

**CITY OF SALEM UNITY FORUM
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
FEBRUARY 10, 2014**

Notice was given of the “Public Meeting – Unity Forum” involving the Salem City Council and City Boards and Commissions, along with other community organizations, which was held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 10, 2015 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. Representative John Cavaletto was welcomed and recognized for his contributions to the community. Council members present and recognized were: Councilman David Black and Councilwoman Sue Morgan. 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 Sean Reynolds, Deputy Chief of Police Susan Miller, Recreation Director Sherry Daniels, Library Director Kim Keller, Finance Director Ben Stratemeyer, Code Enforcement Officer Bryan Hunt, and Administrative Assistant Cindy Eller. Also present were members of Boards, Commissions, and Organizations and members of the Media. Mayor Raymer welcomed those present, particularly Representative Cavaletto, and touched on a list of accomplishments taken from his “State of the City” address, as follows:

- North American Lighting plant employment tops 1000 workers at our Salem plant
- City of Salem and Jarco Propane break ground for new 50,000 sq. ft. facility at #10 Carpenter Drive
- Holiday Inn Express selects Salem as site of New 86 room hotel
- Americana Products announces expansion of Powder Coating and Painting facilities at Salem plant
- Howell Paving consolidates operations at former Henderson Trucking location
- Radiac Abrasives announces Jim Baylis as plant manager with Tyrolit merger
- Star Buildings selects Salem as new center for drafting and design operations – opens in November
- Salem Twp. Hospital completes \$20 million in expansion
- Murray Center Parents Association organize to oppose Governor’s plans to close the center
- Salem Animal Control begins operations in new facility on Cartter Road
- US 50 4-Lane Coalition identifies Marion County as next area for study in road project
- Keep Salem Beautiful wins Lowe’s grant for \$20,000 local match for Bryan Park Trail Project
- City receives \$15,000 Union pacific Grant for Creation of Salem Museum
- City awards contract to Shores Builders for constructing new walking trail in Bryan Park
- PKC World Coon Hunt Expands and is recognized for five years of operations in Salem
- Marion County Fair expands buildings and events at the summer fair
- Little Egypt Festival and Parade has new directors in Jay and Beth Henke
- Safe Sheds displays actual product that saved lives of people and pets in a tornado
- Chamber of Commerce welcomes new president Brian Gansauer
- Salem Theater sets goals for three-year effort to restore the building and expand programming
- Salem Area Aquatic Center continues plans for indoor swim pool and therapy pool
- Keep Salem Beautiful brings new recycling trailer to Salem
- Apostolic Church and St Theresa’s Church open buildings to stranded travelers during ice storm
- Farmer’s Market expands to 25 vendors and adds Saturday operations during July
- Salem Banking Center opens new main bank facility in downtown Salem
- City purchases 8 acres from Yellow Freight for expanded worker parking in industrial park
- RADIAC abrasives announces new safety, environmental and community involvement plans

- Chamber of Commerce monthly business luncheons expand membership and information
- City adopts tiered rate structure for pricing natural gas to customers, rebates gas costs for December
- Daffy-Dill Garden Club and Master Gardeners expand Display Garden at Bryan Statue
- US Sonet announces plans to expand services to Odin and Sandoval
- Salem Community Activities Center announces \$10,000 grant from Union Pacific Foundation
- City established tree nursery using Union Pacific Grant funds
- Salem YMCA begins operations with location in Salem Community Activities Center

Mayor Raymer invited Finance Director Ben Stratemeyer to read a letter from Governor Rauner, who expressed regret for not being able to attend the meeting, and enthusiasm for all the community has accomplished and is working towards.

Presentation of a “Key to the City” to Rita Winkler, Murray Center Parents Organization

Mayor Raymer presented Rita Winkler of the Murray Center Parents Organization with a Key to the City, and thanked her for her tireless efforts to protect our area’s most vulnerable citizens. Mayor Raymer indicated that the fight is not over yet, but our new Governor has expressed his support for keeping Murray Center open, and that is largely due to Ms. Winkler and the Murray Center Parents’ efforts. Mayor Raymer added that he is glad to be a partner in those efforts.

Representative Cavaletto also commended Ms. Winkler and the Murray Center Parents’ Organization for their efforts to keep Murray Center open, and towards preventing the residents, some of whom have called the center home for 30-40 years, from being relocated. Representative Cavaletto indicated citizens from all over the State were present at the hearing, largely due to Ms. Winkler.

Ms. Winkler thanked Mayor Raymer and Representative Cavaletto, and indicated it has been three years since the State first announced it would be closing Murray Center. Ms. Winkler thanked the staff, parents, citizens, and government representatives who have helped in the Parents’ organizations efforts to keep the facility open. Ms. Winkler added that the Center is not officially off of the closure list yet, but there is a lot going on behind the scenes. The Center has been hiring new staff and posting jobs. Ms. Winkler added that many staff members took stands that threatened their jobs, because they love the residents and want what is best for them.

Mayor Raymer introduced Bruce Kropp of WJBD Radio, and indicated he would be acting as Master of Ceremonies. Mr. Kropp also commended Ms. Winkler for her efforts, and indicated no one has worked harder on a project than Rita.

Representative Cavaletto thanked Mayor Raymer for all he has done over the past four years, and indicated the current Mayor and Council have taken Salem to the next step, and thanked all of them for their efforts.

Bruce Kropp recognized the Boards, Commissions and Organizations present, and a summary of speakers and their goals and accomplishments are listed below:

Greg Gruenkemeyer, Airport Authority

Accomplishments

- Renovation of the Administrative Building - \$220,000 project. Included terminal doors, windows, paint and signage;
- Hosted the Annual Acrobatic Air Show, which draws a crowd from a large region;
- Continued the Ralf Mirka Aviation Scholarship, which is \$2,000.00 per year.

Goals

- To replace the underground fuel tanks with an above ground storage tank;
- To build new T hangers to replace the old ones;
- Their long-term goal is to lengthen the runway to 5,000 feet or longer, which will help Salem’s economic development efforts.

Pat McArdle, Daffy-Dill Garden Club

Accomplishment

- Installed new benches and a pergola at the Bryan Statue;
- Installed new pavers (which were donated);
- Garden and planters were improved and maintained;
- Decorated the planter boxes for Christmas;
- Issued a scholarship to a high school student.

Goals

- Putting together an event celebrating the Club's 10th year of operation;
- Replace the wood frames around the beds;

Brian Gansauer, Greater Salem Area Chamber of Commerce

Accomplishments

- Electric aggregation continues to provide savings to members, which directly improves their profitability;
- Continues to recognize well-deserving employees and business people for their dedication and hard work in serving their customers and our community;
- Co-sponsors the annual Awards Dinner with the Greater Salem Area Foundation;
- Hosted one of the largest (if not the largest) Applefests ever.

Goals

- To improve technology by creating a more robust website. Goal is to provide a platform that will benefit the membership.
- Increased networking – in addition to monthly luncheon, they are exploring additional ways to improve networking with businesses;
- Continued Industrial Tours – will continue to facilitate tours of local industries;
- Continue to host a successful home show, which will include new vendors this year;
- Will be conducting more one-on-one meetings with members to listen to their ideas regarding how we can bring more value to their members/customers.

Rita Black, Keep Salem Beautiful

Accomplishments

- Keep Salem Beautiful's focus for 2014 was to promote and educate our community on recycling
- In May, purchased present recycling trailer at a cost of \$13,550. Grants from Keep Illinois Beautiful and the City of Salem covered the cost of the trailer. However, due to the future costs of this service, the KSB board will be launching a general membership drive in an effort to receive additional funds to support the recycling service for Salem. At present, driver empties the trailer twice a week at a cost of \$175 per week;
- Collected 600 lbs of old and used Christmas lights were collected from 6 different locations in January, and recycled locally for the copper with a return of \$120;
- Keep Salem Beautiful promotes its mission throughout the fiscal year, as follows:
 - In March, participates in the Chamber of Commerce Home Show;
 - In April, holds the "Great American Clean Up" month. Volunteers assist with the "Neighbor to Neighbor" event the first week of April. Two local residence yards were cleaned by the group last April. Also, the "interstate Clean Up" is a major undertaking for litter removal on a designated weekend.
 - "Bryan Park Clean Up" concludes the April commitments on the last Saturday in April. A free lunch is provided by Larry Rogers of Rogers-Atkins Funeral Home. Tree saplings from the Tree Board are given out and an award for the best "Design a T-Shirt Contest" is given to a student. All participants receive a t-shirt that day.
 - In June, they participate with the City of Salem Recreation Department at the annual "Family Day in the Park" to make paper hats from recycled materials.
 - In October, they host the awards for the "recycled" costumes at the Bryan-Bennett Library.
- Education Programs at schools –
 - Graphic Packaging International, located in Centralia, presents "Trees into Cartons, Cartons into Trees" each year to local schools. The program demonstrates the journey of a cardboard carton through the recycling process. Each child plants a tree sapling in an old milk carton to plant at their home;
 - The 5th grade class at the Iuka Grade School learned about the importance of recycling Christmas lights for the environment in December.
 - Selmaville Grade School had a recycling program in May 2014, after the April park clean up.

- 2014 Grants Received
 - \$20,000 from Keep America Beautiful for the Walking Trail in Bryan Park
 - \$6,000 from Keep Illinois Beautiful/Illinois Environment Protection Agency to further recycling efforts.
 - \$6,000 from the City of Salem Appearance Fund for the new recycling trailer.
 - \$2,000 from Keep America Beautiful/Dow Chemical grant for Sherwin-Williams paint to be used at the Community Center.
 - \$2,000 from Modern Woodmen of America as a tree grant.
 - \$59 from Troy-Bilt Gardening Equipment through Keep America Beautiful for garden hand tools.

Goals

- Keep Salem Beautiful is initiating its new general membership drive, inviting businesses, industries, families, and individuals to support the organization with memberships. Application forms are available now.
- To continue to maintain the recycling trailer in Salem, which is located by the Medicine Shop on North Broadway;
- To provide educational programs to schools, clubs and local organizations in recycling, as requested;
- To remain in good standing with Keep America Beautiful and local partners, i.e. City of Salem, Salem Chamber of Commerce, Daffy-Dill Garden Club, and the SCHS Green Team.

Jane Gaston, Library Board

Accomplishments

- Added 1,441 books to the BBL collection as follows: Large type – 180; Fiction – 506; Juvenile – 579; Non-fiction – 176.
- Total number of audio books added to BBL Collection – 82 (approximately 1,000 in the system); 231 e-books in just the BBL's collection;
- Have approximately 65 magazine subscriptions;
- 5 newspaper subscriptions;
- Five groups meet on a regular basis at BBL: Salem Book Club, D.A.R.; Salem Historical Commission; Ladies Legion Auxiliary; Salem Chamber of Commerce. The following use BBL to meet/hold events once or twice a year: Little Egypt Festival; Marion County Real Estate Tax Sale; Marion County Clerk's Election Judge Training, Breakfast/Lunch with Santa; Alpha Delta Kappa, Keep Salem Beautiful.
- Have added Wi-Fi in the Genealogical and Historical/Friends of Library room.
- Have been advised that a \$70,000 grant is being directed to them through the City by Senator McCarter for sidewalk improvements.

Goals

- To seek grants that could help the library provide more services to the community;
- Update the building
- To develop a yearly maintenance plan
- To actively seek to rent out the gym to increase revenue and provide more services.

Jay Henke, Little Egypt Festival Committee

Mr. Henke opened by indicating his mother had supported her family by working at Murray Center, and he thanked Ms. Winkler for the Murray Center Parents Organization's efforts not only on behalf of the residents, but also on behalf of the many families who are supported by working at the Center.

Accomplishments

- The 2014 parade had the largest number of entrants in history, primarily due to a new and enthusiastic committee;
- Paid for the event through fundraising, and were able to make a \$1,000 donation to the City to be used on the Bryan Park Walking Trail.
- Added a 5K to the event.

Goals

- To start planning for the event earlier this year;
- To utilize local businesses for the porta potties, trash collection, etc.
- Add a new event this year – Gospel Concert;
- Get the word out about the festival by using social media, etc.

Jim Milano, Planning Commission

Accomplishments

- Issued four (4) Special Use Permits –
 - Temporary Use – Hot Dog Stand
 - Temporary Use – Tropical Snow Stand
 - Special Use – Ground Floor residential in a business district;
 - Temporary Use – “Smoked to the Bone”
- Heard two requests for Zoning Amendments, and made recommendations on same:
 - 1313 E. Main from B-3 and NU to RS-5
 - 409 E. Main from B-2 to B-3
- Held two (2) Public Hearings on proposed changes to Sign and Zoning Codes.

Goals

- To serve the citizens of Salem in a consistent, fair and timely manner regarding planning issues and petitions for Special Use Permits and Zoning Amendments;
- React to petitions in a way that maintains the integrity of the zoning district being affected;
- Insure that action taken or recommended by the Planning Commission is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan;
Review the Comprehensive Plan and recommend revisions, if warranted.

Ed Black, Recreation Department

Accomplishments

- Offered the following programs:
 - Co-Ed Volleyball
 - Women’s Volleyball
 - Spring and Fall Soccer Programs
 - Family Hay Ride
 - Halloween Trick-or-Treat
 - Christmas in My Hometown
 - Letters from Santa
 - Calls from Santa

Goals

- Looking for interest in a disc golf course in the park
- Continue existing programs

Ed Black, Lion’s Club

Accomplishments

- Main goal is to help youth obtain eyeglasses – have helped more adults than youth this past year.
- Support Salem Swordfish Swim Team
- Sponsor Easter Egg Hunt
- Post Prom
- Candy Day Fundraiser
- Booth at Applefest
- Sponsor Little Cats and Little Cat Cheerleaders
- BCMW Christmas for Kids
- Greater Salem Area Foundation Bowling Fundraiser

Goals

- Increase the number of youth, over adults, who are helped with eyeglasses
- Continue to sponsor and support the organizations listed above.

John Andrews, Salem Business and Industrial Commission

Accomplishments

- SBIC has assisted the City from behind the scenes on a number of economic development projects.

Goals

- Continue to assist the City from behind the scenes.

Leslie Stephens, Salem Farmer’s Market

Accomplishments

- Started a Partnership Program for businesses in the area to support the market for advertising.

- Collaborated with W.I.C. office to allow use of coupons
- Completed a successful season

Goals

- Expand the Partnership Program to encourage school groups and non-profits to use the market space free of charge.
- Use market coins as promotions at local businesses.
- Offer a Fall/Winter Market with the Salem Community Center
- Ensure goods come from local sources whenever possible

Janice Eischens, Kaskaskia College – Salem Education Center

Accomplishments

- The Salem Education Center has five classrooms, all equipped with smart room technology, a state-of-the-art computer lab, a distance learning room, a tutor room, a wet (science) lab, an industrial/health occupation lab, and a conference room
- Open computer lab is in constant use from the time the doors open until closing, with both students and individuals from the community using it.
- Conference and multi-purpose room, which can accommodate 50-75 people, has become a favorite for community groups and organizations to hold their meetings.
- The Center continues to increase its programming in the areas of science, business and general education courses with the goal of assisting students toward attaining their desired degree. The center also teaches the certified Nursing Assistant (CAN) program each semester. This is exciting, as the college has many successful allied health programs, many which require the CAN program as a basic pre-requisite. The center offers classes at a variety of times; morning, afternoon, evening and weekend opportunities are available. It is KC's goal to offer classes at times that are convenient for the students.
- The Small Business Development Center also has a presence at the Salem Education Center. This includes five business incubator offices for area start-up companies to lease, as well as on-site staff for questions, appointments, and counseling. The newest addition to the Small Business Development Center is KC's Center for Rural Exports. Exporting has become a lucrative activity for many US companies, but all of them began by making the critical decisions necessary to expand their market outside the USA. Formulating solid export strategy requires a critical examination of the capabilities and resources of one's company.

Goals

- The Salem Center will continue to increase the types and number of classes offered. They have a goal to offer more complete degrees and certificates for individuals. KC has identified program areas in which they already offer a majority of the classes, and will continue to add courses until those programs are fully taught in Salem.
- The staff of the Salem Center will continue to provide support for groups and activities involving the community. This will be accomplished both in-house by offering meeting space, and out in the community by offering classes at other locations.
- The Center would like to offer more activities for the students in order to give them more of the "college experience". The Center plans on doing "theme days", contests, picnics, stress less activities during midterms and finals, etc.
- The Center will strive to maintain, and hope to increase, its enrollment each semester. They will do this through additional advertising, public service announcements on local radio, and promoting programs through local high schools and the community.

Art Borum, SCIGA, Director of Industrial and Continuing Education at KC

Accomplishments

- SCIGA has started a new group, the Entrepreneurs Initiative, and Entrepreneurs Club which meets monthly
- Provides a Recognition Program, for groups who have been in business for less than four years
- Focusing on Workforce Development, as local businesses are finding a shortage of skilled workers. The group is looking at targeting a group from Junior High on up, to have the skills local business and industry needs. Factories are now much nicer than they used to be – clean, climate controlled.

Goals

- Continue the programs in place, and increase the workforce development efforts.

Jason Patrick, SCIRP&DC

Accomplishments

- SCIRP&DC provides many services to Clay, Marion, Clinton, Fayette and Jasper counties.
- Five loan programs
- Purchased \$20,000 in GIS software which covers all five counties and 76 townships

Goals

- Continue and increase the programs currently offered by SCIRP&DC

Drew Johnson, Salem Community Theatre Board

Accomplishments

- Theatre Board has developed an online presence (like them on Facebook)
- Surveying
- Reinvesting donations into patron experience
- Providing concessions, including popcorn
- Doors were open during all months except one, with customers from LA to NY
- Continued student liaison, with two student representatives on the Board
- Opened the Theatre office on Tuesdays from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- Received notice of receipt of the CAP grant to assist with the backstage expansion, which is the first since 1941

Goals

- Celebrate the Theatre Board's 15th anniversary
- Sell out the season tickets for shows (which has happened)
- Apply for and receive a quarter of a million in grant funds to:
 - Rebuild the marquee
 - Rebuild the ticket booth
 - Expand the theatre lobby
 - Install new LED theatrical lighting
 - Purchase and install a projection screen, which will help with educational presentations

Bob Haney, Tourism Board

Accomplishments

- Provided a key bargaining chip involving the hotel/motel tax that was useful in the City of Salem's acquiring a new hotel out on the interstate
- Continues to help with funds for the Shrine Circus, Bluegrass Festival, SCHS Girls' Basketball Tournament SIJHSAA Cross Country Class S State Meet, Car Show, Ladies Golf Tournament, etc.
- Have rejoined IllinoisSouth, after review and a decision that it was in the best interest of the community
- Financed a new website to handle Tourism Events and news. It can be found on the web at www.toursalemil.com.
- Placed digital picture frames in hotels showing events and things to do, with the project being called "what's there to do in Salem". The frames are getting rave reviews from visitors and hotel management.

Goals

- To complete and organize a viable portable exhibit that can be used as a display at various gatherings to showcase the City of Salem and our entities. The completed Community Link video will be part of that display
- To maintain the webpage and keep it up to date
- To use its reestablished relationship with IllinoisSouth for the purpose of benefitting both the community at large and especially the hotels/motels in the best possible way.
- To seek to improve the events that they now support and to find or develop other events that will draw from an array of interests, especially events that can span a couple of days.
- To explore the idea of adding more digital picture frames at other locations, such as popular restaurants where travelers might stop.
- To continue with the very popular advertising campaign for the hotels/motels through Travel Buddy magazine, which we pay as a way of giving back to the participating venues.
- Fill a vacancy on the Tourism Board

University of Illinois

Mayor Raymer introduced new U of I representative Pamela Schellhorn.

Mark Decker, Zoning Board of Appeals

Accomplishments

- Issued two (2) commercial variances:
 - Bob's Auto Repair
 - Klein Orthodontics
- Issued three (3) residential variances:
 - 613 S. Marshall
 - 1309 S. Jefferson
 - 615 N. Marion

Goals

- Serve the citizens of Salem in a consistent, fair, and timely manner regarding variance requests.
- Insure that action taken by the Zoning Board of Appeals is consistent with the City Code and the Comprehensive Plan

Jed Casburn, Marion County YMCA

Accomplishments

- Broadened program selection and offered Shape Up Marion County (nutrition and wellness), Volleyball, Parent's Night Out, Summer Camp, Flag Football, Cheerleading and Karate programs that reach their areas of focus as an organization, which are Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility.
- Increased interest in youth sports.
- Offered a Summer Camp program for grades 1st through 6th, which was held at SCHS for 10 weeks in the summer to help the county have more selections for their children to learn and have fun while their parents are at work. Thanked Salem Community High School for participating in this with them.
- Donated 35 full backpacks and a total of 2,578 individual school supplies to area schools.

Goals

- Keeping great relationships with Marion County to make a stronger community
- Continue to work with each other to make sure that everyone, regardless of age, income or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive in Marion County.
- To hear more voices from the community of all ages to build strong programs of what they think would make our county stronger and what interests are out there.
- To strengthen the program selection for a year-round schedule that helps all ages through participation and core values, which are Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility.
- Encourage use of Facebook, ymcaswil.org, marioncounty

Bill Gruen, City of Salem

Ongoing Projects and Goals

- Do a Planning Retreat with the newly elected City Council, and include the Chamber and SBIC.
- Make further progress on Kinney Blvd – target a restaurant, in addition to other leads
- Determine the future of the Armory
- Complete Bryan Park Walking Trail
- Work with Salem Lions and Elks Clubs to improve park equipment, including Andrew Jackson and Roberts Parks. Handicapped accessible equipment will be targeted at Roberts
- Work with the Salem public, including Rent 1, to target all fund raising and cash donations to animal veterinary care (not euthanasia) and “comfort items” such as blankets and toys
- Wrap up softball and soccer field work at Tully Park
- Go out for proposals for Wastewater Treatment Plant Bond Refinancing
- Improve meter reading capabilities
- Establish a program to accept debit and credit cards at City Hall
- Host a CNG meeting on February 19th to determine if there is interest
- Continue Economic Development efforts
- Add a Canine Unit to the PD
- Resurface streets around the hospital
- Improve the Police Department headquarters

- Continue “free hot dog giveaway” at the Aquatic Center and offer an extended season for the weekends between the start of school and Labor Day

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Raymer thanked everyone for attending, and declared the meeting adjourned.

Bev Quinn, CMC
City Clerk