



January 26, 2016

Meeting Location: Green Gables, New Milford, PA

Ethel Boccafogli called the meeting to order at 1:07 pm.

Attendance: There were 7 people in attendance: Ethel Boccafogli, Tom Chamberlain, Lucas LaRue, Michele Sushnick, Eleanor Lempke, Marsha Morrison and Dr Lisa Ciavola.

Previous Month's Minutes: Ethel Boccafogli distributed copies of the November meeting minutes and they were reviewed. Tom Chamberlain made a motion to approve the minutes. Lucas LaRue seconded the approval.

Treasurer's Report: Marsha Morrison reported on the monies available in the checking and savings accounts. It was further noted that EMBA had 28 businesses represented in our 2015 membership. Lucas LaRue made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Eleanor Lempke seconded.

Old Business:

Budget: As the 2016 budget proposed last November had not been approved, the budget was back on the agenda. To re-cap, the main issues of debate were the suggestions to cut back on giving and to reduce the annual scholarship award from \$500 to \$300. This was suggested after a critical review of monies available in membership dues (as our only means of income) and the realization that in order to fund these EMBA activities would necessitate the continued dipping into the savings account.

The resistance in reducing the Scholarship allowance led into an extensive discussion which dominated most of the meeting time. In essence, some members felt that since we are a business group we should be generously sponsoring and encouraging a graduating senior in their business aspirations. On the other side of the fence, some members were of the opinion that \$500 was a substantial sum and that \$300 was nothing to sneeze at either. Also, since it is difficult to follow-up on the recipient, we really are at a loss as to the impact we may be making in offering the scholarship.

It was noted that an invitation to join our organization or to at least pay EMBA a visit at one of our monthly meetings had been extended in the packet given to last year's scholarship recipient. Beyond that, it is difficult to oblige a beneficiary.

2016 EMBA Business Scholarship: Dove-tailed into the above conversation was the mention that Blue Ridge High School Honors/Graduation Coordinator had just sent out this year's Award's Database Update due by March 31, 2016. So, will we offer the scholarship this year and at what level? Disappointingly, last year we had only received two submissions. Obviously, EMBA would like to see more interest on the part of the Blue Ridge students. Tom Chamberlain offered to talk with Brian Lewis, Business department head at Blue Ridge, to see how we can drum up some needed excitement over the scholarship and also perhaps gain some suggestions as to a method of follow-up.

2016 Washington DC trip: Also intertwined with the budget discussion is the Blue Ridge 6th grade trip to our nation's capital. Last year we donated \$350, fully sponsoring one student on this trip. Can we afford to do this again this year? Food for thought: Might we be making a greater impact in the life of a student with this sponsorship instead of the scholarship?

This discussion was tabled until next meeting as no resolution was forthcoming.

New Business:

New Website & the Susquehanna Room Tax Grant: It was a pleasure to announce that after submitting the Room Tax Grant application last fall, EMBA was awarded a grant! This will allow for the design and development of our new website. Our website will bring greater visibility to our organization and enable us to promote the member businesses we serve. In addition, some of the monies need to be used toward the design of rack cards that will be distributed through the Endless Mountains Visitor's Bureau. This is intended to point locals and visitors alike to our website.

Website Task Group: Dr Lisa Ciavola and Byron Sands are willing to work together in the design and development of the Website. Ethel Boccafogli, Eleanor Lempke and Michele Sushnick also volunteered to work on the task group. Contact information and best days/times were conveyed.

2016 Membership Applications: A membership letter, 2016 calendar and 2016 application will be snail-mailed out within the next two weeks to all our current and past members. The officers are actively seeking local business names and addresses of non-members in our service area and will include them in our mailings as well.

We encourage all our current members to renew your membership to EMBA this year and invite a colleague, associate or fellow business owner to join as well.

A motion to adjourn was made at 2:05 by Eleanor Lempke and seconded by Michele Sushnick.

Our next two meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, February 23rd at 1:00 pm at Green Gables in New Milford and Tuesday, March 22, 2016.

All meetings are scheduled for the fourth Tuesday of the month at 1:00 pm. Watch your e-mails for changes in locations.