**CITY OF SALEM UNITY FORUM**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 10, 2014**

Notice was given of the Public Meeting – Unity Forum of the Salem City Council and City Boards and Commissions along with other community organizations that was held at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, February 10, 2014 at the Bryan-Bennett Library, 315 S. Maple Street, Salem, IL.

A light meal was offered from 6:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The Forum was called to order by Mayor John Raymer at 6:30 p.m. Council members present were: Councilman David Black, Councilwoman Sue Morgan, and Mayor John Raymer. Also present were City of Salem Department Heads and Staff: City Manager Bill Gruen, City Clerk Bev Quinn, Economic Development Director Jeanne Gustafson, Public Works Director John Pruden, Chief of Police Ron Campo, Recreation Director Sherry Daniels, Library Director Kim Keller, Finance Director Ben Stratemeyer, Code Enforcement Officer Bryan Hunt, Administrative Assistants Cindy Eller and Courtney Mitchell, and Asst. Pool Manager Connie Fulton. Also present were members of Boards, Commissions, and Organizations, as follow: Art Borum, Gary Hahn, Brent Taylor, Neil Chance, Ed Black, Mike McHaney, Pat Warden, Joan Kless, Jim Milano, Susan Batchelor, Jane Gaston, Jane Marshall, Joe Hotze, Alan Wilson, Leonard Ferguson, Michael Phillips, Sandie Phillips, Dominic Santomass, MD, Jed Casburn, James Baker, Frank Brinkerhoff, Jim Somer, Mark Larimer, Lynn Larimer, Jack McGuire, Sherm Doolen, Rhonda Williams, Jonathon Hallberg, Patricia McArdle, Kerri Richards, and Kathy Baker. Members of the Media present: Bruce Kropp, Dennis Rosenberger, and Reece Rutland.

Mayor Raymer welcomed those present, and touched on a few high points, including the August 3rd City Council Workshop, contract with CBRE to market Kinney Blvd., and the expansion of two local businesses. Mayor Raymer introduced new leadership within the Farmer’s Market, Ms. Cathy Baker and Ms. Robin Williams, recognized special guest Representative John Cavaletto and his legislative aid Mark Decker, introduced Councilman David Black and Councilwoman Sue Morgan, and introduced new City Hall employees Courtney Mitchell and Cindy Eller.

Mayor Raymer presented a key to the City to former Mayor Leonard Ferguson in recognition of his 27 years as mayor, as well as his role in development of the Industrial Park. Recognition plaques were also presented to: Jane Marshall, Keep Salem Beautiful, Don Ruston, SCAC, Jim Somer, Economic Development, and Representative John Cavaletto, for his continued support of the area.

Mayor Raymer also congratulated the Historical Commission on receiving a grant through the Union Pacific Foundation in the amount of $15,000 for development of a museum. Mayor Raymer added that this opportunity came to the City through Councilman Royce Bringwald, and suggested other organizations may have similar opportunities, and suggested they keep the City in mind.

Mayor Raymer introduced Bruce Kropp of WJBD Radio, and indicated he would be acting as Master of Ceremonies. Mr. Kropp indicated the goal of this event is to give Boards, Commissions and Organizations the opportunity to share their accomplishments for the past year, and their goals for the upcoming year. Kropp added that the list is in no particular order, and groups would be called upon randomly. A summary of speakers and their goals and accomplishments are listed below:

**Bill Gruen, City Manager, City of Salem**

**Accomplishments:** City Manager Gruen distributed a handout of Projects and Accomplishments for the City during the past year, indicated he would allow those present to review the list at their leisure.

**Goals:**

* City Manager Gruen indicated the City is currently in the process of putting together the FY15 Budget, and while revenues appear to be flat, we will be able to keep it in the black.
* The City has recently entered into a contract with CBRE and will be aggressively marketing Kinney Blvd.
* Development of a truck stop, preferably offering compressed natural gas;
* Continued demolition of dangerous buildings;
* Public Works Projects – Boone Street resurfacing ; Bryan Park Trail; Development of soccer fields at Tully Park;
* Aggressive K-2 enforcement.

City Manager Gruen commended City employees for efforts during the extremely cold weather, and added that the City is lucky to have the staff it has.

**Jim Milano, Chairman, Planning Commission**

**(Additional members present: Neal Chance, Alan Wilson, Sandie Phillips)**

**Accomplishments:**

* Issued Special Use permits
* Comprehensive review of the B-3 Highway Business District

**Goals:**

* Serve the citizens of Salem in a consistent, fair and timely manner regarding planning issues and petitions.
* React to petitions in a way that maintains the integrity of the zoning district being affected.
* Insure that action taken or recommended is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

**Joan Kless, Zoning Board of Appeals**

**Accomplishments:**

* Have only had to meet once this past year, as our citizens are complying with regulations and have not requested variances.

**Goals:**

* Continue to serve the public.

**Joe Black, Airport Authority**

**Accomplishments:**

* Renovation of the Administrative building, to be completed in early 2014.
* 2013 Annual Aerobatic Air Show in July

**Goals**

* New “T” hanger project to add/replace four “T” hangars. This project is scheduled for 2014/2015.
* New above ground fuel tank storage
* Runway/Taxiway resurfacing
* Always making efforts to extend the length of the runway from 4,100 ft. to 6,000. May involve the Economic Development Director and the community in this effort this year, as the Airport Authority must prove to IDOT that there is a five-year need for the longer runway. Black added that he feels the short runway has been a detriment to economic development in the area.

**Tim Hudspeth, Tourism Board**

**Accomplishments:**

* Helping with funds for the Shrine Circus, Bluegrass Festival, SCHS Girls Basketball Tournament, SIJHSAA Cross Country Class “S” State Meet, the car show, ladies golf tournament, aerobatic contest, etc.
* Financing the PKC Superstakes, Youth Hunt, and World Hunt for the third year of its contract. The owner and management of the event are happy with how things are going, we Tourism hopes to continue the relationship.
* Continue to require those receiving funds to be accountable for the funds they receive by filling out a questionnaire regarding how the funds were spent, explaining how the funds were spent, and evaluating their event.
* Making groups aware of the fact that there are funds available for new events.

**Goals:**

* Seek new events to sponsor or help sponsor.
* Design, create and maintain a webpage that is kept up to date.
* Revisit Tourism’s relationship with the former Southwest Tourism Council, now Illinois South, for the purpose of seeing if it is in our best interest to rejoin or remain on their own.
* Seek to improve the events that they now support and to sign an extension of the three-year contract with PKC.

**Frank Brinkerhoff, Historical Commission**

**Accomplishments:**

* Have been showing the Bryan Home as often as possible.
* Opened communication with current generation of the Bryan family -- had a visit from one of William Jennings Bryan’s great-grandsons, and the offer of memorabilia from another great-grandson.

**Goals:**

* Museum, museum, museum.
* Keep the history of Salem before the citizens of Salem and beyond.

**Michael Phillips, Board of Police Commissioners**

Mr. Phillips indicated the Board of Police Commissioners has the following responsibilities, which they take very seriously:

1) To advertise for open positions within the Police Department, and test applicants accordingly.

2) Prepare Eligibility Lists, based on the applications and test results.

3) Handling disputes between officers and authorities.

**Accomplishments:**

* Tested over twenty applicants for Salem Police Department Patrolman
* Developed a Salem Board of Police Commissioners Final Eligibility Roster of Patrolman, based on scores of personal interviews and testing.
* Conducted tests and interviews for promotion form Patrolman to Sergeant

**Goals:**

* Stay current with state rules and regulations that affect police.

**Jane Gaston, Library Board**

**(Other members present: Sherm Doolen, Jack McGuire and Library Director Kim Keller)**

**Accomplishments:**

* Found funds to provide 136 e-books. Patrons also have availability to check out over 10,000 e-books through Southern Illinois Libraries On the Go.
* Have improved the acoustics of the large meeting room, through fund-raisers and donations from Modern Woodmen of America and Friends of the Library.
* Provided space for Recreation Programs and City Meetings.
* Currently house the Salem Historical Commission artifacts.
* Hosted the Halloween Costume Contest.
* Provided space for the County Clerk to conducting training of election judges.
* Provided space for the County Treasurer’s tax sale.
* Continue to offer the Children’s reading program.
* Enlarge programming to include programming for adults. (Offering Self-Defense for Women Feb. 23rd)
* Over 2,000 people have attended events at the Bryan Bennett Library.
* Happy the City has returned the levy to its previous levels. (Thanked City Manager Gruen for his assistance and support.)
* Offering Prince and Princess Party on February 15th at 10:00 a.m.
* Dr. Sue’s party on March 1st.

**Goals:**

* Increase the e-book inventory
* Resurface the south parking lot (and possibly replace some sidewalks)
* Evaluate employee wages, as they are low.
* Increase adult programing.

**Pat McArdle, Daffy-Dill Garden Club**

**(Other member present: Pat Warden)**

**Accomplishments:**

* Celebrated 9th year as a club.
* Participated in the Home Show and Applefest
* Plant the downtown planter boxes in the spring and decorate in the winter.
* Maintain the Bryan Statue garden.
* Created a Tribute Garden with pavers and names.
* Use the High School and inmates at Big Muddy to grow plants for planting.

**Goals:**

* Install a picnic table at the Bryan Statue
* Install a gazebo on the north end of the Bryan Statue garden
* Keep up the good work of Pat Warden and Sharon Blair.

**Don Ruston, Salem Community Activities Center**

**Accomplishments:**

* Replaced 47 year-old boiler system when it failed. (Partnered with the City of Salem0
* Entered into a partnership with the YMCA – while the SCAC has been good at providing space and offering events, it will benefit from the YMCA in offering programming.

**Goals:**

* Increase revenue to insure financial survival – income from activities (Bingo, fundraisers, events) has been in a deficit for the past three years.
* Expand use and support from the community – increase community spirit.

**Diana Morrison, YMCA/Salem Aquatic Foundation**

**(Other member present: Jed Casburn, YMCA of Southwest Illinois)**

Ms. Morrison indicated the Salem Aquatic Foundation has partnered with the YMCA, under the umbrella of the Southwestern Illinois YMCA. This group is now joining with the St. Louis Y, and becoming the Gateway Y. Morrison added that the Y has three goals – Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility. Additionally, the Y offers financial aid to families whose children would not be able to participate otherwise, and provides an Angel Tree at Christmas for families who would not be able to provide Christmas gifts to their children. The Y is a not-for-profit organization, and all funds raised in the area stay in the area. The local board will be made up of community members. Ms. Morrison said they are looking for someone to partner with them on development of a pool, either City, hospital, organization, or individual.

**Accomplishments:**

* Sept-Nov - Offered Flag Football for 1st – 4th graders, and a bitty program for free.
* Nov-Jan - Offered Developmental volleyball for 3rd through 8th grade girls.
* Jan-Feb - Offered a “Shape Up Marion County” program for nutrition and wellness.
* Jan – “Parents Night Out”

Will be offering:

* Parents Night Out
* February -YMCA Marion County Karate on Mondays and Wednesdays.
* February – Adult Karate
* Summer Camp
* After School Program
* Home Show – SCAC
* Dine to Donate to help send a child to After School Program or Summer Camp
* Fashion Show sponsored by Tavi Tots
* Spinning Classes
* Pilates Classes

**Goals**

* Indoor Pool
* Day Camp (Starting in June at SCHS)
* Provide learning opportunities

**Rhonda Williams, Salem Community Farmer’s Market**

**(Other member present: Cathy Baker)**

**Accomplishments:**

* Created a new management for the market to allow better communication between vendors, customers and local businesses.
* Solicited new vendors for the 2014 market season, with new products becoming available.
* Instituted a new policy of having ONLY locally grown produce, crafts, meat and baked goods.
* Beginning a new partnership program with local businesses. First partnership is with People’s National Bank.

**Goals:**

* Develop working relationship with local businesses by creating partnerships and encouraging Salem citizens to buy local. (i.e. coins, advertising, etc.)
* Provide central location for local producers to sell.
* Increase awareness of locally grown, nutritious foods for healthy eating and lifestyle
* Encourage community activities and identify resources available in the local area.
* Start a Saturday market, in addition to the Thursday one.

2014 Market to run every Thursday from May 22nd through October 9th.

**Judge Michael McHaney - Marion County Drug Court**

Judge McHaney indicated one of the key elements to making drug court work, is to change the players playmates. If they live with people who have encouraged their drug use, they need a safe, clean environment where they can land on a temporary basis to start their rehab. Judge McHaney said it has been a delight to partner with the City on different programs, and the next program is to demolish two derelict buildings and build a Katrina type house to be used as a temporary home for drug court participants. McHaney added that part of recovery is giving back and doing good work, and what better work is there to do than to help the community you live in. Frank Brinkerhoff is donating the land, and the City and Drug Court participants will partner in the demolition. Judge McHaney indicated he is determined to see this work, and he would like this to be the first of many such homes.

**Susie Batchelor – Kaskaskia College**

Ms. Batchelor indicated KC has been a strong partner with the City of Salem, and the Salem Center offers classes to students, three business incubators, and an open computer lab. KC is happy to serve Salem. Ms. Batchelor indicated KC is currently bringing to fruition several capital projects, including the Trenton Center, Nashville Center, the Nursing Education Center, and the remodeling of the Crisp Center. Ms. Batchelor indicated their goal is to help students compete and succeed, whether its developing skills for the workforce or obtaining basic credits to go on to University. KC’s goal is to continue to recruit new students. Batchelor added that KC is happy to be a part of this community.

**Art Borum - SCIGA/Entrepreneur Program**

Mr. Borum indicated he is the Executive Director of the SCIGA program, which works closely with all the counties in the Kaskaskia College district. One of its new projects is the Entrepreneur Program recently started in Salem. Borum added that one of the Emerging Entrepreneur of the Year awards was awarded to Tavi Tots, a successful new company in Salem. The Entrepreneur Program’s goals are to help retain existing jobs, and help new businesses grow. The group will meet monthly, and intends to work closely with City Manager Gruen and Economic Development Director Gustafson. Mr. Borum added that SCIGA’s founding members were Centralia’s Mayor Bob Demejin and Salem’s Mayor Leonard Ferguson, who understood regionalism before it was popular. Mayor Raymer is now President of SCIGA, who is a true hustler. Borum attributed SCIGA’s tremendous success to both Mayor Ferguson and Mayor Raymer.

**Jane Marshall, Executive Director – Keep Salem Beautiful**

**Accomplishments:**

* Maintained good standing with Keep America Beautiful
* Recycling demonstrations at Chamber of Commerce Home and Ag Show
* Successful Great American Clean Up in April 2013
* Provided Arbor Day tree planting demonstration at St. Theresa School
* Continued to improve Recycling Opportunities in Salem and participated with Centralia Clean and Green Recycling Center
* Purchased Trash Containers for the pool, park and library
* Participated in Salem Recreation Department events: Family Day in the Park (hat making from repurposed materials); Promoted recycling and repurposing with Recycled Halloween Costume Contest; Crafting with repurposed materials at Breakfast and Lunch with Santa
* Obtained grants from: Keep Illinois Beautiful/IEPA for education and recycling; Modern Woodmen - $500 for trees to be planted in Bryan Park and $1,000 for benches/bike rack for library; City of Salem for recycling.

**Goals:**

* Continue to maintain Good Standing with Keep America Beautiful
* Increase KSB Board Members and General Membership
* Provide educational opportunities and activities for schools, day cares, clubs, organizations, and general public regarding litter prevention, beautification and community greening, managing waste, and recycling
* Expand Recycling Opportunities in Salem – purchase new recycling collection trailer
* Organize additional Recycling Events
* Continue to partner with Daffy Dill Garden Club, City of Salem, Chamber of Commerce, Salem High School Green Team, and others that meet the mission goals of Keep Salem Beautiful
* Expand Great American Clean-up events in Salem
* Update the lengthy Keep Salem Beautiful mission statement to mirror the KAB mission statement which is, “to engage individuals in taking greater responsibility for improving their community environments”.

**Roger Mann, Chief – Salem Fire Protection District**

**Accomplishments:**

* 2013’s Loss and Damage Ratio is the smallest it has been in several years.
* There were no grass fires during the dry times (more during the snow).

**Goals:**

* Don’t use our equipment. ☺

**Jim Somer, President - Salem Business and Industrial Commission**

Mr. Somer indicated SBIC was created 20+ years ago, at the direction of Mayor Ferguson. It was determined that there some Economic Development actions that the City just couldn’t do – SBIC was created to do those things.

**Accomplishments:**

* Procured additional parking for NAL
* Assisted with finding growth space for Americana
* Assisted with finding growth space for Jarco

**Goals**

* Assist with Economic Development for commercial, industrial and retail
* Stand ready to help when the City can’t do it.

**Jonathan Halberg, Director – South Central Illinois Regional Planning and Development Corporation**

Mr. Halberg indicated SCIRP&DC assists with a five-county area, and is not involved in front-end economic development. SCIRP&DC runs under the radar, with small business development loans and grants.

**Accomplishments:**

* Closed $2.6 million in business loans.
* Wrote 12 Community Development Assistance grants; five were funded, and still waiting the results on four.
* Completed a Regional Aviation Study, outlining the economic benefits of smaller municipal airports in the area.
* Finished the year with a fund-balance of over $200,000.

**Goals:**

* Complete a regional freight study and Clay County Greenways and Trails plan. New plan to be started for either Marion, Fayette, or Jasper County
* Develop a Commission Mission Statement to align regional goals towards global competitiveness, instead of smokestack chasing.
* Expand commercial lending activity.
* Just submitted district planning grant, which funds a large portion of operations for the next three years.

**Tim Hudspeth, President – Greater Salem Area Chamber of Commerce**

**Accomplishments:**

* Started monthly Chamber lunches, featuring a speaker from Industry and a speaker from retail/service.
* Established the Winner’s Service Awards to recognize exceptional customer service.
* Co-sponsors the Awards Dinner with the Greater Salem Area Foundation
* Established a com
* Commercial Electrical Aggregation program
* Applefest
* Home Show

**Goals**

* Promote current Salem businesses and bring new business to Salem

**Ron Campo, Greater Salem Area Foundation**

Chief Campo indicated the Foundation continues to help those in need, co-sponsors the Awards Dinner, accepts donations, and is always looking for funds.

**Salem Elks**

Mayor Raymer recognized the work of Joe Hotze and a dedicated group of volunteers who are members of the Salem Elks. The group provided funding and labor for an intensive upgrade of Jackson Park, which is located in the Frisco subdivision.

**Ed Black - Salem Lion’s Club**

**Accomplishments:**

* Purchased eyeglasses for school children
* Maintained ongoing programs, including Post Prom

**Goals:**

* Continue to serve the citizens of Salem.

Rotary meets every week on Tuesday at noon, at Sharon’s Café

**Bill Gruen - Rotary**

Salem Rotary will be doing a Trivia Fundraiser on Thursday, February 13th at the Methodist Church in Salem.

**Alan Wilson - Kiwanis**

**Accomplishments:**

* Gave out 325 pairs of shoes to children

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor John Raymer and MC Bruce Kropp thanked attendees for their participation, and Mayor Raymer asked Councilman Black to close the meeting with a prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Bev Quinn, CMC

City Clerk