, and it's an excellent website, but the Board needs to be behind it. It's constantly being updated. We need to share it, and get involved with it. Again - need the lunch and learn to talk about and promote the Chamber. Is this coming up in October with Jim and Blair? Haha it's actually September 23! So they are going to scramble to get something together :)

Nomination Committee: nothing to report.

Financial report: submitted by Lee - welcome back and congratulations! Please see attached report.

Executive Governance:- have not met, but will be meeting in the next few days.

Directors Report: - membership - some invoices have to be sent out again. We do know we will be losing a few members. Online programs are going well - two starting this month. Close to \$10,000 in membership so far.

Town of Bridgewater: - Cheryl - There was a break during the summer. Focus for council is the Exit 12A interchange, land development. Report from Design Point - there's a public document which we are encouraged to look at (through the Town of Bridgewater app). Exciting development projecting a 9% growth for the population of Bridgewater over 10 years. Zoning and land development is the focus. Residential development in the works. What are the challenges with this growth?(so looking at housing and those needs, attracting new families ie across all demographics, attracting new businesses. Next step is to identify gaps and opportunities, further analysis is going to take place to look at this. Would be great to get this information in front of our membership! **Could businesses reach out to the Town**

about these opportunities? Cheryl will take this back to CAO. Perhaps could be a lunch and learn? Starting discussions about Christmas on the LaHave for this year. (hey the BACC should be involved with the parade! Is there a major sponsor yet? Could the Chamber be a sponsor at a different level?)

Leitha MODL - Since I was giving the report I'm not sure what I shared in any detail - but Council and I personally have been on a break, everyone is anxious to get back to the regular schedule. We are looking forward to meeting in person again once we enter Phase 5. Connect2Rec is now in place. Ground has broken on the Stonement Seniors Development at Osprey Ridge. We are going to have a discussion about Truth and Reconciliation Day. Perhaps could tie in with Orange Shirt Day?

OLD BUSINESS:

Strategic Planning Event: A lot of this discussion about CME/Outreach and Advocacy work is feeding back into this strategic plan. This is going to be on hold for a little bit because we have some really solid initiatives in front of us right now - can stay under old business.

Bridge The Gap Campaign: No updates Think this was through Josh... was there any action we have to take? We are going to take this off our list.

Town Hall with the Premier - was a good event! Feels like a lifetime ago! Should we reach out to our new Premier and our MLA and SCG as Minister of Ec Dev't. to host some kind of event? Maybe we should look at January to have an event - gives us time for the dust to settle and manage the reopening. But we should reach out early so we are on the list for January. If they do agree we should start promotion early. **Who is taking the lead on this?**

Passport to Taste - don't have an update, continues till the end of September, unsure how it's going? Rae indicated that some restaurants weren't promoting it... will get an update as BACC is providing the prizes.

NEW BUSINESS:

Debates both provincial and federal. Recap - the Provincial one was easier to organize at the Bridgewater United Church. Approx 75-80 people onsite. Facebook live - connection issues at first, approx 140 people were watching. Well received. BACC and candidates are able to share the after the fact. NSAR sponsored \$500. Federal - larger venue with Best Western - went well. Approx 100 people. NSAR sponsored \$1000. Live stream was excellent - work provided by Patrick Hirtle. Extremely professional. Maybe up to 780 views. Really only cost us a few hundred dollars. Feedback to call it a "Meet the Candidates" or "Panel Discussion" as opposed to debate. For the Premiers event should try to go with the church again. Might also be nice to have **BACC shirts or pins to indicate we are Chamber members. There might be a chamber member who could do this service. Jim will look into this.**

Board Member Openings - Josh was our secretary, but not officially a board member. Leitha will act as secretary - **we will do a vote at the next meeting.** Shawn will have to be changed as the secretary on record, and will go back to "Past President". It would be a great idea to have exit interviews when a Board Member leaves.

Budget approval - will BF next meeting as we need Quorum.

Newsletter - next edition is on September 21st.

Recap of two debates, tease the Premier and MLAs, reports from TOB and MODL, would also do three interviews - Oak Island is lined up with Rae, who else to interview? Maybe a restaurant that has had struggles? Perhaps Waves or River Pub? Maybe a focus on reopenings? We will delay for a week and have a summary of the lunch and learn about the Chamber.

Adjourned at 10:11. Next meeting October 8th at MODL Council Chambers.