

Southwest Illinois Trade & Investment Council

Thursday, April. 28th, 2022 9:00-11:00am

ZOOM Meeting

Minutes

I. Roll Call - *Edie Koch, Secretary*

President Bobby Wondolowski opened the meeting at 9:00 am. A roll call was taken, and it was stated that a quorum was present, with the following Board members in attendance: Bryan Johnson, Dennis Knobloch (proxy Koch), Mike Strobe, Paul Toskin, Al Li (proxy Wiltowski), David Kniepkamp, Kurt Prenzler (Williams Proxy), Bobby Wondolowski, Ed Weilbacher (proxy Koch). Non-voting ex-officio members in attendance were Elizabeth Ahren, Tracey Glenn, Han Ko, Donna Richter.

II. Approval of April 28th, 2022, Minutes

President Wondolowski asked members if there were any corrections to the minutes, they received in their meeting packet. With nothing to add, the minutes were motioned for approval by David Kniepkamp and seconded by Paul Toskin. The motion was approved.

III. Officers Reports:

A. Executive - *Chairperson Wondolowski*

President Wondolowski stated the content of the Executive Committee meeting on will be elaborated on in the committee reports that follow. He particularly mentioned his conversations with Tom Dunstan, a potential consultant to be hired to implement the 2022 Export Now Training series. He indicated this would be discussed further under Committee Reports.

B. Financial - *Chairperson Toskin*

Current Bank Balance: Paul Toskin stated that as of April 28th, 2022, the bank balance for the Trade and Investment Council was \$9,350.94 after expenses. There were \$500 in expenses including costs paid for Serpentine and O'Fallon Post Office Box.

With no other business to discuss on financials, a motion was brought forward by Edie to accept the Financial Report which was seconded by David Kniepkamp and approved.

IV. Committee Reports:

A. Marketing/Communications - *Chairperson Strobe*

Exporter Database Status: Mike Strobe reported on the results stating companies reached out to rarely returned their calls or emails. The intern spearheading the effort contacted 96 companies – with the vast majority not returning communications or stating they are not interested. Edie Koch inquired as to the verbiage of the communications and whether using County databases would yield greater results. Strobe then added that the intern is graduating and there is no succession in place to continue this work.

Outreach: Mr. Strobe also informed the Council that the planned Lunch n' Learn with Sylvia did not take place. He offered up the notion of sponsoring a different one to continue outreach efforts. Several other ideas for continued outreach were discussed as options:

- Revise the outreach letter so it can be distributed to Board members so they could send out to their respective databases.

- Reaching out to more local Chamber meetings to connect with business not previously affiliated with the Council.
- The idea of streamlining export forms/documents for certain regions (Middle East)
- Growing the presence of the Council’s LinkedIn profile, while including information on the website to increase traffic.
- Mr. Kniepkamp offered the idea of informal “exporting after business hours” events. The goal being to increase business engagement while facilitating an organic networking forum with the Council at the center. He also emphasized reaching out to IL State government leadership starting with the Governor and working down the hierarchy until someone agree to join these events – to lend more legitimacy and awareness. Han Ko agreed with this idea as it is a low time commitment for business owners, is low cost for the Council, and provides exporters with networking/support.

B. In-Bound Trade Missions - Chairperson Koch

South Korean Delegation: Edie Koch provided the Board with a brief overview of the South Korean delegation visit and the efforts made to help them engage with the local area. 5 viable S. Korean companies visited SWIL on April 7th. It was considered successful and there are hopes to emulate the trips with other markets. Han Ko provided a brief overview of the sectors the companies covered and how they felt about the trade mission.

Reconnecting with AmCham Peru: Edie Koch informed the Council that AmCham Peru has renewed their interest of a trade mission to southwestern Illinois. Edie, Sylvia, Bryan Johnson, Dennis Wilmsmeyer, and Mary Lamie gave a presentation promoting SWIL to the Supply Committees at AmCham Peru by ZOOM in April. Edie reported that the call went well, and it appeared that they would be starting the recruitment of participants for a visit to SWIL in mid-August. Edie mentioned that the costs of the visit may need to be covered by the Council, but this would be further addressed in the July meeting.

Select USA Spinoff Event: Edie Koch updated the Council on SWITIC’s Spinoff Event, stating that there are now 5 registrations for “Discover SWIL on June 23-24, 2022. These Foreign Direct Investors are being vetted currently. Han Ko mentioned that he may be attending the Summit in D.C. as well and can also bring up SWIL. Edie put forward the need for “action” on funds for the Spinoff to cover the costs of hosting participants. She requested \$1,000 - \$3,000 for the Spinoff in June. A motion was put forward by Mr. Kniepkamp to accept Edie’s request for \$1,000, as needed, with the executive committee’s oversight. The motion was seconded by Mr. Strobe – a vote was taken, and the motion was approved.

Nathalie Scharf weighed in on the 2022 Select USA Investment Summit, informing the Council that the amount of applicants for this time of year is higher than expected and may increase as the date gets closer. She cited geopolitical concerns as to why some investors are currently hesitant to join. Select USA Summit will continue to disseminate SWIL’s Spin-off event information to all Summit registrants and outposts.

C. Out-Bound Trade Missions - Chairperson Torres

Mexico Trade Mission: Unfortunately, Sylvia Torres was unable to attend this meeting, so Edie briefly updated that Sylvia now has two business committed and one tentative to participate in the mission.

D. Education Committee - Chairperson TBD

Export Now 2022 Training: The Council brought forward their agreement terms with consultant Tom Dunstan. It was stated that Tom would charge \$100 an hour and will need approximately 40 hours to complete programmatic materials (totaling \$4,000 – with has been expressed as a fair price). The issue of the \$2,000 - \$3,000 CARES Act funding that the ITC has is needed to make this program work, but funds must be used prior to the deadline date of Sept. 30th, 2022.

Edie Koch expressed that the Executive Committee has the authority to enter into a contract with Tom Dunstan on behalf of the Council and should do so by the end of May. It was further determined that the deliverables would be fleshed out between Tom and the Executive Committee, and he would be allowed to go forward before the next quarterly meeting.

V. New Business:

Approval of Board of Directors. Bobby referred members to the meeting packet for a list of recommended members for the 2022 SWITIC Board of Directors. A motion was made by Mike Strobe and seconded by Edie Koch to approve the 2022 Board of Directors list as submitted. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Approval of 2022 Officers. Next, Bobby asked Edie Koch to introduce the slate of officers for 2022 as follows:

President – Bobby Wondolowski

Vice President – Mike Strobe

Treasurer – Paul Toskin

Secretary – Edie Koch

Before asking for a motion to approve, President Wondolowski asked if there were any nominations from the floor. With none being offered, David Kniepkamp made a motion to approve the recommended slate of officers for 2022, Mike Strobe seconded that motion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.

VI. Public Comment and Announcements

Paul Toskin expressed that for the longevity of the organization, By-laws should be updated to include an audit of the Treasurer’s work and to add term limits to that position. Though there are currently no issues with mismanagement of funds, it was asserted that the current By-laws permit too little oversight of the Treasurer’s position.

VIII. Adjourn

A motion was put forward to adjourn the meeting by Mr. Strobe and seconded by Mr. Toskin - motion was approved. Next meeting will be held on July 28th.