



November 24, 2015

Meeting Location: Green Gables, New Milford, PA

Ethel Boccafogli called the meeting to order at 1:09 pm.

**Attendance:** There were 7 people in attendance: Ethel Boccafogli, Tom Chamberlain, Byron Sands, Lucas LaRue, Connie Reinhart, Kim Smith and Dr Lisa Ciavola.

**Previous Month's Minutes:** Kim will send out the September meeting minutes on-line. There were no minutes for October as EMBA members toured the Mormon Priesthood Restoration Historic Site on Rt 171 instead. We had an impressive showing with 20 members and guests in attendance. Elder Walker greeted us and wanted the business community to know that their desire is to contribute to the economic climate of Susquehanna County. It was agreed that all enjoyed the afternoon and learned a lot.

**Treasurer's Report:** Kim reported on the monies available in the checking and savings accounts. It was further noted that there are 28 businesses represented in our 2015 membership to date. Byron Sands made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Lucas LaRue seconded.

#### **End-of-Year Wrap-Up:**

**Officer Election:** As stated in the by-laws of EMBA adopted on 9/20/2005, the term of office of the President may be two (2) consecutive one (1) year terms. Ethel Boccafogli having served as president of EMBA throughout the 2015 year, has expressed interest in continuing in that role throughout 2016. A vote was taken with Ethel being unanimously supported.

The other three offices, namely Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, may continue as long as those serving are willing to remain in their positions with no term limits imposed. Tom Chamberlain, Vice-President, willing to continue and having no opposition will stay on as same. Dr Lisa Ciavola, Secretary, willing to continue and having no opposition will stay on as same. Kim Smith, Treasurer, has indicated that she will step down from her position as of December 2015. Marsha Morrison stepped forward as a candidate for Treasurer. Her name was put up for nomination; voting commenced and she was unanimously elected.

The 2016 EMBA officers shall be Ethel Boccafogli, President; Tom Chamberlain, Vice-President; Dr Lisa Ciavola, Secretary; Marsha Morrison, Treasurer. Thank you Kim for your past service! Welcome Marsha!

**By-Laws:** As stated above, the by-laws that EMBA operates under had been adopted in September of 2005. It is the desire of EMBA to review them and consider any up-dates that may be required. For starters, it was suggested that membership be open to any business in our area and not be restricted to the Blue Ridge School District. We have already welcomed businesses from the Binghamton area and also Wayne County, PA. This effort will be undertaken in 2016.

**Budget:** It has been noted that we have been operating in a deficit for some time now. Thankfully, we do have the savings account to dip into but at this rate even that could be exhausted in short order. The officers had reviewed where the outlays were occurring, made suggestions and brought it before the membership.

Firstly, we need to make a concerted effort to increase membership this year as this is our only means of income. This will involve us all. Please invite and encourage your business neighbors to join our group.

Secondly we could offer a \$300 scholarship instead of the usual \$500 to a graduating Blue Ridge student pursuing business. It was observed, with some dismay, that there had not been much interest on the part of the graduating students. In fact, only two students made application by writing a short essay last year. This suggestion was met with some opposition. By the very nature of our group being a business minded organization, we should not scrimp when it comes to education and the pursuance of business especially in our community right here.

2015 saw the first time that EMBA sponsored a 6<sup>th</sup> grade student on their Washington DC trip. This was for \$350. Can we afford to continue this? More discussion will be needed.

Third, we could raise the \$45 membership fee or add on an additional fee for each individual within a given business. As it stands, the business joins for one fee and any number of employees of that business are welcome as attendees. Dialog surrounding this suggestion had everyone in agreement to leaving the \$45 fee intact with no increase or additional fee. So, basically, we've come full circle in that we need to encourage greater membership levels. Also any other donations will be membership/capital dependent.

One very important point was brought up that should be understood. Should EMBA be faced with a prodigious issue that would be put up for a vote, to be fair to all members, only one vote per member business would be allowed. This would ensure that all businesses had an equal say without the decision being skewed by a member organization with a larger number of representatives. (This point may be incorporated into the by-laws).

**2016 Meetings:** By looking at a 2016 calendar, it was observed that the fourth Tuesday in August will fall during the Harford Fair. Consequently, we will not be holding a meeting in August or December (as usual) for 2016. Also, it was suggested that our annual mixer be moved up to the last Thursday in April. This will need to be firmed up.

**Meeting Locations:** A discussion as to where to hold the meetings ensued. Suggestions were made to rotate meeting locations around to various meeting rooms and to perhaps ask area restaurants to sponsor the meetings by bringing in lunch. Proposed were such locales as Byron Sand's new studio, Lackawanna College or the Holiday Inn Express conference rooms. We will pursue this in the coming months. But this will mean that members must be **intentional** in reading their e-mails all the way through!!

**Meeting Topics:** A conversation followed as to what guests/topics we would like to see/hear for 2016. On the wish list were to arrange a tour of the Susquehanna County Career and Technology Center; hear from the Susquehanna County Housing & Re-development Authority; dialog with Northern Tier Regional Planning & Development Commission; talk with a representative of Simmons-Rockwell; and bring Jean Ruhf from EMVB back. Any other suggestions are always welcome.

**Website:** The Room Tax Grant should be decided by December 15, 2015. EMBA is hopeful that we will be awarded monies to allow us to develop a website and rack cards to display in area kiosks. Byron Sands wants to prepare business videos showcasing various businesses and offers his expertise to our members. These can be put on our website or even used on the member's website. Although the finished video is only approximately 90 seconds long after editing, it can take 2 days to do the filming. Anyone interested can contact Byron.

**2015 In Review:** Tom Chamberlain concluded that all in all EMBA did a fantastic job of bringing in speakers, arranging tours and organizing the annual mixer this past year. All programs were informative, relevant and meaningful. Good Job Team!!

Happy Thanksgiving!

Merry Christmas!

And a wish for a Happy, Healthy, Safe and Prosperous New Year to all!!

See you in 2016!

**A motion to adjourn was made at 2:08 by Connie Reinhart and seconded by Lucas LaRue.**

**This will be our last meeting for 2015. Merry Christmas to all our members and attendees. There will be no meeting in December. Our next two meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 1:00 pm at Green Gables in New Milford (but check your e-mails).**