

***Pulaski County
Community Development Commission***

7 January 2020

Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex
Winamac, Indiana

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, 8 October 2019

Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex
Winamac, Indiana

Members present: President Gregg Malott, Secretary Sheila Jimenez (Winamac), Membership Officer Doug Roth, board member Brandon DeLorenzo; County Commissioner Kenny Becker; Christy Coon, Samantha Williams, Kelsie Zellers. Executive Director Nathan P. Origer, Project Coordinator Krysten Hinkle. County Councilor Jay Sullivan arrived at 6:27*p.m.*

Members absent: Vice-President Beth Grund; Aaron Paulsen (Chamber), Darlene Mellon (Francesville) [personal], Suzanna Wilcoxon (Medaryville) [personal], Doug Denton (Monterey) [civic]; Tony Holliday [business].

Guests present: Joe Moyer, Wade Wake, County Councilor Brian Young, Dave Olds, County Building Inspector/Plan Administrator Doug Hoover, Michael Gallenberger (WKVI), MacKenzie Ledley, Kim Russell, Kyle Hurd (Francesville *Tribune*), Scott Straw, Randy Dickensheets.

Call to Order

President Malott called the meeting to order at 6:00*p.m.*

New Business

CDC response to County Council's decision to eliminate project coordinator: Director Origer explained that this meeting had been called to discuss the County Council's elimination of the project coordinator from the 2020 budget and how the Commission would like to proceed in addressing this decision prior to final adoption of the budget on 14 October. The director stated that prior to the position's being cut, he had already cut about \$72,000 (roughly 26%) out of the budget from 2019 to 2020. He provided documents outlining the CDC's accomplishments, given that Councilors Ronald DeSabatine and Michael Tiede had made statements that they had not seen enough achievement out of the department. He further explained that he had presented the Council with the possibility of implementing an innkeeper's tax to offset the cost of the department's marketing efforts, to which he had received little response.

Mrs. Hinkle stated that Councilor DeSabatine, who had made the motion, could not likely have known her job duties, because he did not know her title, as his original suggestion had been to "remove the secretary's position from the CDC." She further stated that she believed this to have been rooted in sexist thinking.

Councilor Sullivan responded, when questioned, that the reason for the cut was that the project coordinator had been the last full-time position created, and therefore had been the first to be cut. When challenged whether this policy could be considered a best practice, Councilor Sullivan remarked that other factors had been considered. When asked what these other factors were, he cited lack of respect for elected officials. Comments from the director and members of the public suggested that the County Council may have violated Mrs. Hinkle's First Amendment rights by considering remarks that she had made as a private resident, which Councilor Sullivan denied.

President Malott asked if there was a possibility of the position being reinstated at the 14-October 14 meeting, and Mrs. Coon enquired as to what strategy should be employed to seek reinstatement; Councilor Sullivan suggested presenting the list of accomplishments, programs, and activities in which the CDC participates to the County Council at the budget adoption meeting. Significant further discussion ensued.

Path forward if project coordinator is not reinstated: The Commission requested that Director Origer make a list of programs and project that would need to be cut to be discussed at the next meeting if the project coordinator position would not be reinstated by the Council.

Regular October meeting (1 October/postponed until 15 October): The regular October meeting, due to a variety of circumstances, was again rescheduled, now to 22 October.

Other Pertinent Business

Courthouse security: Mr. Roth enquired as to the status of security improvements at the courthouse, and Councilor Sullivan noted that, in light of State mandates, efforts would be undertaken in the near future to meet the mandated requirements.

Councilor Tiede's LIT-Economic Development (LIT-ED) proposal: Mrs. Hinkle asked Commissioner Becker for his thoughts regarding County Councilor Mike Tiede's proposal, made to the Board of Commissioners, to distribute nearly \$100,000 of the County's share of LIT – ED revenues to the four incorporated towns, at a rate of \$25 per capita, to expend on community-development efforts as their town councils would see fit. Commissioner Becker remarked that the Board heard Councilor Tiede out, but was left with more questions than answers, particularly regarding oversight of the distribution of funds.

County budgeting for other positions: Mr. Roth asked Councilor Sullivan if the County had intended to cut any more positions from the 2020 budget, and Councilor Sullivan replied in the negative.

Public Comment

Councilor Young: He remarked that he had not made four attempts at running for County Council to turn Pulaski County into a joke; that the Microfilm budget should not be eliminated; that Council members should not be holding private meetings; and that he would do whatever he could to help.

Mrs. Ledley: She expressed her gratitude for CDC staff's efforts; questioned why the County would distribute additional LIT-E.D. funds to the towns when they already receive their own shares of these revenues; and reminded all present that the Commission receives its funding from LIT-ED, and not the General Fund.

Mr. Moyer: He cited a recent New York *Times* article, "The Land of Self-Defeat," suggesting that Pulaski County had been shooting itself in the foot; observed that Director Origer's greatest value to the County is not in economic development, but in at-risk ancillary roles that he plays in lieu of a county administrator, and that losing the director would be highly problematic for the community; and remarked to Councilor Sullivan that the perception is that the project coordinator had been eliminated as retaliation.

Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Roth; second: Commissioner Becker; no discussion; approval: all.

7:06p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Krysten Hinkle, Project Coordinator/Recording Secretary
Sheila Jimenez, Secretary