

Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce  
Tuesday, February 11, 2025, 8:33 am  
161 Building, Columbus, WI  
Google meet: [meet.google.com/qhb-mnaf-pvt](https://meet.google.com/qhb-mnaf-pvt)  
Join by phone (US) +1 727-873-0110 PIN:808006072

The monthly meeting was called to order at 8:33 am by Katie Nichols. Members present: David Bennett, Suzanne Walcott, Tommy Kempfer, Katie Nichols, Barbara Oelke, Patti Walker, Cheryl Besaw and Nick Sharrow.

The following items were added to the agenda: CHLPC requests partnership with Summer Band Series in the Park, election of Secretary, Handbook, and business photos. Motion by Barbara Oelke, seconded by Nick Sharrow to approve the agenda, carried.

Minutes from February 8, 2024, cannot be found, motion by Dave Bennet, seconded by Nick of acknowledge missing and moving on. Motion carried. March 14 meetings were presented. Motion by Tommy Kempfer, seconded by Barbara Oelke to approve minutes. Carried.

Citizen Comments: Concern by a citizen that a member of the board was not representing the Chamber of Commerce in a positive manner. Has heard several negative comments including about the Chamber. When starting a new business, they were encouraged not to join the chamber because it was going down. This certainly is not productive for the chamber. Citizen wanted the organization to know these facts.

Treasurer's Report: All bills were paid by the end of the year. Memberships are coming in online and by Stripe. Balance after today's deposits is \$5039.60.

The chamber received thank you notes from Red Bud Players, Historical Society, and several miscellaneous letters from organizations when they don't know an address. These are forwarded. We received an invitation to attend the annual hospital meeting February 24, 2025; a request for ad in the Columbia County and Dodge County Visitors Guide (did this last year). Motion by Nick Sharrow, seconded by Barbara Oelke to do the ads again for an amount of \$1065.00. Motion carried. The Chamber of Commerce will continue with the Elaine Baerwald Memorial Scholarship. High School will select a candidate who will be majoring in business to receive award. Katie Nichols will present award May 14, 2025.

Digital Report: Received an email from Cale Zomer, and he hosts Hometown Today on 95.3 WBEV. I'm reaching out to see if the Columbus Chamber would be interested in coming on our show a couple of times a year to promote community events in Columbus. The show airs on weekdays from 9am-11am. If you are interested, just let

me know some possible date ranges based on your upcoming events, and we can get you on the calendar!

The Chamber will evaluate their event dates and get back to Cale.

David Bennet and Katie will coordinate the city calendar to merge the present calendar hosted by Tourism and get it connected with the Chamber of Commerce Website.

We received an invitation from Dodge County for Small Businesses Clinic. Chamber will get out to membership via Facebook. Cheryl Besaw volunteered to take over the chamber Facebook page. She will work with Katie to get this all going and communicate updates as needed.

Via phone we received requests from Grothman's office for a representative to visit one of our meetings to update us on what they are doing in Washington. School Administrator, Jake Flood, wants to attend a meeting and update Chamber on the school referendum coming in April.

Several phone calls received about Amtrak. Questions were answered. We need to get information on our website.

An AI company in Sun Prairie contacted us. This is something we may want to consider while marketing Columbus.

Patti will set up a 3-way phone call with JD Milburn and Bob (of Web Wisconsin) to coordinate the redirection of our secondary website, getting full administration for the chamber for all our social media, websites, LinkedIn, Bing, Yelp, Instagram, etc. Katie will send invites to Patti Walker on all websites or media. Suzanne Walcott will begin drafting a letter regarding this matter in the event it cannot be completed by phone.

#### Old Business:

Memberships are coming in.

Red Bud Days will be May 10, 2025, with the Prince and Princess Contest, a drawing for Red Bud Trees and a Pre-Sale of Bare Root Red Bud Trees with an Arborist (on-site May 10) to explain care and maintenance of the Red Bud Trees. Plans are well underway. Odd Fellows will have their Food Truck Rally in Fireman's Park. Historical Society will do their Pie & Ice Cream on the boulevard.

Wine Walk 2025 will be moved to mid-October. Katie Nichols and Cheryl Besaw will coordinate this event.

Annual Meeting 2025 was a good meeting, great food, and an excellent presentation by our City Administrator and Community Development departments. We need to send out their handout to our membership. Perhaps we could do this as part of a newsletter via the website.

Katie Nichols made a motion to move forward with the present Tourism Event Calendar by renaming the back side and hosting it on the Chamber Website. Seconded by Nick Sharrow, motion carried.

#### New Business:

Important dates for 2025 include: Red Bud Days (May 10), City Garage Sale (May 10 & end of September), June 7<sup>th</sup> Trek 100-mile race through town, SAGBRAW Bike Trip (August 6-8), Wine Walk (October), Odd Fellows Event (end September), Holiday Hop

(November) Holiday Train.

CHLPC requests partnership with Summer Band Series in the Park. The Chamber has only 3 picnic licenses available, not sure we could partner with all three as we will use one for the Wine Walk. We need to check insurance, licenses, costs, and responsibilities. Need to know what type of alcohol would be involved. Dates are June 19, July 17, and Aug 14, 2025.

Motion by Katie Nichols, seconded by Nick Sharrow, to nominate Suzanne Walcott as secretary. Motion carried.

Need to revisit Handbook for the Chamber. Suzanne Walcott will get onto Google Drive so all will have access. Need to finish, approve and utilize.

We should encourage all members to submit photos of their business, employees, products, etc. so we have resources to continue our website featuring our membership. Need place to update to website.

Motion by Tommy Kempfer, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Katie Nichols to adjourn. Motion Carried

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Walcott, Secretary