

## ***Girard Chamber of Commerce Report Courtesy of Chamber Website***

The September 11, 2024, 7 a.m. meeting of Girard Chamber of Commerce got underway at the Community Center with Janice Smith as sponsor for the breakfast. Also in attendance: President Jeanette Earley, Deb Burnett, Sara Millward, John Earley, Bill and Peggy Giles, Wayman Meredith, Michelle Hoover, Sydney Gray, Steve O'Dell and Dr. Arlen Magelitz.

Approval of previous minutes came following Pledge and prayer. Members are preparing for the October 12 Pumpkin Festival, scheduling an organizational meeting for Tuesday, September 17, 7 p.m., at the Center. Chamber will again sponsor the food, hot dogs, brats, pork burgers, hot cider, etc.; vendors have begun to sign up for the event (there is no charge for registration); petting zoo and possibly an adopt a pet event; fire pit and hay bales; new this year, a bingo event; and homemade rides. High school groups will be contacted to volunteer assistance for the Festival.

Chamber's newest member, Dr. Arlen Magelitz, was introduced. A physical therapist specialist, Magelitz reviewed his list of services, providing clinic at The Zone Fitness Center in Virden.

Treasurer Sara Millward distributed financial reports to be filed for audit, presenting a financial overview of this year's Festival Days, Chamber earning a profit slightly over \$4,000. Brief discussion centered on the city's new entrance signs, three obtained through grant monies, the final north entrance with monies yet to be raised through donations and with city council voting to assist in the purchase.

Bill Giles stated the four-way stop Girard business sign will be updated with new entries after the completion of road work taking place on Illinois Route 4. Deb Burnett reported on Community Center rentals, stating there is no charge for non-profits.

Two vital city ordinances have just recently passed, Police Chief Wayman Meredith reviewing a "No Soliciting" law carrying a \$750 fine, exclusions for non-profits such as scouts; and a no homeless camping on any city properties. With very few local municipalities in representation, Meredith stated Girard Police participated in Springfield's 911 Parade taking place September 7. The Department will again sponsor "Trunk or Treat" October 31 from 5 to 7 p.m. near the Municipal Building.

Reporting for Fire & Rescue and Prairieland Ambulance, John Earley updated members, stating work is moving forward quickly for the transition to the new fire station, a recent acquisition of the former Kruse Enterprise dealership. General contractor is Koster Construction of Carlinville. Plumbing is underway with a concrete pour for the new 80'X125' by 16' tall addition set for late October or early November. Earley gained approval from Chamber to utilize a portion of the many remaining materials (earmarked for the initial construction of the community building, but never needed) in the fire station project. The existing fire station (historically a one-time Vaudeville Theater) will be readied to place for sale.

Speaking for Prairieland Ambulance, Earley addressed the effort to maintain a special services area for ambulance service, now in the process of establishing, with perhaps an advisory referendum tax line item enabling service to be provided to the Thayer area,

Sangamon County. The service has learned of an ongoing program, Alton Memorial Hospital in partnership with Barnes Jewish Hospital, concerning the rotation of their ambulance vehicle fleet, donating those rotations to smaller area ambulance services rather than exercising trade-ins. Prairieland has enrolled on that recipient list, hopefully to receive a unit in October.

Earley continued by commending in-community members and business owners who have graciously stepped forward to help in various ways with the fire station project.

Steve O'Dell spoke for Country Financial, announcing his office will change location, still Virden's north side square, now in the former State Farm building. Virden's Chamber planning is underway for their holiday Christmas event in early December, and Farmer's Market is ongoing each first Saturday.

Director of Sales & Marketing for Courtyard Estates, Michelle Hoover announced the facility is under the new management of Gardant Solutions. Several updates are underway and upcoming events include: Community Health Fair Tuesday, September 24, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Haunt the Hill, October 17.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 a.m., next meeting set for 7 a.m. Wednesday, October 9, at Courtyard Estates, The Zone/Cody Smith as sponsor.