

Pulaski County Economic Development
Conference Room, Winamac Municipal Utilities Building
Winamac, Indiana

8 January 2013

Regular Meeting Minutes

PCED members present: Vice-President Cheryl Stone, Secretary Andrew Fritz, Past President David Broad; Medaryville Board-of-Trustees Vice-President Derrick Stalbaum, Lawrence Loehmer (Monterey); Rebecca Anspach, Bill Champion. Executive Director Nathan P. Origer (*ex-officio*). Dave Zeltwanger arrived at 7:14 p.m.

PCED members absent: President Rod Button, Membership Officer Jamie Bales (Francesville); Ken Boswell (County Commissioners), County Councilor Alex Haschel.

Guests: Amy Jo Hoover, Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors; Mary Perren, Pulaski County *Journal*; Bob Aloï, P.E., Territorial Engineering, LLC; Dan Garigan.

Call to Order

Vice-President Stone called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Approval of Agenda

On a motion from Mr. Champion seconded by Mr. Stalbaum, the agenda was unanimously approved.

Membership Action

Christy Perdue having resigned as the Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce's representative, Ms. Hoover volunteered to represent that entity. On a motion from Mr. Stalbaum seconded by Mr. Champion, the members unanimously accepted the appointment.

Approval of Minutes

After brief review, a motion to approve the minutes of the 13-November-2012 meeting was made by Mr. Loehmer. Vice-President Stone seconded, and all approved without further discussion.

Executive Director's Report

Because of the guest presenter, Director Origer provided a limited report.

Strategic Relations: The director had attended November and December Chamber-Board meetings, and had met with all three County Commissioners to discuss potential PCED rail-oriented projects; he received positive feedback regarding plans to move forward with engineering for the proposed PC-CARE industrial park and cautious interest in Great Lakes Basin, LLC's proposal for rebuilding the Monon with investment from Pulaski County. He would be meeting with new County Councilor Doug Roth on the next day.

Infrastructure: Issues regarding Rhein-Bach, Inc's land-use maps for the Advisory Plan Commission are finally being addressed appropriately.

Business Attraction/Retention/Expansion & Entrepreneurial Development: Director Origer had met with Les Ezra of Metal Fab Engineering, Tom Bonnell at T&S Recycle, and Kyle Trent and Paul Overton of U.S. Aggregates – Francesville quarry; he had discussed the freight-rail and the aforesaid Monon-rebuild proposal with Messrs. Trent and Overton. Peggy Hosea had returned to Pulaski County to speak at the final Year-of-the-Entrepreneur event; Director Origer had met with Ron Gifford, of the Northwest Indiana Small Business Development Center, and Mr. Zeltwanger's son, Ryan, regarding a potential start-up agricultural business that Mr. Zeltwanger the younger is considering once he returns from college to Francesville. This was one of the better sessions that Mr. Gifford had conducted.

Workforce Development: Director Origer reported that the PACE/Extension two-week welder-training courses has been put on hiatus until the impact of the SCILL Center's welding program in

Knox could be measured; it is a time-intensive, costly, but more thorough program, and it offers the opportunity for AWS certification. The director would be including a story about it in the next quarterly newsletter; some Pulaski-County manufacturers already have involved themselves in the program, and others likely would benefit from investigating it.

Pulaski County's unemployment rate was 7.0 percent, up from 6.1 percent in October; most counties saw similar increases. Pulaski County dropped from second-best to being tied for third-best in the northwest part of the state.

Financial Report: At the end of 2012, PCED had expended \$98,715.58 of its \$124,277 appropriation. The entire CEDIT Fund experienced a net decrease of \$25,272.22 in 2012. After 2013 appropriations, the fund had a remaining balance of about \$1.607 million. The Donation Fund had a balance of just more than \$2,000; all repayments continued to be made on time on revolving loans.

Priority List and Monthly Calendar: Forthcoming events on the director's schedule were reviewed. On the next day, Director Origer would attend his first meeting of the Northwest Indiana Forum's Economic Development Committee as a member of the Forum. On Monday, 14 January, the Winamac Town Council would hear a tax-abatement request from GalCo, Inc., for real-property tax abatement related to the proposed expansion at Galfab. On 22 January, the director would attend his first meeting as a member of the advisory group for NIPSCO's Reynolds-Topeka transmission-line project. On 30 January, he would attend a business-start-up workshop, conducted by the Northwest Indiana Small Business Development Center, in Knox.

Director Origer noted that the Francesville Town Council had moved their meetings from 7:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., still on the first and third Monday of each month.

On a motion from Mr. Broad seconded by Mr. Champion, the Executive Director's Report was approved unanimously without further discussion.

Old Business

PC-CARE engineering-study proposal: Director Origer introduced Mr. Aloï, whose site-feasibility/preliminary-plan proposal for PC-CARE had been presented at the November meeting. Mr. Aloï spoke at length about TE's work at the rail-served Knox Industrial Park. He said that the work started with a lead track off of the Norfolk Southern line, with TE and the Starke County Development Foundation relying on a belief that "if you build it, they will come." A spur was later added for Toll Brothers, followed by a team track parallel to the lead track for switching. A tenant of the park, Reagent, established a new division dedicated to servicing rail cars. Eventually, a team-track dock facility was constructed to offer rail access to local companies not adjacent to a railroad.

Mr. Aloï spoke at length about what goes into conducting the site-selection and preliminary-design processes, what costs should be anticipated, and what issues could arise. Mr. Zeltwanger enquired as to the size of the Knox Industrial Park; Mr. Aloï said that he thought it comprised about 150 acres total. Director Origer followed with a question about minimum acreage necessary for rail service to make sense; Mr. Aloï suggested no fewer than 80 acres. Director Origer then asked about the use of the dock facility; at least half a dozen companies have used it. Mr. Zeltwanger asked about total costs for all rail construction at Knox; Mr. Aloï said that it was somewhere near \$10 million, although some companies had expended their own funds, too. Further discussion ensued.

On a motion from Mr. Broad seconded by Mr. Zeltwanger, the Board unanimously authorized Director Origer to present these plans to the County Commissioners and Council for their approval and an additional appropriation to fund the study. The director intended to do so and to contact CSX to apprise the company of PCED's plans.

Great Lakes Basin, LLC/Future railroad development: The director presented a proposal from Great Lakes Basin, LLC, whereby Pulaski County would make monthly loans, to total no more than \$500,000, to the company for front-end costs prior to filing the Monon-rebuild plans with the Surface Transportation Board. After considerable discussion, Mr. Zeltwanger summarized the consensus, stating that, the project has many obvious potential benefits to provide to the community, "We need more concrete information [to undertake this much risk with tax dollars]."

2012 CDC Accomplishments: On a motion from Mr. Zeltwanger seconded by Mr. Stalbaum, the 2012 report was approved unanimously as presented.

New Business

Community gardens (Mr. Broad): Having has Director Origer include in the meeting packet an article from the Logansport *Pharos-Tribune* about a community-gardening endeavor underway in that city, Mr. Broad invited Mr. Garigan to speak about his experiences with such projects and his thoughts on the possibility of such an endeavor in Winamac. Mr. Broad noted that he saw such an endeavor as a way to foster community cohesiveness and to provided fresh produce for local food pantries. After Mr. Garigan concluded his remarks and some discussion ensued, the director suggested that the idea is a worthy one, but that PCED could and should not take the lead on it.

Winamac Lumber Yard RLF request: Owner Phil White had requested a two-month reprieve from loan repayments while he undertakes some restructuring and endures the slowest part of the year for the building-trades industry. Discussion ensued, and Mr. Loehmer, who owns a hardware/farm-supply store, confirmed that the winter months can be slow. On a motion from Mrs. Anspach seconded by Vice-President Stone, the request was approved unanimously; the director was instructed to prepare a document to be signed by Mr. White and PCED. Mr. Zeltwanger suggested that RLF guidelines be amended to address a situation like this in the future.

[Note: Rather than accepting a full forbearance, Winamac Lumber Yard, LLC, would be making payments in January and February sufficient to keep them at pace with required payments: previously, they had been overpaying, which they intend to do again beginning in March.]

Quarterly newsletter 1.4: The director solicited suggestions for sections not yet completed in the forthcoming newsletter; discussion ensued.

2013-2014 vacancies: Director Origer asked members to submit recommendations for new members; three individuals had already expressed interest. He and Mr. Bales would review all candidates before presenting recommendations in February to fill two at-large vacancies. Members were also asked to consider 2013-2014 officer nominations.

Other Business Deemed to Be Necessary

PCED shirts: Mr. Zeltwanger suggested that PCED should consider having shirts featuring the organization's logo on them made, so that members could dress uniformly at PCED events and be able to advertise the organization in public.

Theme for 2013: Mr. Zeltwanger suggested that, in following 2012's being the Year of the Entrepreneur, PCED should develop a theme and programming for 2013.

Community Reports

- Mr. Champion: Fratco had a strong 2012 and will be celebrating its ninetieth anniversary in 2013. If it could be made to work financially, the Monon-rebuild project would be a great boon to the company. Line six is now running at the Francesville plant.
- Secretary Fritz: He will be attending a number of agriculture conferences, and 2013 budgeting has begun.
- Mr. Loehmer: Two thousand twelve was good year for his store. Yields were relatively good in the Monterey area, and farmers paid most of the hardware bills earlier than usual. He expects another good year in 2013.
- Mr. Zeltwanger: The sale of Parkview Haven to the Pulaski Health Foundation has been approved, but not finalized. This time of year is slower for his business, but he has projects ongoing and lined up; in early February, he will be flying to Las Vegas to attend the World of Concrete 2013 exposition.
- Mr. Broad: Alliance EMS has been buying ambulances, and four of eight graduates of their EMT class have hired on with the company. He has been looking at vacant Winamac storefronts to find a building for his health-and-safety-industry retail business.
- Vice-President Stone: Rick's Service had a healthy 2012, with the end of the year having been especially strong.
- Ms. Hoover: As tax season begins, H&R Block has been getting steadily busier; she has approximately ten employees. She also noted that she owns a day-lily farm.
- Mrs. Anspach: With the 2012 drought finally catching up to them, Bonnell Grain has seen a slight drop in sales recently. She will be leaving Bonnell Grain to become director of the

United Way of Cass County. The Star City Regional Sewer District has fewer than ten holdouts remaining.

[Mr. Stalbaum had to depart early.]

Adjournment

With no additional business to address, Vice-President Stone moved to adjourn. Mr. Zeltwanger seconded the motion, and all approved to end the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Fritz, Secretary