

TOWN OF BATH COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, October 18, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER: @ 5:30pm by Mayor
2. ROLL CALL: Scott Merki (X) Susan Webster (X) Chris Chapman (X) Rose Jackson (X) Elizabeth Skinner (X) Greg Forney (X) Rick Weber (X) Quorum present.
3. REVIEW OF MINUTES: Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 4, 2022 were approved by Common Consent.
4. PERSONS BEFORE COUNCIL: Travel Berkeley Springs (TBS) President Stephanie Rebant and Laura Smith presented the TBS Annual Report (attached). Discussion was held concerning tourism in the Town and Morgan County. The Town was encouraged to participate in the events scheduled for the WV Legislature's Interim Session to be held November 12-16 at Cacapon State Park.
5. COMMUNICATION FROM MAYOR: The Apple Butter Festival weekend was reviewed at length. While the success in attendance was appreciated there were also concerns with organization. The Chamber of Commerce will be contacted for further talks on ideas and improvements.
The Town office received a request letter (attached) from the Chamber of Commerce to hold the 6th Annual Deck the Meters decorating project. Concerns were expressed from Chief Link and others on damage to meters, length of time for the event and meter revenue loss. It was concurred that the issues would be taken to the Chamber leadership for discussion and resolution.
The annual Zombie Walk is scheduled for October 29 from 11am until 3pm.
Halloween Trick or Treating will be held in Town October 31 from 6pm until 8pm.

COMMITTEE AND BOARD REPORTS

1. BATH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (BDA): No report at this time. The next meeting is November 2, 2022.
2. PARKS & REC: The next meeting is October 19, 2022. Those interested in serving on this board are encouraged to submit a volunteer application.
3. PLANNING COMMISSION (PC): The next meeting is November 3, 2022. President Landon reported on the progress of the weekly meetings of the Comprehensive Plan Assessment sub-committee. Additional goals are being considered having to do with governance of the Comprehensive Plan after completion. He again requested that Council members contribute their thoughts on leadership assignments.
4. RAIL/TRAIL: The progress report has been submitted to the Town office (attached).
5. STREETSCAPE: Committee Co-Chair Pete Brown has submitted reports to the Town office (attached).
6. TRAIN DEPOT: Chairman Webster advised Council the Depot donations and parking fund raiser over Apple Butter Festival weekend was a great success taking in \$4,926.05. With the help of many volunteers, businesses and parking fees collected by a second parking lot donated, the total collected was approximately \$2,000.00

more than previous years. Appreciation was shown to all. It is hoped that a Depot Owner's Meeting can be scheduled soon.

7. LANDMARK COMMISSION (HLC): No report at this time.
8. CLERK/RECORDER REPORT: Recorder Webster attended a Town Hall Meeting held by WV Governor Justice on this day at Cacapon State Park. The reason for the meeting was to discuss Amendment II on the November 8 ballot and to present the Morgan County Commission with a check for \$3,200,000.00 for the Rt. 522 Water Line Extension Project.
9. FINANCE: Chairwoman Webster delivered the following bills for approval.
 - (a) Town of Bath \$12,244.17- Motion to approve: Forney/Weber- Carried
 - (b) BSWW \$58,936.81 – Motion to approve: Forney/Weber- Carried
 - (c) Cemetery \$85.00 – Motion to approve: Forney/Weber- Carried
 - (d) Train Depot \$6,214.40- Motion to approve: Forney/Weber- Carried
 - (e) Hotel/Motel Disbursement: \$30,770.50-Motion to approve: Forney/Weber-

Carried

10. TREE BOARD: The next meeting is October 19. Member Skinner informed Council of the Board's work and interest in having the Tree Ordinance updated.
11. GRANT: Chairman Forney informed Council of his plan to attend the November 7 Region 9 Planning and Development meeting to seek funding opportunities for the cemeteries and speed limit signs.
12. PUBLIC SAFETY: Chief Link announced that the Town will be advertising for the Chief of Police position. His time is currently split with the Morgan County Sheriff's Office and the Chief's position requires more attention than he can provide. He will remain part time with the BSPD.
13. CEMETERY: Chairman Skinner is continuing work on cemetery records and the restoration of Union Brigadier General Barstow's headstone.
14. PUBLIC WORKS: Chairman Weber is hoping to soon fill the vacant position on the Town Labor Crew. He thanked the BSWW staff for assisting with Town duties while the hiring process continues. The Town equipment is being winterized for the approaching season. Weber will see that the streets are cleaned in time for the WV Legislature Interim Session in Morgan County November 12 – 16.
15. ORDINANCE: Next meeting is November 1 at 4:30pm. Councilman Chapman reported that the Committee is working on the Town's personnel manual.
16. BERKELEY SPRINGS WATER WORKS: Chairman Chapman explained that Phase IV Water Line Replacement is 28% completed. The Rt. 522 Water Line Extension Project has been approved for funding. The Morgan County Commission was presented with a check on this day for \$3,200,000.00 by the Governor. There will be no rate increase to BSWW customers The funded project does not include funding for locating a second water source. The Morgan County Commission will pursue exploration and development of a second water source as a separately funded project.
17. MOTION TO ADJOURN: Approved by Common Consent.

Attest:

Mayor

Susan Webster Recorder *Chapman Pro Temp.*

TRAVEL BERKELEY SPRINGS • ECONOMIC IMPACT OF VISITOR SPENDING IN FY22

SUMMARY:

Travel Berkeley Springs reports that visitor spending in the industry as whole amounted to \$140 million in FY22.

Total hotel/motel tax revenue collected by the town and county in FY22 (7/1/21-6/30/22) amounted to \$809,416 an increase of \$345,672 or 57% from the previous year. Most lodging places saw a 20-30% increase over the last year. The advertising that TBS is doing is bringing more guests to the county and our businesses are doing an amazing job accommodating those guests resulting in repeat business. The opening of the new lodge at Cacapon State Park helped plus the room rates are higher than the old lodge.

The new WV legislation which tightens the rules so that marketplace facilitators collect and report the hotel/motel tax of all listed lodging has made a huge impact. The law took effect January 2022. The county saw the hotel/motel tax almost double when looking at January 1 to June 30. The town saw a small increase, but they do not have the marketplace lodging that the county has.

The county total in FY22 was \$680,542 (\$378,386 FY21) and the town total was \$128,874 (\$85,358 FY 21).

Half of the tax receipts were used to promote tourism through Travel Berkeley Springs, while the other half, or \$404,708 was allocated to various community groups by the Morgan County commissioners and the Bath town council.

Analysis of the direct impact of tourism is based on the 6% tax for all FY22 as well as WV Tourism calculations for visitor spending.

It is useful to repeatedly point out to local governments both the tremendous value of the tax distribution as an economic development tool (promoting tourism) as well as community development through the services provided by various groups. And, that all this benefit comes at NO TAX COST to residents. It should also be obvious that the overall benefit of a \$140 million boost to the local economy, and the property taxes paid by the tourism industry and jobs provided, is worth the minimal effort expended by the governmental entities in administering the tax. Those very real monetary contributions are not included in this impact statement.

The tax revenue total of \$809,416 translates into \$13.8 million in lodging revenue alone. With an average room cost of \$160 a night, the tax represents payments for 87,000 room nights, or approximately 174,000 overnight visitors, since room units are usually occupied by a minimum of two persons.

Morgan County has approximately 5,000 vacation-home owners (about 2500 second home units.) There still seems to be a desire to escape cities which encourages weekenders to come more often. Assuming each of the weekenders journey here just four times a year, and are accompanied by their families and friends, the number of vacation-days amounts to 66,000 a year.

TBS estimates that some 400,000 people come to Morgan County for a single-day visit. This number is extrapolated from downtown businesses, meals served by restaurants, a number reported by Cacapon State Park, which includes golfers, picnickers, hikers and local folks. Plus WV Tourism studies calculate 75% of visitors to the state are day trippers. We estimate a lesser percent -- 65% -- in Morgan County since we do not have gaming businesses which are a major contributor to daytrips.

There is no precise way of knowing what each of the more than 574,000 visitors spend each day. WV Tourism studies have estimated \$450/visitor statewide which seems modest for Morgan County since WV figures for FY22 showed that the three counties of the Eastern Panhandle accounted for nearly 25% of all statewide visitor spending. Using state figures, overnight visitors result in a total expenditure of \$39.6 million. For weekenders and guests with their own lodging and the estimated 400,000 day trippers, TBS estimates a modest \$300 is spent on items including food, shopping, spa services, golf fees, gas and other sundries on their visits to Morgan County for a total of \$120 million.

This brings to \$185 million the total amount pumped into Morgan County's economy by its visitors – an amount that shows an impressive increase considering the ongoing concerns about the virus and the increase in gas prices . This substantial amount makes visitor spending Morgan County's largest generator of revenues.

In economic analysis, a multiplier number is often used to determine the impact a particular sector has on the overall economy of a place. In this analysis, it represents the impact of taxes and salaries both directly within the industry plus the impact of those organizations and activities funded by the hotel tax. The standard is a multiplier of 7; we have chosen to use a more conservative multiplier of 5. Using this process, the total impact tourism has on the economy of Morgan County is \$925 million.

Prepared by Laura S. Smith – September 2022

NOTE: The process of calculation used in this memo has been the same used by Travel Berkeley Springs for more than a decade. The resulting figure of direct tourism spending over those years has always matched the revenue number calculated by WV Tourism using other methods. Dean Runyan Associates is now doing the state visitor research. 2021 has shown a modest increase but it is our opinion that their figures do not show the new marketplace collection increase.

July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022 Financial Summary

Income		
County Hotel/ Motel	82%	\$340,271
Town Hotel/Motel	15%	\$ 64,437
Paw Paw Hotel/Motel	1%	\$ 1,096
Water Tasting	1%	\$ 3,870
Membership Dues	1%	\$ 3,400
Fireworks	1%	\$ 4,000
Interest		\$ 167
Total July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022		\$417,241
Expenses		
Web Advertising	25%	\$58,896
Print Advertising	14%	\$32,569
TV Advertising	9%	\$22,467
Ad Grants to Members	1%	\$ 6,300
Payroll	10%	\$24,658
Water Tasting	7%	\$17,384
Brochures	1%	\$ 2,414
Telephone	1%	\$ 2,862
Internet	1%	\$ 1,612
Videos & Design	2%	\$ 5,406
Office	1%	\$ 4,009
WVACVB	1 %	\$ 924
Insurance	1%	\$ 1,648
Community Outreach	7%	\$15,496
Rent & Utilities	3%	\$ 6,003
Media Contract	12%	\$27,849
Accounting Expenses	3%	\$ 7,154
Total July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022		\$237,651

2022-2023 Budget

	Actual 2021-2022	Budget 2022-2023	Notes
Income			
Bank Interest	\$128	\$200	
Water Tasting			
Booth Fee	\$50	\$100	
Entries	\$2,327	\$3,500	
Sponsors/Ads	\$3,070	\$3,000	
Total	\$5,447	\$6,600	
Renewal Fest		\$0	
UVW	\$0.00	\$0	
Hey, Girlfriend		\$0	
Total	\$0.00	\$0	
Membership Dues	\$3,250	\$3,500	
County Tax	\$340,271	\$320,000	
Town Tax	\$64,437	\$67,000	
Town of Paw Paw	\$877	\$1,000	
Misc Grants	\$4,000	\$5,000	
Product Sales	\$190	\$50	
Total	\$418,600	\$403,350	

2022-2023 Budget

	Actual 2020- 2021	Budget 2022-2023	Notes
Expense			
Advertising			
Brochures	\$1,672	\$2,400	
Print	\$28,179	\$45,000	
Web	\$24,785	\$60,000	
Television	\$21,457	\$30,000	
Social Media	\$22,175	\$30,000	
Billboards	\$795	\$4,000	
Design	\$0.00	\$9,000	
E mail Blast	\$694	\$950	
Press Relations	\$676	\$15,000	
Imagine DC Contract		\$40,000	
Total	\$100,433	\$236,350	
Water Tasting			
Contract Services	\$5,000.00	\$5,000	
Event Expenses	\$9,747	\$10,000	
Postage/Printing	\$101	\$500	
Total	\$14,848	\$15,500	
Renewal Fest		\$0	
UVW	\$0.00	\$0	
Hey, Girlfriend		\$0	
Total	\$0.00	\$0	
Sponsorships	\$7,000	\$10,000	
Ad Grant Awards	\$2,663	\$12,000	
Business Promotions	\$630	\$5,000	
Community Projects		\$13,000	
Total	\$10,293	\$40,000	

2022-2023 Budget

	Actual 2020-2021	Budget 2022-2023	
Expense			
Internet			
DSL Museum	\$600	\$600	
Web Hosting	\$447	\$500	
Telephone/DSL	\$2,298	\$3,000	
Maintenance/Training	\$0.00	\$300	
Domain Names	\$243	\$525	
Total	\$6,632	\$4,925	
Office			
Insurance	\$427	\$1,300	
Office Rent/Electric	\$2,826	\$6,000	
Office Printing	\$944	\$1,400	
Postage & Supplies	\$137	\$400	
Conferences	\$0.00	\$2,000	
Member Benefits	\$781	\$1,500	
Major Purchases	\$0.00	\$15,000	
Cleaning	\$2,626	\$3,000	
Dues	\$924	\$1,600	
Professional /Accounting		\$9,000	
Fireworks	\$5,090	\$11,500	
Total	\$21,634	\$52,700	

2022-2023 Budget

	Actual 2020-2021	Budget 2022-2023	
Expense			
Staff			
Salary	\$16,661	\$26,400	
Federal Tax	\$2,692	\$4,121	
Social Security	\$2,627	\$3,712	
State Tax	\$1,532	\$2,436	
Worker's Comp	\$352	\$350	
E & O Insurance		\$3,000	
Total	\$23,864	\$40,019	
Total	\$177,705	\$389,494	
Income	\$418,600	\$403,350	
Expenses	\$177,705	\$389,494	



Berkeley Springs – Morgan County Chamber of Commerce

127 Fairfax Street, Berkeley Springs, West Virginia 25411

304.258.3738

www.berkeleyspringschamber.com

October 12, 2022

Mayor Scott Merki

Town of Bath

271 Wilkes Street

Berkeley Springs, WV 25411

6TH Annual Deck the Meters

Dear Mayor Merki:

The Berkeley Springs – Morgan County Chamber of Commerce would like to team up with the Town of Bath to host the 6th Annual Deck the Meters project for the 2022 holiday season.

The plan would be to allow meters to be decorated between November 22nd and November 26th, with completion before November 27th. The meter decorations would be removed by January 4, 2023.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Colin Graham
Executive Director
Berkeley Springs – Morgan County Chamber of Commerce
127 Fairfax St.
Berkeley Springs, WV 25411
304-258-3738