

BREMEN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Minutes of the November 13, 2025, meeting

Chamber president Rich Lines welcomed members and guests to the Chamber's annual meeting at the Bremen Community church at 6:30 p.m. and led the group in the pledge of allegiance. Following an invocation by Pastor Linda Ward, dinner was served.

The group moved to the sanctuary for the meeting and speakers. The minutes of the October meeting were available for viewing but will be published in the December email. The treasurer reported the following account balances:

Checking:	\$1 590.65
Money market:	7 426.77
CD:	13 491.64
CD:	14 930.45
CD:	5 525.73

She noted that over \$5 500* was donated to various community needs this year. David Foltz moved to receive the report, seconded by Dee Mowry and approved.

The Chamber welcomed eight new businesses in 2025. One of the major advantages of membership is availability of insurance programs through the *Southern Ohio Chamber Alliance* or *SOCA*. Non-members present were encouraged to join, with the first year of membership being free. The Chamber sign at the intersection of routes 37 and 664 has four spaces available; cost is \$300 for the year plus the plaque with the business's name. There being no old business, discussion moved to announcements:

Santa in the Village will be held on December 14, from 3 to 5 p.m.; candy donations are needed and can be left at the village office. Marilyn Boyd moved that the chamber donate \$100 toward this project; Heather Yontz seconded the motion, and it carried. *(- included in the 2025 donations)

The December chamber meeting will be at Bremen Elementary for the Assembly Singers' Christmas program; date and time to be announced.

Awards for Beautification by a Business were presented to:

The Rushcreek Pub and Grub, Chad Ashbaugh
Self-Made Properties, brothers Justin and Jeff Self

The State of the School System, the Township, the Village

The evening's speakers began with Matt Destadio, in his 4th year as Director of Education Services with Fairfield Union Local Schools. He affirmed the importance of the district's placing on the State Report Card, but he also cited attention given the individual student's growth in skills. The report card places FU in the top 2 districts in Fairfield County, the top 20% in the state; we have a 98% graduation rate and are tops in CCWM (College/Career/Work Force/ Military) readiness in the county. High school highlights include math strategy, resulting in an 11% improvement, 22% above the state average; reduced absenteeism; 19 in-house classes for college credit; ag, business and home economics training; Workforce Connection to prepare students for employer identified needs. Staff are working on early reading skills and intervention strategies; all four buildings have extra support for military families.

Chad Ashbaugh, chairman of the Rushcreek Township Trustees, reported that there are no more gravel township road; the last 15 miles have been tar-and-chip sealed. There have been 17 new home permits issued this year, and the fire department has had 385 EMS runs, 90 fires and 50 car accidents. EMS has a new tracking system for their drug supplies.

Mayor Anthony Taylor highlighted the completion of the water meter project, giving monthly rather than quarterly readings, and detecting leaks. The waste water treatment plant added a surge protector to prevent outages due to lightning strikes. The Broad Street sidewalk and conduit project has begun; this necessitated the removal of many trees, but plans are to replant with species less likely to interfere with walkways. An ADA swing was added to the park, thanks to collaboration by a local group, business and individual. Howell Park's walking path repaving has begun, with additional major projects slated using grant funds. Over all, the village has sought and received \$2.6 million in grants to \$269,000 of local input.

The evening's presentations were capped by Jonett Haberfield, Executive Director of *Visit Fairfield County*. Her job involves developing marketing tools and educating residents on

- > what there is to do in Fairfield County
- > the impact tourism already has in the county,

> and what can be done to increase Bremen's share.

Bremen is promoted on the *Visit Fairfield County* website, sharing businesses, events and connections, like the origin of the Trail of Scarecrows begun here. Fairfield County saw \$700 million in total economic impact from tourism in 2023; this includes direct visitor spending, direct jobs and an estimated \$724 per household in tax burden relief. There are 925 people in Bremen every business day, up 3.7% from 2024, and 92,000 drive through annually - how do we get them to stop and add to the local economy? The county's 3% lodging tax includes the short term rentals popping up in Bremen and the township for overflow Hocking Hills visitors. What do we offer in hospitality, aesthetics and things to do while they are overnighting - or if they live here? Do we want village growth? How can we control, direct it? These are the concerns she left us to consider.

A motion to adjourn was made by Dee Mowry, seconded by Dave Foltz and carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Schmitz, secretary