



Keep Carter County Beautiful (KCCB) Board Meeting Minutes

Chamber Conference Room, 615 W. Elk Avenue, Elizabethton & Zoom

April 21, 2022, at Noon

Board Members Present: Don Hlavaty, Lisa Vezzosi, Ed Jordan, Mike Mains, Ed Basconi, Mike Simerly, Ginger Holdren, Ross Garland, Simon Maddock

Board Members Absent: Doug Theobald

Guest Present: Mary Ellen Hlavaty

Call to Order: Don Hlavaty opened the meeting at 12:03pm. A quorum was present.

Approval of the Agenda: Board approved the agenda. Comments for additions were to be included under the new business section.

Prayer: Ed Jordan gave the prayer.

Pledge of Allegiance: Ross Garland led the pledge.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from February 17, 2022, delayed due to no quorum at the meeting opening on the March date. The **minutes were approved** by the Board with an abstaining vote from Mike Simerly, and Ginger Holdren. **Minutes** from the last regular meeting on March 17, 2022, were **approved by the Board** with an abstaining vote from Ross Garland, Ginger Holdren, and Ed Basconi.

KCCB Treasurer Report: Mike Simerly

- The bank statement closed on 3/31/2022 with a balance of \$8,085.82. This included expenses of \$466.09 as a result of the application fees associated with our incorporation and non-profit submissions. These fees were paid initially by Don Hlavaty and reimbursement made to him.
- The Chamber of Commerce bank account through Bank of Tennessee was closed by the Chamber Foundation in April 2022. The Chamber cut a check for \$9,452.55 to KCCB. This represented the last City of Elizabethton payment of \$1,250, and the cash out of our PayPal account.
- KCCB opened a new banking account and debit card through Northeast Community Credit Union with the deposit of \$9,452.55. Checks were ordered with a fee of \$11.00 and a debit card issued for KCCB. We were required to deposit \$5.00 in a savings account, and the remainder was placed into the checking account.
- We have pending payments due for which we are awaiting the invoices. There will be a check for Hannon's Landscaping for the tree purchases totaling \$3,240.00, and \$720.00 for the tree maintenance. We are also awaiting invoice for \$250.00 that represents our portion of the Trash Trout maintenance. Mail Chimp invoiced \$12.07 for April to be reimbursed to Don Hlavaty.
- With the transition, a check had been made prior to the approval for \$466.09 to Don Hlavaty. A **motion was made** by Mike Simerly and seconded by Ed Jordan **for the reimbursement costs of \$466.09 to Don Hlavaty**. The **Board approved unanimously**.

- Mike Mains indicated that his new City of Elizabethton budget for 2022-2023 request included an additional \$6,000 to go toward mowing around the trees and maintenance.

Public Comments: No comments were made.

Status of KCCB Corporation/501C3: Don Hlavaty, Lisa Vezzosi

- Our application for 501C3 status was approved as of 2/24/2022. We were declared a Tennessee Non-Profit Public Charity organization. Although our application took only three weeks to approve, it took another two weeks to be posted online, and we are awaiting the finalization letter. In reference to the IRS website, it indicates that our 1023EZ application was approved, but does not indicate we used the 1023 EZ form.
- The application for tax-exempt in Tennessee has been mailed and is still pending. If approved, our applicable purchases can be made without sales tax for state and county taxes. These purchases can only be made with our accompanying authorization letter and paid by our corporate bank account check or debit card. Individuals making purchases cannot be reimbursed for purchases with sales tax exemption.
- The PayPal information has been changed on our website. A new button for contributions has been created and established at PayPal for donation reporting, as required by law. The cost of non-profit corporate rate is 1.9%.
- The question was asked on the purpose of Mail Chimp. Don indicated it is an app that identifies our emails are corporate mail and not spam. This avoids rejection to delivery from the email providers. While there are a few email addresses that may be returned due to a closed email account, Don can maintain the mailing list more accurately with this service. The volume of emails for event announcements, press releases, etc. warrants the inclusion. The Mail Chimp account allows 500 contacts for \$11.00/mo. plus taxes, while we now utilize about 350 contacts. **A motion was made by Ed Jordan and seconded by Ross Garland to approve the Mail Chimp expense routed through the debit card. The Board approved unanimously.** Our Mail Chimp account will be set-up with the debit card for monthly payment rather than Don's personal credit card. These payments will be directed paid from our checking account each month. Once the tax-exempt status is approved, it will be included as well.
- Lisa reported that all the Conflict-of-Interest compliance statements have been received for this year. As a reminder, they will be required again in January 2023 with the Board elections.
- With our new corporation status, KCCB will be required to submit an IRS 990 filing at the end of our fiscal year of June 30,2022. We have until September 15, 2022, to submit.
- Simon Maddock indicated his wife, Melinda, will work with Microsoft for their charity benefit filing. Don stated that Microsoft, in his past experience with non-profit educational companies, may offer additional benefits of Microsoft 365 software and Microsoft Teams access. Simon stated he would check on that information.
- Ed Jordan congratulated Don Hlavaty and Lisa Vezzosi for the hard work of obtaining our non-profit 501C3 status and accompanying paperwork. He stated that he had been working toward this goal for years, and he is so happy it has now been achieved.

Website Changes: Don Hlavaty

- Don reported the PayPal button on our website directs donors to the website which will document donations that qualify as tax deductible for donors.

- Because the Chamber Foundation notified us that Seth & Rikki will no longer be the administrators for Facebook on our webpage, we need to designate a new administrator. Simon Maddock has volunteered, and the transfer will be effective 4/30/2022. The new Facebook page will redirect users to our regular URL website page.
- Don asked the group about an update option on the website to identify Board members with a photo and the names. He wondered if we should do that since the only photo now has the original board membership from many years ago. Ed Basconi suggested we could take a group picture at future date and indicate the names under the photo. If anyone is not present, we would just indicate the absence in the photo. The group seemed to agree with the plan.
- Don stated he would like to focus more website discussion for recycling. There was a discussion on the latest Carter County news of landfill limits and the effort of the County Commission to acquire more land. Ginger updated the group that there are numerous rumors and false claims regarding the land available and claims of imminent domain. Ginger indicated the claims were politically motivated. Ed Jordan suggested we solicit auto dealers for their existing community programs.
- Ginger also reported that the county has a new machine to recycle cardboard at the recycling center. She stated that a company (Watauga Valley Auction) had reached out to the county for assistance with the cardboard recycling because they did not have sufficient employees to remove the plastic & Styrofoam packaging. One of the County Commissioners (Mark Tester) provided that business with assistance so the recycling could be completed. Don asked Ginger to thank the commissioner for his assistance to that business.
- Don reported his meeting with the Bank of Tennessee on a shared business event. Don found out their annual Shred-it day resulted in any boxes being placed in their dumpster. After a discussion on the matter, Mayor Woodby arranged for a recycle dumpster to be placed in Bank of Tennessee parking lot for the event day.
- Simon suggested we contact Eastman regarding recycling. Ginger reported that suggestion was already in progress. Don also made the comment that we need to work with Carter County and surrounding counties to accept plastic recycling beyond the 1-2 type limitations.

Grant Submission: Ginger Holdren

- Ginger asked Isaac Nicholson for an update to our submission. He indicated that many requests were submitted, and it was still pending. He is reaching out to Ginger to review the process and make suggestions on future submissions.
- Lisa indicated there is a new Tennessee Federal Scenic Byway booklet being published by the *Keep Tennessee Beautiful* group. While there is a limited mention for NE Tennessee, it was a nice booklet that can be ordered.
- Don reported the KAB website has a volunteer portal and offer clean-up kits to anyone requesting it.

Trash Trout Signage: Ross Garland

Ross indicated that Mr. Elliot had made a suggestion for us to place informational signage at the Elizabethton Trash Trap similar to the one in Roan Mountain. Their signage included some history and information on the purpose, which may detract people from tampering with the set-up. Mike Mains indicated that he thought Eric Anderson had also sent him this information. He would look for it and forward the email to everyone. Simon made **a motion to add our own**

similar signage with our logo on it to the Elizabethton trap. It was seconded by Ed Jordan, and the **Board approved** unanimously.

City Park Signage: Mike Mains

Mike indicated he was low on staffing and had not yet completed the signage placement. Lisa volunteered to get a group together to help alleviate the crew burden if Mike thought it would be useful. Mike stated that he was grateful for the assistance. Ed Jordan seconded the offer and Mike Mains said to stop by and get more information on placement from him.

Wayfinding Signage for County: Ross Garland

- Ross reported all the signage has been manufactured. There are 10 large ones and 50 smaller ones. He indicated that we need to pick up the merchandise, but we would need a box truck due to the large sizes of the signs. He felt it was far too large for a pickup truck to handle. Ross stated he had a friend and would contact him to borrow the truck. Ed Jordan indicated it would be worth the money to rent a U-Haul truck if needed, as well.
- Ross stated once the signage is picked up, an arrangement to store the signs with the Highway Patrol facility has been made. The County Road Department will place the large signage along the highway routes. We can arrange for smaller signage to be placed in county park areas. Ross indicated he would check on the box truck and contact us when assistance is needed for transportation to storage.

Seed Planting: Ed Basconi

- Ed has taken delivery of a variety of plant seeds for the city garden areas. He stated that he harvested sunflower seeds last year, so we can use them this year. Mike Mains indicated that he had a new tractor to plow up the areas. Ed Basconi stated we should wait to plant until after the second week of May to avoid frost damage. Mike Mains will determine the areas for planting this year. Since we previously had coordinated with the Main Street group to plant along the downtown areas last year, Ed will reach out to them for help. Ed Basconi and Mike Mains will coordinate the time and let us know the plan for a planting event.
- Ross indicated the existing two Tweetsie Trail plots need to be mulched. Don reported that the clean up of these areas was already scheduled to take place next week. Don will determine the mulch needed at the Mary Patton plot. However, the Sycamore Shoals plot is too grassy and some of the plants are dying. Because the soil is too gravel ridden being that it is on the train track bed, we may need to figure out different plants. Don will investigate what should be done at Sycamore Shoals and report back.
- **A motion was made by Lisa to reimburse Ed Basconi for the purchase of this year's seed for \$138.56.** The motion was seconded by Ed Jordan, and the **Board approved** unanimously.

Future Giveaway Items: Lisa Vezzosi

A discussion was made on the future events planned and the need for giveaway items. Suggestions were made for items to order with our logo on them. Suggestions included safety vests, garden signs/lawn signs, recycled grocery tote bags, car ashtrays, car litter bags, t-shirts, pens, etc. Ed Jordan indicated we received free items from KTB in the past. Lisa will investigate some of the options and report back at the next meeting.

Business Sponsored Events: Don Hlavaty

- Don reported that he had met with Carter County Bank regarding sponsorship. Andrew indicated he was not interested and redirected him to the Bank of Tennessee Marketing Department. He stated that he had no funding and felt he could not ask employees to volunteer for any events.
- Don indicated business litter along West Elk Avenue was terrible. He stated we need to partner with local businesses to help them clean-up. Don asked Ginger to help out enforcement by county commissioners assistance. He gave the Elizabethton Post Office as an example stating the grass has yet to be mowed, litter is present, and no one seems to be maintaining the exterior of the property. Ginger indicated she would talk to the mayor regarding possible resolution. Ginger said enforcement cooperation may be needed between the city and county. The problem of a patrol is often determined by who gets the Tennessee State monies for enforcement, much like the bulk items on non-covered loads on roadways.
- Don and Ed Jordan explained there is a lot of dumping and vehicle load dropping items. Ed Basconi suggested an article in the *Chamber of Commerce Newsletter* regarding the problem. He also suggested that perhaps a promotion to recognize a business for excellence could be a monthly event. The winner could receive signage indicating the achievement.
- Don also indicated to Ginger that an increase in fines by the county could help curb these behaviors. Other surrounding counties have a much higher fine and they have more enforcement for compliance.

New Business:

- Ginger suggested we work to get an article placed in the “*Carter County Living*” magazine, which is published by the *Elizabethton Star*. We should contact Delany Scalf. Our recent non-profit status should be known to everyone.
- Ed Jordan stated we needed to discuss enforcement for littering with the new sheriff. He felt everyone should take the opportunity to vote for a candidate that is supportive of our efforts.
- Ed Jordan indicated that the website needs a firm date on some of the future events, so people can plan on them. Don indicated he will add them in.
- Don indicated the *Chamber of Commerce Newsletter* was now coming to him. He had not been previously added to the mailing list.

Next Meeting Scheduled: Next Board meeting scheduled for May 19,2022 at the Chamber of Commerce Conference Room, 615 West Elk Avenue, Elizabethton at noon and available by Zoom.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn made by Lisa, seconded by Ginger, and Board approved unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 1:49pm.

Submitted by: Lisa Vezzosi, Secretary