

Friends of the Big Empty

Minutes

Board meeting

DATE March 5, 2024

TIME 6:00 PM

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY Alex Vukasin

IN ATTENDANCE

Exa Lee Smith, Cindie Kesler, Alex Vukasin, Marcella Barden, Jessica McDermott, Mariah McDermott, Becky Offutt.

Absent: Brandi Kureska

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Review minutes of the February 15th, 2023, meeting. Motion to approve with no changes: Jessica; 2nd: Exa Lee; Approved unanimously.

BOARD

1. Next Notable Resident: Wyman Meinzer bio received from Haskell COC. Marcella will email him and request a photo. Permission by Haskell COC granted with submitted text. Publish as reprint. Current word count = 692
2. Future Notable Resident: Joyce Adkins Turner suggested by Sandra Grinstead Fry.
3. Future Notable Resident: Don Thompson

REPORTS

1. Mascot Contest – no additional entries received, will discuss at the March 26 meeting the possibility of modifying the rules to allow anyone and any age in the 11 counties to submit an entry and a new contest end date.
2. New Sponsors – Buckaroo: Camille Davis, San Angelo, updated website
3. Treasurer – non-profit software received for QuickBooks, Grant Station, TechSoup, Canva, Adobe Express
4. Website statistics – Explore The Big Empty 6 month total = 3,285, 438 in February; Friend of The Big Empty 6 month total = 1,729, 264 in February.
5. Marcella updated membership form with treasurer@friendsofthebigempty.org email address. Replaced form on website.
6. Receipt submitted to Cindie from Marcella for reimbursement of \$102.21 for contact@friendsofthebigempty.org email renewal for 1 year.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Exa Lee requested a map of the counties to fill up the 30"x40" bulletin board in the office to pin the places we've visited and have the map available for anyone who comes in the office to see where our focus is.
2. Jessica stated we can also have an online map of "pin drops" to show something similar. Jessica is in the process of creating an online shareable Google map which may serve different purposes of having a printed copy for the office and online for the website.
3. Locations to pin so far: Stamford (Chamber of Commerce), Spur (County Library), Benjamin (Jim Bob Art Park)

4. We have a new project to gather content for explorethebigempty.com. There are currently 8 categories under Places. Each board member has agreed to **gather information on at least one place in each of the 11 counties if possible, the more, the better.** List the name, county, website and/or facebook, a brief description (typically found in the About section of website) and an email contact (typically found in the Contact Us section). Send each list to Marcella. Once these are ready to post on the website, we will notify all places and let them know what our mission is and how we may be able to help promote one another through membership, announcements, events, etc.

Example

Category: Arts & Sciences Category

Name: 3 Rivers Foundation

County: Foard

Website and/or Facebook: <https://www.3rf.org>

Description: 3 Rivers Foundation (3RF) is a non-profit educational foundation dedicated to providing science, math and outdoor learning opportunities to Texas teachers, students, and the general public.

Email Contact if found on website or facebook to be used later when contacting: _____

The categories were divided as follows:

Arts & Sciences: possibly Brandi, **Churches:** Cindie, **Dining:** Alex, **Golf Courses:** Exa Lee

Lakes, Hunting, Fishing: Jessica/Mariah, **Lodging & RV Parks:** Jessica/Mariah

Museums: Cindie, **Rodeos:** Marcella

5. Marcella will start contacting a Chamber of Commerce in each county to find out if they offer non-profit memberships. Stamford has a \$60 annual non-profit membership and Marcella has a copy of their application.
6. Exa Lee requested to change the Join Us stock photo on friendsofthebigempty.org with one of our posted photos.
7. Exa Lee suggested having a cleanup day in the alley behind The Movement Space which leads to a courtyard behind our office.
8. Marcella will update Places on explorethebigempty.com with Whiteside Museum in Seymour and a new sponsor Wichita Brazos Museum.
9. Marcella will submit a copy of the tax id form to GoDaddy so we can avoid paying taxes in the future.
10. A note was made to contact Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs, etc. Not sure who mentioned this or what the outcome/plan is.

NEWSLETTER CONTENT SUGGESTIONS

1. When posting future newsletter links on facebook, a screenshot of the beginning of the newsletter will precede the link to encourage others to read further.
2. Wyman Meinzer next Notable Resident
3. Solar Eclipse April 8
4. Jim Bob Art Park Earth Day event April 20th

CLOSE MEETING

Motion to close meeting 7:50 PM: Cindie, 2nd: Exa Lee, Vote: Yes, unanimous

NEXT MEETING

Same Location, March 26, 6-8 PM