

***Pulaski County
Community Development Commission***

Tuesday, 13 September 2022

Fratco Production Plant

Francesville, Indiana

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, 1 March 2022

Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex

Winamac, Indiana

Meeting Minutes

Members present: County Commissioner Maurice Loehmer, County Councilor Kathi Thompson, Lynn Johns (Francesville), Doug Denton (Monterey), Sheila Jimenez (Winamac); Brandon DeLorenzo, Blake Kasten. Executive Director Nathan P. Origer, Assistant Taylor Bailey. *Breann Wilson* arrived at 6:06 *p.m.*, establishing a quorum.

Members absent: Leslie Hanson (Chamber) [personal], Art Conley (Medaryville) [business]; Bill Champion [business], Christy Coon [business], Brian Ledley [personal], Kelsie Zellers [personal].

Guests present: *Unidentified Facebook viewers.*

(Roman text indicates in person attendance; *italics indicate telephone/virtual attendance.*)

Call to Order

Director Origer called the meeting to order at 6:02 *p.m.*, noting the absence of a quorum and introducing his new assistant, Ms. Bailey.

Consent Agenda

With no requests for extraction having been made, the Consent Agenda was adopted upon the arrival of Mrs. Wilson.

Reorganization of the Committee

Election of Officers: The following nominations and volunteers been offered prior to the meeting:

Ms. Jimenez, President, by Mr. Denton. Ms. Jimenez had accepted.

Mrs. Coon, Vice-President, by Councilor Thompson. Mrs. Coon had not responded.

Mr. DeLorenzo, Secretary, by Ms. Jimenez. Mr. DeLorenzo had accepted.

The director called for nominations and volunteers from the floor. Ms. Jimenez nominated Commissioner Loehmer to serve as vice-president, and the commissioner accepted the nomination. Councilor Thompson nominated Mrs. Zellers to continue serving as membership officer. Ms. Jimenez nominated Councilor Thompson to serve as the fifth executive-board member, and the councilor accepted.

Director Origer called to close nominations and to accept the slate as presented, excepting the office of vice-president and pending Mrs. Zellers's acceptance. This took place.

Motion: Mr. Johns; second: Councilor Thompson; no discussion; approval: all.

[Mrs. Zellers later confirmed acceptance of the nomination via electronic mail to the director.]

With Mrs. Coon not having accepted the nomination, Commissioner Loehmer was elected vice-president.

Motion: Mr. Johns; second: Councilor Thompson; no discussion; approval: all.

Strategic Visioning Committee: President Jimenez, Vice-President Loehmer, Councilor Thompson, and Messrs. Johns and Champion reiterated their willingness to continue serving; Mrs. Zellers previously had done so. No other members volunteered to serve, and the committee's continuing membership was approved.

By consensus.

Revolving Loan Fund Review Committee: The president, Mr. Kasten, and Mrs. Wilson agreed to continue serving on the committee; the director noted that once the County's attorney had offered comment on the proposed changes, the committee would like only need to meet once or twice. The committee's continuing membership was approved.

By consensus.

Old Business

Revolving Loan Fund matters — general updates: Most of the borrowers remained in good standing, with two maybe a month behind, except for IBCT. Director Origer had recently spoken with Mr. Voranoff, who had finally seemed to accept that this project would never be viable and would like to sell off his assets. The director had spoken and would continue working with the County's attorney to determine the best course of action, which ultimately would depend at least as much on what the property is worth as on anything else; seeking the deed in lieu of foreclosure may be on the table, depending on the value. Once Mr. Voranoff next returned to the area, the County would seek access to the property for an appraisal. The director noted a current Fund balance just shy of \$75,000, with \$3,000-\$4,000 in monthly repayments.

Revolving Loan Fund matters — program review: Still awaiting legal review.

Solar-energy development: Director Origer reported that legal challenges remained pending against tax-abatement/ERA-designation/EDA-execution decisions regarding both the Mammoth and Moss Creek projects, with rulings expected to be issued in early May, in addition to the outstanding challenges to special-exception approvals for the projects. Mammoth Solar had resubmitted its application to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a special-exception hearing in April, but the Advisory Plan Commission would be considering a proposal from the Board of Commissioners that would repeal the special-exception requirement for commercial solar-energy projects.

Assistant position: The director reported hiring Ms. Bailey, whom Councilman Mike Tiede had encouraged to speak with Director Origer about the position. Ms. Bailey had been helping the director to get caught up on things and to organize the office. The director expressed hopes for having at least one full-time person, if not one full-time and one part-time or two full-time.

Membership terms: One vacancy remained and would be addressed during the forthcoming bylaws-amendment discussion.

Strategic-plan implementation — Aspirations-in-Action progress: A Main Street 101 presentation would be given at 4:30 *p.m.* on 7 March in the Eastern Pulaski Elementary School Learning Lab as a first step toward re-establishing a Main Street program in Winamac.

Director Origer reported that the Lieutenant Governor's Office had formally designated Pulaski County as a Broadband Ready Community; the director would be working with commissioners and the Highway Department on some permitting documentation. Two developers had proposed delivering broadband to underserved or unserved parts of the county pending grant funding from the State's Next Level Connections program. Director Origer would be setting up a meeting with a local man who owns an IT solutions company and had expressed interest in broadband investment.

The Housing Resource Hub had been contracted to provide consulting services for a housing strategic plan; a taskforce meeting would be taking place on 16 March.

Strategic-plan implementation — other Commission efforts: The director remarked that solar-project approvals fall under the low-workforce-impact investments goal of the Targeted Industry Sectors Key Action Step of the strategic plan. In May, the Strategic Visioning Committee and, possibly, the Executive Board would begin reviewing and discussing long-term alternatives or supplements to current organizational structure of the commission. and economic-development tools that the County had not been utilizing, but could be available.

The director tentatively planned to resume one-on-one business visits with major employers and public coffee hours in the second quarter and to revive the quarterly newsletter in the third quarter.

New Business

Proposed bylaws changes: Director Origer reviewed a number of proposed changes to the bylaws that he believed would better align the Commission's member-term calendar with the County's calendar, as well as one that simplify the process for filling the last remaining commission vacancy; members agreed to these changes, which would have to be addressed formally during a specially called meeting held exclusively to consider such changes.

2022 Economic Development Summit: The director reported that Ms. Bailey works part-time at the Medaryville American Legion, where both she and her mother are involved in the Ladies

Auxiliary. The Auxiliary offers catering, and the Legion has a separate banquet room and ample parking, so the director proposed holding the Summit there instead of at the Christian Church annex. The members agreed to this. Ball State economics professor and syndicated columnist Dr. Mike Hicks had confirmed his availability for the event, which would take place on 12 April. Councilor Thompson and Mrs. Wilson expressed excitement about the returning event and moving forward with Commission programming.

Other Pertinent Business

Revolving Loan Fund: Vice-President Loehmer inquired about annual 1099s for RLF borrowers. Director Origer reported that he provides annual payment reports to those borrowers who submit their payments directly to him and that he had been working with Deputy Auditor Jenny Shank-Maxwell on improving the reporting system; Ms. Shank-Maxwell had previously stated that the auditor had been working on a manipulable spreadsheet. The director further explained that once the program's guidelines had been updated, this sort of tracking would be more streamlined.

Strategic-planning collaboration: Councilor Thompson noted that she is pleased to be continuing her service on the strategic visioning committee because the synergies with the Community Foundation's program create potential for significant progress in the community.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Motion: Councilor Thompson; second: Vice-President Loehmer; no discussion; approval: all 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Taylor Bailey, Assistant/Recording Secretary
Brandon DeLorenzo, Secretary