

Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce
Tuesday, December 10, 2025, 8:30 am
161 Building, Columbus, WI
Google meet: meet.google.com/qhb-mnaf-pvt
Join by phone (US) +1 727-873-0110 PIN:808006072

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 am by Suzanne Walcott. Members present: David Bennett, Suzanne Walcott, Barbara Oelke, Nick Sharrow, Cheryl Besaw and Tommy Kempfer. Matt Amundson, City Administrator, was also present. Patti Walker.

Motion by Nick Sharrow, second by Barbara Oelke to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

There were no minutes of the October meeting presented, we will approve at the next meeting. Tommy Kempfer arrived and took over the meeting.

Matt Amundson was present to represent Columbus and would like to see more cooperation with the city to improve communication and perhaps work closer together on projects. Sees the struggle that organizations have to get volunteers, thus limiting what they are able to accomplish.

Mail: Nothing to report.

Digital Report: Cheryl Besaw reports that we have 2116 followers. Continuing to post Chamber information and promoting the Chamber. Featuring new businesses with Facebook posts.

Cheryl Besaw is now handling the phone: Reports calls from Associated Bank and Odd Fellows about membership. Referred to the website.

Old Business:

Website update: Web redirect has not occurred.

Handbook: Updated preview of the Handbook is on the Google drive. Please review for approval at our December meeting.

Need to get the additional membership tags delivered.

Wine Walk was discussed. Ticket sales were down; businesses have commented that they were not as successful as last year. The chamber uses 2-ounce glasses and cancelled the order for cups so the chamber should be receiving a refund.

Cookie Walk had a good response even though it was snowing. The Holiday Hop and parade are this coming weekend.

2026 Board Members and Officers needed: Katie Sharrow and Suzanne Walcott are not returning. Need to recruit for next year. Perhaps we should reach out to Mary at Vick & Associates and Melody at Associated Bank as possible board members. It was suggested that we begin talking about combining with the Fall River Chamber. We should set up a discussion sometime next year to begin a 3-year plan.

Annual Dinner

It is on January 26 at Magnolia's. Motion by Nick Sharrow, second by Barbara Oelke, to have a \$1000.00 set aside for a free annual dinner this year for members of the Chamber, to include 2 meals for each business. Additional members would be \$20.00. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: A detailed report will be emailed to board members. Memberships are coming in and there will be a refund from the Wine Walk, so there will be sufficient funds to cover the Annual Dinner.

New Business:

David Bennett reported:

- The City of Columbus would be looking to designate a local non-profit, preferably the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce, in order to fulfill State Statute and to enable more funding opportunities for tourism. This would involve the City allocating some room tax funds to the Chamber, in which 100% of the funds would be used for tourism promotion and activities and/or to help fund staff that would be dedicated to tourism efforts. City staff will bring this up to the Tourism Commission and work out details from the City's side and look to see if the Chamber would be willing to accept the designation. The goal would be to designate in 2026, then budget accordingly in 2027. If designated, the Chamber would have to report to the City annually for accountability.
- The City is not requesting any action, just providing information. There may be a joint Chamber / Tourism meeting(s) in 2026.

CHLPC has requested help with the Summer Concert Series 2026 in the form of a partnership and possible future management of the program. Suggesting that it be expanded to include additional weekends. This will need further discussion as we are only allowed a certain number of picnic licenses. We will have to investigate this and see if cooping with businesses that already have licenses in the area.

Motion by Nick Sharrow, seconded by Cheryl Besaw to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Suzanne Walcott, Secretary