

## *Pulaski County Economic Development*

Winamac Municipal Utilities Building, Conference Room  
Winamac, Indiana 46996

3 May 2011

### **Presentation**

At approximately 6:30 p.m., a small presentation began, with the Pulaski County Economic Development (PCED) board thanking former executive director Dan Dolezal for his dedicated service to the PCCDC/ED over the last half-decade. Dan was presented with a wooden wall clock, engraved with signage representing some of his bigger accomplishments during his tenure, that the board purchased from The Roudebush Company of Star City. Dan spoke of his time on the job, noting that handling the time-zone issue was the most memorable. The board offered its fondest wishes to Dan and thanked him again for all of his service. All board members were present, except Carolyn Hildebrandt and Steve Sewell; also present were executive director Nathan P. Origer and Dan's wife, Virginia.

### **Public Meeting Minutes**

PCED members present: David Broad, Rod Button, MacKenzie Ledley, Courtney Poor, Karrie Sutton, Kenneth Boswell, Parish Foerg, and Steve Morrison  
Nathan P. Origer, Executive Director  
Guests: Pulaski County *Journal* reporter Mary Perren

### **Regular Meeting Call to Order**

Board President David Broad called the meeting to order at 6:57p.m.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the April 5, 2011 meeting were reviewed. Karrie Sutton moved to approve them as presented, Courtney Poor seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Director Origer reported on various activities during his first two weeks on the job. He attended the April meeting of the MidWest Indiana Economic Development Region at Ivy Tech's Corporate Learning Center in Lafayette; he noted that the group spent most of the meeting discussing workforce-development issues, especially middle-skills job, which he would further address under New Business; that he will not be attending the International Economic Development Council's conference in Indianapolis, although he may participate in the post-conference showing of regional assets to interested parties,

as arranged through MidWest; and that he does intend to participate with the group at the 2011 Indiana Renewable Energy Conference. He attended a meeting and toured the BioTown USA AgDigester in Reynolds through the Western Indiana Sustainable Energy Resource (WISER) group.

Along with Steve Morrison, Director Origer attended the April meeting of the Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce; he briefly mentioned The 3/50 Project initiative being undertaken by the Chamber, noting that he would discuss it further under New Business and expressing his hope that businesses embrace it, rather than leaving it to the Chamber board alone. He proposed sponsoring a hole at the upcoming Chamber golf outing, to be held at Pond View on June 10, 2011.

Director Origer then noted that he had been working with Winamac Town Manager Jim Conner to organize a meeting of the Winamac Industrial Park (WIP) Board and has been attempting to communicate with Todd Dickard of CBRE regarding marketing WIP. He then proceeded to discuss the various community and business leaders with whom he had met, including three potential PCED board members.

Origer next reported that he had lunched with Mark Shillington, PE, of Woolpert & Associates; Bud Widner, Arens Field manager; and Jim McDaniel, BOAC, regarding the proposed expansion of the Arens Field runway.

Regarding the state of affairs at All Seasons Lumber Yard, Mr. Origer sat down with manager Kyle Kruzick, who displayed cautious optimism for future prospects, pending the results of the scheduled auction. Regarding restaurant attraction for Winamac, Origer spoke with Joe Calabrese and Bobby (Calabrese) Rugg, of JSI Steel, about the River House building, and with Mike and Heidi Fitousis, of Hebron, regarding the Indian Head. The proprietors of both buildings expressed willingness to work with PCED and to be open to new tenants, so long as various requirements are met. Additionally, he noted that he had met with a representative of one manufacturer in the county regarding a potential tax abatement. This person expressed interest in possibly sending himself or another representative of the company to sit on the PCED board after the tax-abatement process had been completed. Director Origer also stated that he had spoken with someone interested in possibly opening a café in Winamac. Origer then noted that he had drafted an op.-ed. piece for the following week's *Journal*, which he had included in the New Business section of the board packet. Finally, he noted that he would be meeting with a Monterey resident the next day regarding opening a private school in Monterey, likely to be situated in the old Catholic-school building.

Attached to the Executive Director's Report were data highlighting how Pulaski County has fared of late, compared to neighboring counties, with respect to monthly unemployment levels and recent-years wages per job and median household-incomes.

He noted that compared to many MidWest Indiana, KIRPC, and other nearby counties, Pulaski County has done well of late.

*Financial Report:* Director Origer noted that the current balance was \$64,588.30, more than \$4,500 under budget. He noted that he had yet to expend a significant amount in his first two weeks. Mrs. Sutton enquired as to whether anything further had occurred regarding the County's land-use maps, which the Planning Commission was having prepared by Rhein-Bach, of South Bend. He said that he had heard nothing from Don Good; Commissioner Kenneth Boswell interjected that payment was to be divided into thirds, with one-third owed after the public meeting and the final third after final approval of the maps. Mrs. Sutton then asked, if the board were to decide during New Business to sponsor a hole, team, or both at the Chamber's golf outing, from where the funds would come. Origer replied that it would likely be from the Donation Fund.

The priority list and May calendar were reviewed; Director Origer noted that he was on the agenda for each governmental board in the county and that he would be meeting with Julie Kitchell of Congressman Donnelly's Logansport office.

President Broad entertained a motion to approve the Executive Director's Report and Financial Report. Secretary Ledley moved for approval and Commissioner Boswell seconded. The Reports were approved unanimously.

### **Old Business**

*Membership Committee:* Director Origer reported that Jamie Bales, of Alliance Bank, Francesville; Cheryl Stone, co-owner of Rick's Service in Medaryville; and business owner and County-Council member Alex Haschel had all expressed interest in joining. Both Bales and Stone were awaiting contact from the Francesville and Medaryville town councils, respectively. Mrs. Sutton noted that Mrs. Shane Pilaski, of the Francesville area, had expressed interest in joining in the future. Regarding Mr. Bales, Origer noted that current board member Steve Sewell, who is unable to attend Tuesday-night meetings, is more than happy to step down in favor of someone who can attend; Medaryville clerk-treasurer Judy K. Harwood had informed Mr. Origer that she would discuss approaching Mrs. Stone with her town council. President Broad asked about Monterey representation, specifically mentioning town-council president Jim Fleury as a possibility. Explaining that he was on the agenda for the Monterey meeting the next night, Origer said that he planned to approach the council about this matter. Mr. Morrison's thoughts were solicited regarding Monterey representation, too. Mr. Origer noted that if all current potential members were successfully recruited, the board would be one short of full membership and asked the board members if they had any preference for sectors and geographical regions in the county to target. Finding another member from the western half of the county, someone from agricultural, or someone meeting both of those qualifications may be ideal.

*Strategic Plan:* Director Origer presented the draft document explicating the program for each proposed Economic Summit, one to be held in Winamac and the other in Francesville. Mr. Poor suggested, provided that the speaker (Mr. Jim Walton of Brand Acceleration, Inc.) would be available, moving the meeting one week earlier to avoid Eastern Pulaski Fall Break. President Broad suggested October 20<sup>th</sup>, a week later, which would separate the west- (September 22<sup>nd</sup>) and east-side summits by one month. Discussion regarding purpose, locations, invitees, catering, and financing and sponsorship ensued, and an Economic Summit Committee was set up, comprising Director Origer and President Broad, with assistance from Councilman Parish Foerg and Carolyn Hildebrandt planned.

Director Origer drew the board's attention to pages from the Strategic Plan's timeline included in the meeting packet, noting that because of the transition from Mr. Dolezal's tenure to his, a delay had occurred, and he would be getting back on track with this shortly.

Director Origer next asked about further discussion regarding the potential use of billboards along major highways in the area to publicize the county. Mr. Poor noted that he had spoken with Mr. Fred Zahrt, who offered suggestions and provided a list of locations where he has boards. After conversation regarding limited marketing funds and the need to reserve said funds for marketing industrial parks; the question of boundaries between responsibilities of PCED and the Chamber of Commerce, and what the contents of a billboard would be; Commissioner Boswell's, Secretary Ledley's, and Mrs. Sutton's concerns about priorities and the efficacy of billboards, Councilman Foerg moved to table the discussion to a later date. Commissioner Boswell seconded the motion, and the board approved unanimously.

*Airport-Expansion Project:* Director Origer asked Commissioner Boswell if the commissioners would view a formal recommendation from PCED as a positive, negative, or irrelevant thing. Origer presented 2007 data, published by the Aviation Association of Indiana, showing an overall economic impact just shy of \$300,000, based on a maximum County budget of \$100,000, notwithstanding any grant money procured that year. He then drew the members' attention to a letter, included in the meeting packet, that had been printed in the *Journal* and addressed to the Board of Aviation Commissioners, indicating a company's potential interest in operating at Arens Field in the future and their need for a 5,000' runway.

Commissioner Boswell expressed his belief that before PCED can make any sort of formal decision on the matter, the board ought to meet with local businesses who may oppose the project, including the incorporated farms that own land in the area, reminding the board that we are an agriculture-heavy county and that the landowners view language in the engineering report as dismissive of agricultural entities. Director Origer expressed agreement, and then explained to the board the federal requirements

for land acquisition – the appraisal process, damage costs, and so on. Commissioner Boswell continued, and noted that a concerned citizen at the previous night’s commissioners’ meeting asserted that the records regarding the use of Braun Corp’s jet at Arens Field this year do not correspond with information in the engineering report, and that, further, it remains unclear what basis was used for determining the flight numbers in said report.

Director Origer asked Commissioner Boswell if the commissioners had set a timeline; he said that they had none at present, and Mr. Poor asked about the timeline for funding. No one was certain at this point. Director Origer thought that Mr. Shillington had noted that the funding was more or less available for FY2013 or so. He asked if, all things considered, the board should entertain a motion to table discussion until after the public hearing. Winamac Councilman Rod Button suggested that, if the project can definitively be shown to have an economic impact, then the board probably needs to take a position. Director Origer agreed. He also noted that Mr. Shillington’s answer about economic forecasting for the project was not convincing.

At President Broad’s request, Mrs. Sutton moved to table discussion, Councilman Foerg seconded it, and the board agree unanimously.

### **New Business**

*Strategic Plan – PC-Care Committee:* Director Origer requested the creation of a committee to dedicated to strategizing for the development of the Pulaski County Center for Agriculture-Renewable Energy, as recommended for the US-421/CSX corridor by the strategic plan. Origer noted that the Economic Development Administration has funding available for technical planning; he also expressed his desire to be sure to include important stakeholders in western Pulaski County – particularly Pulaski West Developers – in the process. Mr. Poor and Councilman Button agreed to serve on this committee with Origer.

*Budget Committee:* Secretary Ledley and Mrs. Sutton volunteered to serve with Director Origer on this committee to prepare a FY2012 budget request to submit to the County.

*Quality-of-Life Initiative:* Director Origer introduced this idea, which he had recently entertained, an informal project that would be of a lower priority than strategic-plan projects, but would fit well with the overall mission of the Community Development Commission. He specifically expressed desire for family-friendly dining options, particularly in the existing River House and Indian Head buildings, noting that he had engaged in discussions with the owners of each facility and that said owners had expressed willingness to work with him. Mrs. Sutton echoed Director Origer’s feelings about a restaurant. Origer further emphasized that, rather than being limited to this, the initiative would be open to any relevant quality-of-life improvements as opportunities arise. He further noted that it is essentially to provide certain amenities in order to keep

and to lure business owners and executives. The board supported this proposal, with Mr. Poor noting that this falls under the auspices of the director's job description.

*Middle-Skills Programming/Workforce Development:* Having attended the April meeting of the MidWest Indiana REDO, at which Ivy Tech's Craig Lamb had given a presentation on middle-skills jobs in Indiana and Warren County's economic-development director, Steve Eberly, had discussed a "workforce conversation" that he, his Fountain-County counterpart, and the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs had organized for their employers, educators, and government officials, Director Origer developed interest in looking into potential opportunities for expanding on workforce training in Pulaski County. Directing board members to a handout in the board packet, Origer explained that the middle-skills field includes such trades as carpentry, mechanical work, dental hygiene, and numerous others. He reported having spoken to Brenda Walters at Galbreath/Wastequip and Paul Gilsinger about this issue and received some helpful feedback. Origer emphasized the importance of improved and expanded middle-skills training to developing the PC-CARE park. President Broad suggested that working with the hospital to re-introduce a candy-striper program.

*State-Job Opportunities:* President Broad discussed the part-time summer jobs available, through IDNR and INDOT, at Tippecanoe River State Park and on highway crews. This information came to him through his new position as member of the WorkOne board. Secretary Ledley created posters to advertise the position, and Director Origer said, at Mr. Poor's suggestion, that he would put an electronic copy of the poster on the PCED Website, and that he had passed the information along to the two high schools in the county.

*The 3/50 Project:* Director Origer included in the meeting packet the draft of an op.-ed. letter that he intended to submit to the *Journal* expressing PCED's support for the Chamber of Commerce's embrace of The 3/50 Project, an initiative that encourages people to make a concentrated effort to spend more money at local, independent bricks-and-mortar stores. He asked board members to review the draft and to provide comments so that he could submit a final copy to the newspaper in time. Mr. Poor asked for more information on The Project; Mr. Morrison, Chamber representative, offered some elaboration and emphasized the relationship between spending locally and quality of life.

*Public-Outreach:* Director Origer asked for continued suggestions regarding the best ways in which he could continue to get his face out to the general public. Various suggestions were offered, and it was decided that it may be wise to have booths at the Pulaski County 4-H Fair and the Francesville Fall Festival. At the Fair, a booth could be shared with the Chamber of Commerce. Director Origer said that he would follow up on both ideas, and thought that the Chamber's golf outing may provide another

appropriate avenue. Mrs. Sutton suggested that board members bring Director Origer to other groups to which they belong.

### **Community Reports**

Councilman Button commented briefly the ongoing separation project and noted that INDOT would be repairing the bridge on the north side of town; this would involve moving electrical equipment. Given the condition of the bridge, Button said that this is a necessary project. Utility relocation would take a month, and some sort of bypass would be constructed prior to closure. Secretary Ledley reported that the job fair at the library went extremely well with 150-some attendees; she thanked the board for funding advertisements for the fair in the *Journal* and *Francesville Tribune*. She further reported that in the first month of the Library's e-book availability, 39 users had checked out 112 books, far surpassing expectations.

Councilman Foerg noted that Francesville is making improvements at the town park. Mr. Poor expressed his pleasure with the extension of the Panhandle Pathway and his hopefulness for continued progress. Mrs. Sutton noted that the Star City Lions are considering reviving Star City Days. Mr. Morrison noted that the Chamber-sponsored spring clean-up in downtown Winamac would be occurring on Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, from nine a.m. until noon.

### **Adjournment**

At 9:00 p.m., with no other business to be discussed, the meeting adjourned with a motion by Secretary Ledley, a second by Councilman Foerg, and unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,  
MacKenzie Ledley, Secretary