

Friends of the Big Empty

Board Meeting Minutes

DATE September 26, 2023

TIME 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY Alex Vukasin

IN ATTENDANCE

Board Members: Exa Lee Smith, Cindie Kesler, Dee Shoemake, Alex Vukasin, Marcella Barden, Brandi Kureska, Jessica McDermott **Volunteer Members:** Becky Offut, Bivi Silva, Mariah McDermott

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Meeting called to order at 7:00 PM

Marcella Barden provided the minutes of the 09-05-2023 meeting. Changes made to correct spelling of Jenna Searcey and final meeting location to John Deere building. No other changes were made.

Motion to approve 09-05-2023 Minutes: Cindie Kesler, **Second:** Dee Shoemake, **Approval:** Unanimous

NEW BUSINESS

1. **TABLED:** Create a Membership Committee to add new members, provide instructions to subscribe to either Friends of The Big Empty or Explore The Big Empty notifications, where to find calendar events on ETBE or minutes on FOTBE websites. Unsubscribe Option always provided on notifications generated by either website.
2. Send an introductory email to the Chamber of Commerce offices that includes the purpose statement in our Bylaws.
 - a. Which cities have a Chamber of Commerce?
 - b. Which FOTBE member/committee will assume responsibility for obtaining the email addresses?
 - c. Send a group email to all COC or send individually?
 - d. Proposed email content: specify the counties we want to focus on, the membership fees, who our officers are, and invite the Empty's residents to join in our effort to make the Empty the destination of tourism in all the counties involved, through good photography and narrative. Give the places to visit, events, etc. Explain how we are interested in receiving info, photos, with narratives by those who have an interest in furthering the scope of this tourism effort.

ACTION: Alex will start gathering COC email addresses in the 9 counties and draft an email to introduce FOTBE/ETBE for review at next meeting.

3. Exa Lee's conversation with Peter Demopoulos, new owner of the old Munday Hotel adjacent east of Allsup's store. **NO FURTHER ACTION AT THIS TIME**
4. **TABLED:** Review draft content of www.friendsofthebigempty.org and www.explorethebigempty.com. All photos are stock photos from GoDaddy. Please bring ideas and/or changes.
ACTION: Attendees from today's meeting will review www.explorethebigempty.com and provide content before the next meeting.

5. How will we decide to add events to the ETBE calendar?
ACTION: Anyone can submit an event to be posted on ETBE. One or more Board members will review for Name, Date, Time, Description, Location, and County. There is no fee or membership requirement.

6. Discuss adding Big Country Arts Celebration to ETBE, Jim Bob Art Park & Nature Trails, Benjamin on Saturday, November 4th. More details coming soon. If the ETBE website is ready, Penny Bisbee approves adding the event to the ETBE event calendar and mentioning it to the public. "We could use all the marketing help we can get." Hoping to get more information on or before 9/23 to share with the public.
ACTION: As soon as further information is received, this event can/will be posted.

OLD BUSINESS

Items to discuss in future meetings.

Contest	Exa Lee suggested asking Wyman and Penny, if available at the right time, to judge the photographs of which one would be chosen to represent the Big Empty when the website is set up. Alex brought up an inspiration idea (tumbleweed) for the mascot/logo contest. Others mentioned horned toad, RV, jackalope. Cindie offered a new purple video camera as a prize for the contest.
Fundraising	Ideas from the group include a recipe book, including photo winners in a calendar, postcards, or puzzles of website photos.
Social Media Admin	Official emails are obtained for both websites. Ready to create facebook, Instagram, etc. accounts. Determine who will create/administer these accounts.

BOARD

1. Finalize/Signoff Bylaws – Cindie read Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.
Motion to approve Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws: Cindie Kesler,
Second: Brandi Kureska, **Approval:** Unanimous

2. Determine membership levels and fees for each. Attendees came up with various levels and annual fees.
 - a. Buckaroo \$20, Cowpoke \$75, Vaquero \$200, Gunslinger \$500, Bronc Buster \$700
 - b. Donations in any amount are always welcome.**Motion** to approve levels and fees: Marcella, **Second:** Alex, **Approval:** Unanimous
ACTION: Each attendee will bring suggestions and ideas for the benefits of each level to the next meeting. (Business Card size ads on website, sponsors page, link to their website, spotlight at events we attend, etc.)

3. Decide which counties to focus on promoting first. Attendees suggested including all counties surrounding Knox County to begin. They are Baylor, Cottle, Foard, Haskell, King, Knox, Stonewall, Throckmorton, and Wilbarger.
Motion to approve initial 9 counties listed above to focus on promoting: Marcella,
Second: Exa Lee, **Approval:** Unanimous

4. **Motion** to end the meeting at 9:08 pm: Dee
Second: Exa Lee, **Approval:** Unanimous

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, October 17th, 6p-8p, John Deere Building, 111 N Munday Ave, Suite 1, Munday, TX 76371
 or Google Meet <https://meet.google.com/wey-ugnv-uur>