

**West Jefferson Business Association**

Meeting Minutes | August 9, 2016

A meeting of the West Jefferson Business Association was held at West Jefferson Town Hall on Tuesday, August 9th at 8:30 am. Members attending included Terri Filipski, Wesley Barker, Susan Banks, Andy Guion, Angelia Church, Christopher Born, Dale & Becky Carlson. Special guests Sharon Krider & Ellen Pesko of Imagination Ashe were also in attendance.

The first item was approval of minutes from the July 12th, 2016 meeting. Andy Guion made the motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Christopher Born. A unanimous vote in favor.

Treasurer Report- Wesley Barker gave the Board an update on the account balance and activity. Wesley said the current balance was $2,797.19. Some recent expenses include postage costs for visitor guide mailings to the NC Welcome Centers. Current outstanding expenses include $632 for advertising in Carolina Mountain Life Magazine summer edition. Andy Guion made the motion to approve the treasurer’s report, seconded by Dale Carlson. A unanimous vote in favor.

In old business, an update was made with the potential branding of West Jefferson as a whole as recently discussed in a joint meeting with the WJ Community Partnership. Wesley explained the West Jefferson Tourism Development Authority (TDA) had recently undergone a branding process for their organization as the TDA never had a set brand to use. TDA will also unveil a new website in the next few weeks that is more mobile & user friendly. Wesley confirmed this was for the TDA marketing efforts only and not on behalf of the entire WJ Community Partnership as the discussion on that branding (i.e. wayfinding signage, welcome signs, etc.) was still in the process. Discussion then took place on how it would be helpful if all Town organizations could work together in the same boat, but based on history of these organizations, it would most likely not be feasible. As a result, it is still important that each organization communicate with each other and continue to move forward in the same direction, in order to have some sort of unification.

Other items discussed were downtown interactive digital calendars such as a touch screen located in public locales. Also, advertising for downtown events was suggested to be placed in the Carolina Country magazine which is published by Blue Ridge Electric. The Antiques Fair would be held on Friday and Saturday, September 16-17 from 1-8pm and 8am-5pm respectively.

Terri Filipski said the recent Alive After 5 event held at Ashe Rental Agency went very well and was well attended. She said the next event would be held at Bohemia on Tuesday, September 6th from 5-7 pm.

Terri then introduced representatives Sharon Krider and Ellen Pesko from Imagination Ashe. Sharon thanked the WJBA for letting them come and speak. Imagination Ashe formed in Ashe County in 2006 and is part of the national organization, Imagination Library, founded by Dolly Parton. Imagination Ashe is a 501-C(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to provide books to children age birth to 5 years old in order to combat the illiteracy rate. Currently, Ashe County has a 14% illiteracy rate which is high in the state. Imagination Ashe provides children who sign up for the program a book each month from birth to age 5 at no cost to them, no matter their financial state. Since their incorporation, Imagination Ashe has sent out approximately 60,000 books to children in the county. 2016 marks the 10 year anniversary of Imagination Ashe and in order to commemorate the anniversary, the group is working on a Step Project which will showcase various words on the steps leading up to the library from the Backstreet Park. Donations are being accepted for each letter and word to be displayed on the steps. A plaque will be placed on a wall at the bottom of the steps recognizing the donors. Also, a stature will be placed at the Backstreet Park commemorating the anniversary. Various donation levels are available and anyone is encouraged to donate. The official 10 year celebration will be held on Saturday, August 20th at the Backstreet Park with music by Julie Lee & Taylon Miller. Also, the Backstreet Concert on Friday, August 19th will announce the 10 year celebrations. Terri said to encourage other businesses to donate and become involved in this project, she would propose the WJBA donate $500 to the Step Project. Becky Carlson made the motion to approve a bronze donation in the amount of $500 to Imagination Ashe. Susan Banks seconded with a unanimous vote in favor. Terri encouraged Imagination Ashe to put out donation containers in various businesses and pass out posters to promote the event.

Terri briefly explained the horse drawn carriage rides proposed by a business in downtown. Terri said the Town of West Jefferson has passed an ordinance for horse drawn carriages which addresses many of the concerns some businesses have about the potential impact of this being in downtown. She encouraged everyone to obtain a copy of the ordinance if they have questions. She said the ordinance is very detailed & overall should be a positive for the Town.

Reference our website: [www.westjeffersonba.com](http://www.westjeffersonba.com) for information on events & updates.

The next meeting of the WJBA will be held on Tuesday, September 13th at 8:30am. With nothing further, the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by Wesley Barker, Treasurer