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The Organization

What is the Chamber of Commerce?

The Hallettsville Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture is a voluntary organization of business and professional men and women who have joined together for the purpose of promoting the civic and commercial progress of our community.

The area's economic well-being is related directly to the caliber of work that is done by the Chamber which is why Hallettsville Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture has a major impact on business, income, and future growth of the area.

There are two primary functions of a Chamber of Commerce (1) it acts as spokesperson for the business and professional community and translates into action the group contributions of its members, and (2) it renders specific services of a type that can be most effectively rendered by a community organization both to its members and to the community as a whole.

Objectives of the Chamber

1. To coordinate the efforts of commerce, industry, and the professions in maintaining and strengthening a sound and healthy business climate in the Hallettsville area.
2. To develop a program of work and stimulate activities that will provide for full development and employment of our human and economic resources.
3. To provide creative business leadership and effective coordination of all interested parties in solving community problems and in initiating constructive community action.
4. To create a broad understanding and appreciation of the great opportunities in the Hallettsville area, and to promote the advantages and assets of our community within the area, in the state, and in the region.

How the Chamber Operates

1. Board of Directors

Board of Directors is the policy making body of the Hallettsville Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture. The Board is responsible for setting policies, approving programs and budget. Board members are elected by membership or appointed by the Board of Directors to serve a two-year or unexpired term on the Board and collectively represent the business and professional members of the community. The Board meets once a month for the purpose of transacting ordinary business. The President of the Board presides over all meetings of the Board.

Board Candidate Application Process:

- All nominees for the Board of Directors must meet eligibility requirements, including residence, employment, or business within the Hallettsville trade area and active Chamber membership.
- The Board shall establish procedures for submitting and reviewing candidate applications, which are maintained in the Chamber's Policy and Procedure manual.
- Applications must be submitted to the Chamber office within the designated nomination period to be included on the official election ballot.
- The Executive Director verifies eligibility and readiness to serve. Verified candidates are included on the ballot distributed to voting members by mail or electronic mail.

2. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee consists of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer who are elected annually. The Immediate Past President also serves on the Executive Committee. The Executive Director sits on the Executive Committee as a non-voting member. It shall be the function of the Executive Committee to act, when considered necessary, in an executive capacity between meetings of the Board of Directors, upon matters requiring immediate attention and in cases where it seems impractical to have a special meeting of the Board of Directors. More specific duties of the officers are documented in the By-Laws.

3. Committee Appointments

A committee system is the most effective means of harnessing energies and abilities of volunteer workers. The Executive Committee shall appoint all committees, subcommittees, and other action groups subject to Board approval. General membership may serve on committees.

Financing

The Hallettsville Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture is financed by the investment of its members and with service contracts with the City of Hallettsville and the Hallettsville Industrial Corporation. The maintenance of an adequate level of support from all business and professional interests in the community is essential to aid in stimulating community growth and development.

The members' financial investment may vary according to the Investment Schedule as adopted by the Board of Directors.

Organizational Documentation

1. By-Laws- The direction and operations of the Chamber are governed by a set of By-Laws that are reviewed periodically by the Chamber's Board of Directors. Any modifications to the By-Laws must be approved by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Approved modifications are immediately effective. The Chamber's By-Laws shall be available to all members of the Chamber and staff. Each member, employee, and Board member are responsible to be familiar with the By-Laws and to be aware of any changes. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that any approved modifications are incorporated into the By-Laws.

2. Policies & Procedures- The operations of the Chamber are guided by these policies, however, the policies and procedures contained in this manual are not exclusive or all-inclusive and may not address every operational or personnel issue. The Board of Directors is responsible for setting policy where no policy exists, interpreting existing policies, and reviewing all policies on an annual basis. The carrying out of activities engaged in by the Chamber is guided by procedures. The Executive Director is responsible for defining operational procedures that achieve the policies of the Chamber. The Policies and Procedures Manual shall be made available to all employees and Board members for review; each employee and Board member is responsible to be familiar with the policies and procedures contained in the manual and to be aware of any changes. A current version of this manual is to be made available upon request for any member or staff of the Chamber. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that any approved modifications to policies or procedures are incorporated into the Policies and Procedures Manual.

a. **Policies –** The Executive Committee may modify, change, amend, add, or delete policies at their discretion, as they deem appropriate, subject to approval by the Board of Directors. Approved policies are immediately effective. Any questions by staff concerning interpretation or clarification of a policy are to be directed to the Executive Director. Any questions concerning interpretation or clarification of a policy by the Executive Director are to be directed to the Executive Committee whose interpretation determination is final.

b. **Procedures** – The Executive Director may establish, modify, add, or delete procedures that explain how activities are carried out. Any procedure recommended for implementation, modification, addition, or deletion may be presented for consideration at any regularly scheduled Board meeting and is subject to Board approval.

Personnel Policies

Equal Employment Opportunity

It is the policy of the Hallettsville Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture to grant equal opportunity to all qualified persons without regard to race, color, age, sex, religion, or national origin. It is the intent and desire of the Chamber that equal opportunity is provided in wages, promotions, benefits and all other privileges, terms, and conditions of employment.

Chamber Staff

Staff members of the Chamber are responsible for affecting the daily operations of the Chamber, providing member services, recruiting new members serving visitors, and other activities as described in the duties of each position. The following is an overview of the Chamber staff functions.

1. Executive Director - The Executive Director is hired by and under the direction of the Chamber's Board of Directors. The Executive Director is directly accountable to the Board of Directors for the entire operation of the Chamber and for complete operating efficiency of the Chamber itself. The Executive Director supervises all employees, volunteers, task force workers and community service workers.

2. Administrative Assistant – The Administrative Assistant is directly accountable to the Executive Director for completion of assigned responsibilities. The essential function of the administrative assistant is to provide administrative support and assistance for the Executive Director and for the Board of Directors as requested. The Executive Director will conduct an annual review on or before the anniversary date of the administrative assistant. The administrative assistant's capabilities are measured by the effectiveness with which assignments and responsibilities are carried out.

3. Additional Staff– Additional Staff, either full time or temporary, will be directly accountable to the Executive Director for completion of assigned responsibilities. The essential function of additional staff is to provide administrative support and assistance for the Executive Director and for the Board of Directors as requested. The Executive Director will conduct an annual review on or before the anniversary date of any additional staff. Capabilities are measured by the effectiveness with which assignments and responsibilities are carried out.

Hiring

The Executive Director (chief paid executive) and the Executive Committee have the joint responsibility for hiring staff personnel required to conduct the business of the Chamber with Board Approval.

Employment Records

Correct and accurate employment records are important. Information concerning the employees full name, address, telephone number, change in name, marital status, and number of dependents must be kept up to date.

Hours of Work

Regular office hours are from 8:00am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday. Full time employees are expected to be at their desks and ready to work promptly at 8:00am.

Lunch Periods

One hour is allowed for lunch, between the hours of 11:00am-2:00pm (flexible). Employees should coordinate lunch hours so that the office is adequately covered at all times. Lunch breaks less than one hour should be approved ahead of time by the Executive Director.

Breaks

Fifteen-minute breaks are scheduled in the morning and afternoon. Determinations of when the break is taken is left up to the individual, with due consideration given to the urgency of office work.

Compensation

Determination of pay for the Executive Director and staff will follow, but not necessarily be determined by, a review and comparability data study of like positions in the area.

1. Salary – The Hallettsville Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture has a salary administration program. Salaries are based on job content and responsibility. An employee's salary is considered a confidential matter between the Chamber of Commerce and the employee, and it should not be discussed with other employees. There is no regular schedule established for increases in salary or wages as related to length of service. Merit evaluations are based on production, attitude and ability and are subject to review annually or otherwise stated by the Executive Director. A performance and salary review of Staff will be given by the Executive Director and of the Executive Director by the Executive Committee after 6 months employment and on an annual basis prior to the December meeting.

2. Pay Period – Salary is paid every two weeks. Paychecks are prepared on the first workday after each two-week pay period ends.

Flex Time –

Flex Time Policy

1. Standard Work Hours
Employees are expected to work from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, with one hour allocated for lunch each day.

2. Flex Schedule
To support staff work-life balance and reduce excessive overtime, a flexible work schedule may be implemented with prior approval. For instance, if an employee works 9 hours on one day, they may come in an hour late or leave an hour early on another day.

3. Flex Time Usage
Any flex time accumulated must be used within 30 days of being earned. Unused flex time after this period will be forfeited.

3. Overtime – Hourly employees required to work beyond the normal working hours are paid time and one-half for time worked over forty hours per week. Authorization for overtime requires prior approval of the Executive Director or Executive Committee. If approved by the Executive Director, it must be communicated to the Executive Committee.

4. Mandatory Deductions - By law, the Hallettsville Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture makes the following deductions from the salary of employees:

a. Federal Income Tax. The amount of this deduction is dependent upon the amount of the salary, the number of exemptions claimed and any special instruction the employee may give authorizing amounts withheld.
b. Social Security. This is provided for all employees under the Federal Insurance Contribution Act. The law requires this deduction subject to change by action of Congress. An equal amount of Social Security is paid by the Chamber to help provide this protection.

5. Payroll – Payroll will be made by direct deposit unless the Executive Committee approves an alternative method of payroll for an individual employee.

Car Mileage

Car mileage for travel on Chamber business outside of the work area for any employee or director will be reimbursed at IRS rate.

Continuing Education

Tuition and expenses will be reimbursed for programs with prior approval of the Board of Directors.

Employee Harassment

The Hallettsville Chamber of Commerce will not condone, under any circumstances, harassment of any type in the workplace. Any employee who engages in such conduct will be subject to immediate discipline up to and including discharge from duties. Employees must be sensitive to acts or conduct which may be considered offensive to other employees and must refrain from such conduct. If you feel you been subjected to harassment of any type, you are encouraged to bring the matter to the attention of your supervisor member of the Board of Directors, as appropriate. The matter will be promptly investigated, and appropriate action taken.

Whistle Blower

This policy is intended to encourage Board members, staff (paying and volunteer) and others to report suspected or actual occurrence(s) of illegal, unethical, or inappropriate events (behaviors or practices) without retribution. The Whistleblower should promptly report the suspected or actual event to his/her supervisor. If the Whistleblower would be uncomfortable or otherwise reluctant to report to his/her supervisor, then the Whistleblower should report the event to the next highest or another level of management, including to an appropriate Board committee or member. The Whistleblower can report the event with his/her identity or anonymously. The Whistleblower shall receive no retaliation or retribution for a report that was provided in good faith that was not done primarily with malice to damage another or the organization. A whistleblower who makes a report that is not done in good faith is subject to discipline, including termination of the Board or employee relationship, or other legal means to protect the reputation of the organization and members of its Board and staff. Anyone who retaliates against the whistleblower (who reported an event in good faith) will be subject to discipline, including termination of Board or employee status. Crimes against person or property, such as assault, burglary, etc., should immediately be reported to local law enforcement personnel. Supervisors, managers and/or Board members who receive the reports must promptly act to investigate and/or resolve the issue. The whistleblower shall receive a report within five (5) business days of the initial report, regarding the investigation, disposition, or resolution of the issue. If the investigation of a report, that was done in good faith and investigated by internal personnel, is not to the whistleblower's satisfaction, then he/she has the right to report the event to the appropriate legal or investigative agency. The identity of the whistleblower, if known, shall remain confidential.

To those persons directly involved in applying this policy, unless the issue requires investigation by law enforcement, in which case members of the organization are subject to subpoena.

Accidents

Any on the job injury as a direct consequence of employment is covered by worker's compensation insurance. If and when this type of accident occurs, an accident report must be completed with appropriate signatures and provided to the Executive Director, any on the job injury must be reported in writing within 24 (twenty-four) hours of incident. Approved medical expenses will be paid.

Dismissal

Employment is terminable by either party for any reason at any time. The first 90 days of employment are considered probationary and employees will be evaluated after 90 days.

Resignation

For the convenience of the Chamber, when an employee decides to resign, he or she should give the following upon submitting a written resignation:

- 2 weeks for clerical staff
- 1 month for management staff

When a staff or a chamber Board member decides to leave the chamber, for any reason, they must turn in any Chamber property that they may possess including keys, Chamber credit cards, name badges, etc.

Staff will be paid for any unused PTO but will forfeit any compensatory time accrued.

Employee Benefits

Vacations/Paid Time Off/Sick Leave

Employees may take vacations at any time during the year. They must, however, pre-arrange such vacations to avoid conflict with scheduled and other work of the Chamber that may require their presence. No more than one employee may take vacation at the same time. In the event of a conflict, preference is given to the person with service seniority.

Full-Time Employees:

10 days paid leave after completion of one year of full-time employment.

15 days paid leave after completion of 10 years of full-time employment.

Part-Time Employees:

After completion of one year of part-time employment at 20 hours per week, the employee is allowed 5 days leave.

Staff members should avoid scheduling vacations the week preceding or the week of a major event. All vacation hours scheduled must be approved in advance by the Executive Director.

Vacation days earned may be used for PTO, Sick Leave, Dependent Care, etc. at the discretion of the employee. PTO/Vacation days may not be used to cover the period of time between voluntary resignation notice and last scheduled days worked. Vacation accrual will not be carried over beyond the employee's anniversary date. Any accrued vacation available at the time of termination of employment will be included in the final paycheck.

Paid Holidays

The Hallettsville Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture will observe the holiday schedule annually approved by the City of Hallettsville.

Part-time employees working under 32 hours per week are eligible for paid holiday based on the hours they would normally be scheduled to work on that day.

Funeral Leave

Full or part-time employees may take as many as two regularly scheduled and consecutive days to arrange and/or attend the funeral of an immediate family member. Immediate family for the purposes of funeral leave is defined as spouse, parent, step-parent, child of employee, step-child of employee, brother, sister, parent-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, and spouse's grandparent. As much as one day with pay may be allowed to attend the funeral of a relative outside the immediate family. Such relatives are defined as aunts, uncles, and cousins. Additional time off will be charged to vacation time or leave without pay, as you request, and as approved by the Executive Director. Employees who are on vacation, personal time off, holiday, or are not scheduled to work, and who attend the funeral of a relative are not eligible for funeral pay.

Office Procedures

Personal Conduct

Personal conduct on and off the job must be above reproach. Pleasant and courteous treatment of all callers, members, or visitors must be eminent. All communication on social media must not contain any negative commentary related to any chamber business.

Correspondence

Employees are expected to answer all inquiries or requests within two working days. If they anticipate a delay in order to gather information, they should immediately acknowledge the request.

Mail

First Class mail should be used only when necessary, when Third Class does not apply. Postage is a budget item and accountable. Please keep an accurate record on postage receipts.

Neatness

All personnel should cooperate in maintaining a neat office. The facility should be clean, neat and in order at all times as members take a great deal of pride in being associated with the facility. Neatness and accuracy are essential. Keep tops of desks, files, and bookcases clear of unnecessary items.

Leaving the Office

When an employee is carrying out assigned duties outside the office, he or she must make certain that a member of the staff knows of the absence, the destination, and the approximate time of return. The destination and time must be documented by employees on a mileage log. Employees should try to only leave the chamber office when there is another office staff member present to cover the office in their absence. The office may be closed by the approval or request of the Executive Committee.

Paying of Invoices

The Hallettsville Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture seeks to maintain its credit standing at the very highest level at all times. This is accomplished by the prompt paying of its bills. Staff members should see that all bills, properly approved by the Executive Director, are delivered promptly to the financial administrator. Executive Board members are to be contacted immediately once checks have been prepared and are to stop by the Chamber to sign checks at their earliest convenience.

Purchasing

All supplies and equipment are purchased by the Executive Director. Whenever possible, these items are purchased from Chamber members. No purchase is made for any purpose that is not authorized in the budget unless prior approval is obtained from the Executive Committee.

Disbursements

Expenses approved for disbursement of funds by check require (2) signatures by the elected officers of the Executive Committee. Then, all officers must initial that they have seen the approved invoice and check stub which was paid.

Checks and Debit Cards

All instruments of financial obligation including checks and the Chamber's debit card are to be stored on-site, in a locked file cabinet or desk until needed.

Petty Cash

Petty cash is to be used primarily for making change for cash sales of the Chamber's retail items. Petty cash is to be kept in a locked money box and secured at all times. All receipts from cash sales or purchases are to be kept in the petty cash box until reconciliation.

Reimbursement of Expenses

Reimbursement for expenses incurred by staff or Board Members for Chamber related activities will be reimbursed with advanced authorization from the Executive Director or Executive Committee. The Executive Committee must approve all travel in advance. The Chamber will reimburse the employee or Board member in full for all reasonable expenses relating to the trip. The employee must complete an expense voucher listing in detail, by day, all expenses to be reimbursed. He or she must attach receipts for travel and hotels to the voucher. The President and Executive Director must approve the voucher. Note: There is no reimbursement for alcohol.

Use of Telephone

When talking on the telephone, employees should remember that they represent the Chamber and its members. Answer all telephone calls promptly. All incoming calls should be answered with: "Hallettsville Chamber of Commerce, this is……may I help you?". Long distance calls add to the cost of doing business, keep them to a minimum. Charge all personal long-distance calls to your home number. The Chamber will check and account for all calls each month.

Internet & Email Usage

Use of Internet and e-mail by Chamber employees is permitted and encouraged where such use supports the goals and objectives of the chamber and the activities are business related. Misuse of Internet access and company e-mail can have a negative impact upon employee productivity and reputation of the organization. Official Chamber business communicated via electronic mail to mass membership addresses must be sent "blindly" in an attempt to keep privileged membership information confidential. Electronic mail sent to membership must be approved by the Executive Director or Executive Committee before it is sent.

Cooperation of Employees

The Chamber, by its nature, is an example of teamwork. A high degree of teamwork is necessary at the staff level. Employees having a slack period are expected to offer their assistance to others when needed. In turn, any employee confronted with an emergency assignment can expect cooperation from all other employees.

Confidential Information

The Chamber Board of Directors, Executive Director and all employees are expected to exercise the utmost discretion regarding all matters of official business in complying with Chamber policy and confidentiality. The Chamber occupies a special position of public trust and civic responsibility. The reputation of the Chamber is dependent upon ethical standards of the employees and those on the Chamber Board of Directors.

If a board member is approached by a community member with a question about something that appears to be confidential, please refer back to the office.

Chamber Membership

Membership accounts should be kept updated on the Chamber's membership database. All accounts should be reviewed as applications and renewals are received. The membership month for new applications is determined by the date the application is received. Records of membership applications, renewals, cancellations, etc. are to be maintained in the office filing system. Copies of the payment received via check or cash should be made and attached to membership application. Accounts over 90 days past due on membership fees will be reviewed by the membership committee who will determine if membership privileges should be terminated.

Staff Meetings

All members of the staff will participate in a weekly staff meeting scheduled by the Executive Director. The purpose of these meetings is to permit staff members to recommend improvements, discuss problems, exchange ideas, and make a brief report on current projects.

Administrative Policies

Affiliation with Other Organizations

Chamber staff members should consult with the Executive Director before accepting any offices or making any public statements that might have an adverse effect on the Chamber.

The Chamber will pay membership dues in certain recognized business organizations as provided for in the Chamber budget and approved in advanced by the Executive Director. All other organization dues are paid for by the employees.

Personal Conduct

Chamber staff should conduct themselves in an orderly manner in relations with the public and fellow workers. Since the Chamber is judged to a great extent by its personnel, it is most important that employees maintain conduct above reproach at all times.

Confidential Matters

Since the Chamber is entrusted with many confidential matters, employees must keep such matters handled by the Chamber in strictest confidence.

Recommendations/Endorsements

The Chamber is supported by many firms that are in competition with each other. It does not make recommendations or endorsements of products, services, companies, and the like. When someone inquires about a product or service, give the names of all Chamber members that are concerned.

Solicitors

The Chamber does not purchase advertising or tickets for social events. The only exception is the long standing policy that the Chamber will place congratulatory ads in the local High School Yearbooks.

Participating in Fundraising Campaigns

It is Chamber policy neither to participate in fundraising campaigns nor officially endorse any particular drive among the many local worthy causes.

Budget Control

The Chamber operations are geared to anticipated annual receipts and expenditures. Income estimates are made at the beginning of each year. Expense estimates for the operation of programs are made at the same time. For these estimates an annual budget is prepared and ultimately adopted by the Board of Directors. In order to stay within budgetary limitations, all Chamber expenditures must have advance approval before any commitment is made.

Publicity

The Executive Director will approve all publicity referring to the organization, its officers, directors, and personnel. Staff should release no information about the Chamber to the media without prior clearance.

Committee Management

All committees, as a matter of general practice, arrange for regular meetings as needed. The staff member, Executive Director, or committee chairman responsible for the committee or committees may use the following guidelines:

1. Confer with the chairman before meetings are scheduled to set up meeting dates, procedures, and agendas.
2. Send out meeting notices to all members of the committee.
3. Reserve meeting facilities.
4. Prepare a call sheet of committee members.
5. Make certain members are called, either on the morning of or afternoon before a meeting, to remind them of the time and place.
6. Record minutes of all meetings.
7. Offer advice and counsel when needed and/or requested.
8. Write reports on committee activity when committee action is warranted.
9. Handle publicity for committee activities.
10. Submit committee resolutions for Board of Directors approval to the Executive Director before Board meetings.

Sponsorships for Chamber Events

Occasionally the Chamber will solicit sponsorship contributions for events from Chamber membership. It is the Chambers policy to have a signed Sponsorship Agreement form or receipt of payment before any advertising will be done on behalf of the business that has pledged the sponsorship.

Use of Equipment

Chamber policy does not permit use of any Chamber equipment for personal reasons. Any exception requires advance permission from Executive Director.

Facility Use

The Chamber Board room may be used by Chamber members and Non-members based on availability.

Fees for use:

Chamber Members - $15/hour

Non-Chamber Members - $20/hour

Non-Profit Organization (Chamber Members): FREE for the first 2 hours, then $10.00 per hour thereafter.

Suggestions

Constructive criticism and suggestions from employees and Board Members are encouraged and welcomed. Staff members will make every effort to give credit and recognition for suggestions and ideas that are implemented to better serve the membership and the staff.

While every effort has been made to make this manual comprehensive, it is not possible to include all details and possible exceptions to general rules. This manual should be used as a guide, and not a binding legal contract. The Hallettsville Chamber of Commerce reserves the right to modify, revoke, suspend, terminate, or change any or all such policies and practices, in whole or impart, at any time.

Approved by the Board of Directors THIS

23 DAY OF March, 2026

Kim Manley

(President)

(Attest)