

Bremen Area Chamber of Commerce

Minutes of the November 30, 2023 annual meeting

The Bremen Area Chamber of Commerce held its annual meeting at the Bremen Area Historical Society on Thursday, November 30. President Dave Foltz welcomed approximately 30 members and local residents at 6:30 p.m. and led the group in the pledge of allegiance. He then introduced the other members of the executive board as well as guests.

Minutes of the October meeting were approved as published on a motion by Marilyn Boyd, seconded by Rich Lines and carried. Treasurer Sue Henwood reported the following account balances:

Checking	\$3 705.60
Community Fund	4 876.54
CD	12 316.82
CD	13 630.30
CD	5 076.89

She also noted that the CD's have earned \$814.28 since investing earlier this year. Taxes were filed for 2022 and our "reinstatement of continued existence" was filed and received from the state of Ohio. There are currently four member businesses, including one from Cleveland, enrolled in SOCA insurance plans. A planter was sent to the new Rushcreek Processing and Deli business welcoming them to the community. Sue reminded us that Christmas Fund donations are being accepted now.

In old business, Dave congratulated chairman Toni Harper on a 6th successful Scarecrow Tour; the community had 27 participants in 5 categories, including residential, business, and organizations, with individual scarecrows or scenes. There was a very nice photo write-up in the *Towne Crier* of the winners. The idea of a December evening social event was presented and declined.

In new business, current trustees Toni Harper and Rich Lines were nominated for new terms; there were no further nominations, and Toni and Rich were voted in for 2024.

Announcements:

The chamber sign at the intersection of 37 and 664 has four advertising spaces available. The year's rental runs from March 1, 2024 through February, 2025; cost is \$300 plus \$50 for making a plaque. Rentals generate Community Fund revenues.

“Santa in the Village” will be from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. on December 10; this usually involves 125 to 150 children.

The December chamber meeting will be December 18 at Bremen Elementary School; the high school Assembly Singers will present a program of Christmas music at 10:00, followed by lunch.

Speakers then followed:

Mayor Anthony Taylor recongnized administrator Bill Robinette, fiscal officer Lydia Coakley and the members of the village council; he then presented the state of the village. Curb and gutter work on several streets, repaving of Main Street, storm drains upgrading took place in 2023. Grants allowed for new water and flow meters, and the water plant is now fully automated, with equipment and training for in-house repairs. The office computer system was updated; older large trees have been removed and smaller varieties have been planted. The pool hosted many special events; right of ways were completed for access to properties on School Street and behind Subway. There are grant applications awaiting approval or funding for 2024, and the savings account went from \$603k in 2020 to nearly \$2,053,500.

Chad Ashbaugh, chairman of the Rushcreek Township trusses, reported the chipping and sealing of 14.5 miles of township road and disposal of 400 dumped tires. Zoning inspector Deidra Hiles was introduced. The zoning committee issued 27 permits, and there were 8 new constructions; they are updating requirements for short-term rentals and planning for organized growth. Challenges for 2024 include seeking grants for fire department and road work, salaries and benefits to retain personnel and recruitment of new workers.

Superintendent Chad Belville reported on the state of the Fairfield Union Local School District. The state report card ranked us with 21 of 25 possible stars; only Bloom Carroll at 22 ranked higher in the county and Pickerington had 20. He recognized board member Jeff Schmelzer and cited the school staff and the villages for the district’s strength. The motto “Every day, every way, excellence is a way of life” came from monthly meetings with the high school class presidents. Facility work included replacement of the elementary building roofs and rebuilding the memorial wall at Bremen; replacement of the district’s chillers and electronics is under way. Students need to feel loved, secure and supported in their preparations for a variety of future paths. For security, a \$400k grant has allowed security camera upgrades and classroom door locks; there are deputies in each building. Investment in student preparation means that curriculum outlays have gone from \$10k in 2013 to \$600k this year, with emphasis on reading support and intervention. Students begin planning their future goals in 6th, 7th and 8th grades. Yearly, fifty to seventy-five will choose a

2 year JVS program; they still are FU students, involved in extra-curricular activities and tracked for academic success and employment post-high school. Seniors can do their academic credits first and second quarters on-line and then join *WorkForce Development* in on-the-job training and work for the 3rd and 4th quarters, with a guaranteed position if they complete the course. Fairfield Union shows excellence in sports, music and extra-curricular competitions for a well rounded school experience. The district is financially strong due to fiscal responsibility.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Schmitz, secretary