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BID goes out without a bang

By Ken Leiviska Times-Press

REEDSBURG — It was business as usual for the Business Improvement District (BID) Committee during its final meeting ever Monday. The committee will be dissolved in 2009, as there is not enough support from local businesses to continue.

The only hot topic discussed was what Christmas decorations would be used in downtown Reedsburg. Going into the meeting, BID budgeted \$10,000 for decorations. By the end of the meeting, that number increased another \$1,000 for trees, boughs and velvet bows after a lengthy discussion.

"I want it (BID) to go out with a bang," said BID Chairperson Sarah Hill.

With \$16,000 left in the budget, and only Christmas decorations and several months of trash pickup to pay for, Hill said she felt almost all the money should be spent on decorations.

Jeannie Jaech was not on board with this plan, due to the heavy amount of criticism she has received from several downtown business owners, who say too much BID money has gone toward Christmas decorations in the past. Jaech wants BID to have a surplus of money at the end of the year so it can give back the appropriate percentage to each contributing business.

"I'm going to go out feeling good about what I did," Jaech said. "I think we did a great job."

At the conclusion of the meeting Peggy Albert had some praise for the BID as a committee and the service it provided her as a local business owner.

"The BID was very valuable to us," Albert said.

Without BID, she said she never would have focused on making her storefront more appealing for downtown visitors. Albert also points out the lights, waste baskets and flower pots BID has provided to make the downtown more attractive and inviting.

Lorraine Traeder, who owns a stretch of businesses downtown and serves on BID, says making downtown Reedsburg more beautiful was one of the main goals of BID. She said she is very grateful for the opportunity to be part of BID for two decades.

"It's been nothing but a privilege to make our downtown friendly," Traeder said.