

Pulaski County Economic Development
(Pulaski County Community Development Commission)

Tuesday, 6 January 2015

Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex
Winamac, Indiana

Meeting Minutes

Members present: Secretary Dave Zeltwanger, Membership Officer Doug Roth (County Council), executive-board member Andrew Fritz; County Commissioner Larry Brady, Medaryville Council President Derrick Stalbaum, John Plowman (Winamac); Gregg Malott. Executive Director Nathan P. Origer, Project Coordinator Krysten Hinkle.

Members absent: President Bill Champion [work-related], Vice-President Lawrence Loehmer; Amy Jo Cantu (Chamber) [medical], Jamie Bales (Francesville) [scheduling conflict]; Becky Anspach, Greg Comoglio.

Call to Order

In the absence of the president and vice-president, Director Origer called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda was adopted, with the Financial Reports extracted.

Director Origer spent some time reviewing the year-end budget balance, noting that approximately \$60,000 in operational funds had gone unexpended and been returned to the CEDIT Fund; this total excluded about \$44,000 from Professional Services that he had requested by encumbered. He then compared actual operations expenditures with 2015 appropriations, noting that the 2015 operations-funds budget is actually greater than what was spent in 2014. Some discussion ensued.

Motion to approve: Secretary Zeltwanger; Second: Commissioner Brady; no discussion; approval: all.

Community Reports

Community reports were foregone due to the lengthy agenda and inclement weather.

Old Business

Hometown Collaboration Initiative: Director Origer announced that Pulaski County had been selected as one of six semi-finalists, and that a site-visit from OCRA and partners had taken place on 19 December. Director Origer and Commissioner Brady voiced that they thought it had gone well, with nearly the entire committee in attendance. Five communities would be chosen for the pilot round, and the announcement should be made within the next week to 10 days. Pulaski County is the northernmost semi-finalist, one of only two in the northern half of the state.

Pulaski Online: Although there has been significant delay, Director Origer noted that the office is very nearly done with the project. The majority of the delays have been not only in local creation of new content for the 'site, but also in tweaking and updating information transferred by Crane + Grey from the old 'site that has since changed. The site would be live by 1 February.

CAGIT-rate issue: After meeting with Senator Charbonneau and Representative Gutwein, Director Origer reported that Rep. Gutwein has been hesitant to commit to support changing the language in the Indiana Code, because he thinks it will be viewed as too toxic. Senator Charbonneau had put Director Origer in contact with Ryan Heater, a Pulaski County native who works in the Lieutenant Governor's Office. Mr. Heater, who suggested that the administration likely would not have a problem with the proposed changes, in turn, gave Director Origer contact information for Micah Vincent, who is general counsel and project director in the Office of Management and Budget. As soon as Director Origer would hear from Mr. Vincent, he would relay his findings to the local legislators. Commissioner Brady commented that Rep. Gutwein had inquired as to what the fund would look like in 20 years, to which the director replied that it is not a significant concern, as the tax ends in 2020, the jail lease expires in 2022, and maintenance and operations costs would continue to exist long after those expiries. Director Origer further stated that the proposed changes to the code do not direct the County to any action, but only open up the possibility for action. Director Origer had found precedent elsewhere in the code for the proposed new language.

2015 Summit: Director Origer stated that if Pulaski County would be selected for HCI, then the ideal theme and speaker would related to HCI, which would be a nice follow-up to Dick Heupel's 2014 presentation on Primacy of Place™. Director Origer is still open to ideas for alternatives in the event that Pulaski County not be chosen. It was decided to wait until OCRA makes their decision before moving on. The date is set for 3 March 2015.

Establishment of a Redevelopment Commission: As of now, there is no hurry in developing an RDC; however, Director Origer recently completed an RFI for a company out of Ohio. The company has expressed interest in tax-increment financing; were the company to focus on Pulaski County more closely, then then request for an RDC would be expedited.

Career and Technical Education curriculum grant: The director stated that the application had been submitted and requested a motion formally to approve the expenditure for grant-writing services, which had been preliminarily green-lighted electronically due to exigent circumstances. After all options had been explored, the grant application was submitted for West Central School Corporation (with Winamac Community High School to be kept involved), due to funding limitations and several last-minute conversations with both school systems. Director Origer stated that the grant would be very competitive, as there were several applicants in this region alone, and CEC would be awarding only \$1.3 million for all funded projects. Discussion ensued regarding various prospects for expansion into adult education if Pulaski County were awarded the grant.

Motion: Mr. Stalbaum; Second: Mr. Plowman; no discussion; approval: all.

New members and current-member second term: President Champion, Secretary Zeltwanger, Councilor Roth, and Mr. Stalbaum had agreed to stay on for second terms; Mrs. Anspach had not yet confirmed whether or not she would. There are also two other vacancies, one having never been filled, and one created by Mrs. Hinkle's resignation. Director Origer stated that he had approached one person for membership and asked for suggestions, preferably for candidates who are west-side based, female, and/or representing a school. Several names were suggested.

RLF financial administration: Director Origer reiterated the shortcomings of the current loan-approval process and again suggested contracting the Regional Development Company to provide financial-analysis services. He explained that the RLF committee would ultimately still be the decision-maker. Discussion ensued.

Director Origer stated that he was not currently asking for a decision to be made, but suggested he investigate the possibility more in-depth. Secretary Zeltwanger pointed out that Adaptasoft was now located in Monon; the director assured that he would be making visits to ensure payments are on track to be received. He explained that, technically, Adaptasoft had violated its loan agreement by leaving the county, but that not calling back the loan is preferable to risking putting the company into bankruptcy and costing local residents' jobs. Mr. Stalbaum expressed concern with the precedence this action sets for future loan borrowers. After much discussion regarding both Adaptasoft and Chesapeake Recycling, Secretary Zeltwanger suggested that any lawsuits against Chesapeake be stopped, due to there being no chance of the County recouping any money. He also suggested the board develop a committee dedicated to evaluate the RLF program guidelines and make recommendations for improvement. Secretary Zeltwanger agreed to head that committee, Mr. Malott agreed to serve on it, and Jamie Bales was recommended as a third member.

New Business

Indiana Bicentennial: In preparation for Indiana's 200th anniversary in 2016, each county has been tasked with creating a Bicentennial Legacy Project. Mrs. Hinkle would be serving as Pulaski County's Bicentennial Committee Chairperson. Commissioner Brady, Winamac Clerk-Treasurer Melanie Berger, and Aubrey Gearhart had also agreed to serve on the committee. The committee would meet with René Stanley, the Director of Community Resources for the Indiana Bicentennial Commission, on 10 February. Responsibilities of this committee include scheduling the torch route and bearers and planning the Legacy Project for Pulaski County.

Project Diesel: Director Origer stated that he responded to an Ohio company's request for information on 31 December. The company, which converts plastics that are not easy or cost-effective to recycle into new uses, is ready to develop its first commercial facility and contacted 10-12 communities for more information. Director Origer expressed that the company is looking for approximately ten acres and that there is a ten-acre lot in the industrial park, which is also in close proximity to the Recycling Center. The company plans on hiring 30-35 employees to begin, with potential growth to roughly 100.

Other Pertinent Business

None.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Plowman; second: Mr. Stalbaum; no discussion; approval: all. 8:21 *p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Zeltwanger, Secretary