



PFHA, INC.  
PIGEON FORGE HOSPITALITY & TOURISM ASSOCIATION  
MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
MINUTES  
March 10, 2016

President Karl Thomas welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending and asked Andrew Byrd to lead the group in the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer.

President Karl Thomas called the meeting to order at 11:39 am at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Pigeon Forge.

A motion to approve the February 18 membership meeting minutes was made by Ray Ogle and seconded by Donna Huffaker, with no opposition the motion carried.

Treasurer David Wear presented the financial report

The association has two bank accounts: one for PFHA, Inc. and another for Pigeon Forge Hospitality Association, LLC.

PFHA, Inc.	
Beginning Balance as of 2/1/2016	\$2779.80
Deposits	10072.22
Checks Written	8812.96
Ending Balance as of 2/29/2016	\$4039.06

Pigeon Forge Hospitality Association LLC.	
Beginning Balance as of 2/1/2016	\$8467.83
Deposits	5265.00
Checks Written	6510.91
Current Balance as of 2/29/2016	\$7221.92

#### Committee Reports

- Communications and Media Relations – Eric Bradley, Chairman
  - Everyone take out your phones please and check in on Facebook
  - The committee is focused now on a social media push to raise awareness of PFHTA and it helps if business associates see that lots of you attended
  - Day on The Hill March 8-9 in Nashville saw attendance lower this year but was an important opportunity to speak face to face with legislators and to make the case for tourism
    - 18.00 in tax revenue is generated for every direct marketing dollar spent

- Additional million dollars in state budget for tourism advertising
  - At Day on Hill attendees emphasized to legislators that tax dollars generated by tourism should be spent on advertising not on general fund expenditures
    - Voiced support for a change for restaurants-2<sup>nd</sup> offense for serving liquor to a minor is now a loss of license for 10 days. Attendees suggested hefty fine of \$5K instead of loss of revenue due to loss of license
      - ❖ There are consequences for servers
  - March 23 is the annual SCEDC Job Fair at the Holiday Inn Convention Center
  - The April 6 SCHC Trade Show still has room for additional vendors and has several seminars scheduled, information is available on the PFHTA website
- Membership Committee- Donna Huffaker
  - The membership drive is still in progress and reminded the attendees that it is very important to complete their applications and to renew their PFHA membership by March 31 in order to retain voting privileges
  - Drew J & K Mechanical as winner of the 2<sup>nd</sup> winner in the Membership renewal contest
- Education – Joe Fall
  - Announced the committee members: Jeff Taylor, Judy Ann Ellison, and Cindi Husk, very involved and committed and sees this as the best committee yet
  - Scholarships
    - 4 \$1000 scholarships are to be awarded this year to Pigeon Forge High School seniors and will be presented at the June Monthly Member Meeting
    - In the past PFHA has awarded 2-4 each year
    - Committee would like to hold back \$1000 to be distributed in continuing education scholarships to members working in the industry
  - Judy Ann Ellison continues to work very hard on developing topics and finding speakers for trade show seminars and is very committed to this effort
  - Amanda Marr at the Sevierville Chamber has scheduled a luncheon meeting April 8th featuring the TDOT Commissioner to cover the future of road projects in Sevier County
    - Luncheon 11:30, program begins at noon
    - Contact David Stanfil at the Sevierville Chamber of Commerce to attend

City Government- Leon Downey, Executive Director of the Department of Tourism

- As was highlighted in the State of the City Meeting, Pigeon Forge had another record year in 2015 with Gross Revenue exceeding 1 Billion dollars which is the result of the hard work of city businesses
  - Preliminary figure for January 2016 as compared to 2015
  - Gross Receipts up 15%
  - Amusements up 9%
  - Lodging up 20%
  - Restaurants up 14%
- Butch Helton, Pigeon Forge Department of Special Events

- The department of special events is preparing for “A Mountain Quiltfest”
- The Annual Dolly Parton Homecoming Parade is scheduled for May 2016
- We are happy to announce that the headliner for the Patriot Festival on July 4 will be

Panel Discussion: The Labor and Housing Crisis in Pigeon Forge, Moderated by Mayor David Wear

- Dr. Nancy Brown, Dean of Workforce Development at Walter State
- Martha Axford, Chair of Workforce Connections, Area 3, Knox County, Tennessee Department of Labor
- David Taylor, Pigeon Forge Community Development Director
- Wojtek Iwaszkiewicz, International Staffing, Orange Hospitality Group, Atlanta, GA
- Pam Caskie, Director of Planning & Development, City of Sevierville

QUESTIONS

- 1) How Are We Going to Solve Our Labor Shortage Problem, What Are the Priorities and Steps?
  - a. Priorities:
  - b. Steps
  
- 2) How Do We Provide Affordable Housing for Current & Future Employees?
  
- 3) What Financial Incentives Are Available to Develop Affordable Housing?
  - a. Low Income Housing Tax Credit-Tennessee Housing Development Agency: A Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) is a credit against federal income tax liability each year for 10 years for owners of and investors in affordable rental housing.
  - b. Multi-Family Tax Exempt Bond Authority-to local issuers for multi- family developments
  
- 4) What Are Some Housing Issues for Seasonal & Short Term Employees?
  - a. Seasonal Challenges for Property Owners/Managers:
  - b. Challenges for seasonal employees?
  - c. Other
  
- 5) How Do We Entice & Recruit More Employees to Our Area?
  - a. Steps:
  
- 6) Are Foreign J1 Student Laborers a Realistic Long Term Solution?
  
- 7) How Can We Get More of Our Local Residents to Join the Workforce Pool?
  - a. Pay scale?
  - b. Childcare?
  - c. Transportation?
  
- 8) What Can Companies Do to Develop Workers into The Quality, Professional Staff They Need?
  - a. In House
  - b. Educational Institutions

Pam Caskie: Director of Planning and Development, City of Sevierville

32000 residents work in Sevier County

2000-2900 workers come from each county surrounding Sevier County to work

47,000 jobs in Sevier County

9 ½ Months of steady employment annually

March Unemployment rate 5.1%

As an average, a family of 2 adults and one child needs to earn \$20 per hour full time to live in Sevier County

Averaging service worker pay and salaries of physicians and attorneys the average part time wage is \$10 per hour

David Taylor, Pigeon Forge Community Development Director

City does keep an inventory of rental housing

The cost of land is a hindrance in Pigeon Forge to the development of affordable housing

Martha Axford, Chair of Workforce Connections, Area 3, Knox County, Tennessee Department of Labor

Employers and job seekers should use [jobsfortn.gov](http://jobsfortn.gov) as a resource

Employees who are respected and appreciated will be more loyal

Consider sharing part time employees and coordinating schedules between 2 businesses

Dr. Nancy Brown, Dean of Workforce Development at Walter State

Consider appealing to retirees as part and full time workers

The Sevier County Job Center on Newport Highway is a resource

Consider developing apprenticeships for students where appropriate

WSCC offers short and long term training services in both technical and soft skills

Wojtek Iwaszkiewicz, International Staffing, Orange Hospitality Group, Atlanta, GA

International workers struggle to pay rents in Sevier County and there is not enough housing that they can afford

International workers do not have transportation and there is virtually no public transit in Sevier County

If affordable housing that was safe and easily accessible by trolley was available more foreign/international workers could be employed seasonally

The next meeting is April 14, 2016 at Music Road Hotel Convention Center

Adjournment