

***Pulaski County
Community Development Commission
Executive Board***

Tuesday, 2 May 2023
Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex
Winamac, Indiana

Minutes

Tuesday, 7 February 2023
Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex
Winamac, Indiana

Members present: President Sheila Jimenez (Winamac), Secretary Brandon DeLorenzo, Membership Officer Kelsie Zellers, board member Kathleen Thompson (Council). Executive Director Nathan P. Origer.

Members absent: Vice-President Maurice Loehmer (Commissioners) [personal]; Lynn Johns (Francesville) <S.V.C.>; Bill Champion <S.V.C.>.

Guests: Brittany Spicer.

Call to Order

Noting that the Executive Board had a quorum, but that the Strategic Visioning Committee did not, with no non-officer members of the committee present, President Jimenez called only the Board to order at 5:33 *p.m.*

Approval of Minutes

The minutes and memorandum of the November meetings were approved as presented.

Motion: Ms. Thompson; second: Mrs. Zellers; no discussion; approval: all.

Monthly Reports

Executive director's report: The director reviewed his activities over the previous month.

Financial report: Director Origer presented both the 2022 year-end report and an end-January update, highlighting that the L.I.T. – Economic Development Fund had ended 2022 with a slightly higher balance than the previous year despite courthouse-related expenditures not yet reimbursed; approximately one-fourth of the Commission's budget had been returned unexpended, as had about seven percent of the non-Commission L.I.T. – Economic Development Fund budget.

The director's projections for 2023 suggested a significantly lower year-end balance, but he noted that this would be adjusted once the County had issued a bond for the courthouse project, as expended funds would then be reimbursed, and remaining appropriated funds earmarked for construction-related costs could be deobligated.

Monthly calendar: Director Origer reviewed his forthcoming appointments and meetings for the remainder of February and early March.

Strategic Plan Implementation Report

Restructuring and reorganization: The director reported on his progress in drafting the necessary ordinances and resolutions to establish the intended development-oriented commission and to reorganize the Commission.

Community Foundation partnership projects: Director Origer reported on the progress of the housing, broadband, and Main Street Winamac projects. Regarding the proposed housing fair, Ms. Thompson encouraged a focus on non-residents who in work in Pulaski County; additionally, she suggested that a member of the county council — perhaps former Sheriff Richwine, who had been involved in the initiative in his previous capacity — should be appointed to replace her on the broadband council. Additional discussion ensued regarding potential sites for residential development and working with the Winamac Town Council on this matter.

Implementation, other: The director reported briefly on other strategic initiatives, including the regional agricultural-strategy project and forthcoming community-engagement opportunities.

Old Commission Business

R.L.F. — general: Director Origer provided a report on the status of outstanding loans, and discussion ensued regarding the ongoing uncertainty regarding the I.B.C. Thermoplastics property and loan, as well as coordinating with one other borrower slightly behind on payments to get back on schedule.

R.L.F. — program review: The director would work to schedule a committee meeting to review the County's attorney's recommendations.

2023 tourism marketing: In light of the cancelation of the January meeting, the director had had to move forward with the proposed tourism-marketing plan and budget without formal Commission approval; he reviewed the allocation plan with the Board.

New Business

Volunteer assistance: A retired economic-development professional with significant experience in the Chicago suburbs now residing in Porter County had recently purchased a house in rural Winamac and been spending time in the community; he had offered to assist the director as a sort of "ambassador" in the community, especially to local small businesses. The director expressed interest in benefiting from his experience and insights, but uncertainty about the particularly role articulated. Significant discussion ensued, with the ultimate consensus being that the director should interact with and rely upon the gentleman in a more informal manner for the time being. Ms. Thompson emphasized the potential benefits of his outsider's perspective.

Chamber of Commerce board of directors membership: Director Origer, noting that he has an *ex-officio* seat on the Chamber's board of directors pursuant to the organization's bylaws, and that, as such, he had previously left the board on with the Commission's approval, detailed his concerns with the organization and his continuing to dedicated time and energy to it, asking if the Board if they would authorize his again resigning his seat. Following significant discussion, the Board recommended that the director present the matter to the full Commission in March.

2023 Economic Development Summit: The director asked for guidance regarding both the preferred subject matter for this year's guest speaker and locations in Monterey for the event. Discussion ensued regarding the various topics covered at previous Summits; whether or not addressing solar energy, or renewable-energy development generally, would be advisable, and, if so, if such a topic could be tied to agricultural diversification. President Jimenez suggested a guess who could speak to post-pandemic recovery, especially in rural communities. The members and director agreed to continue this discussion at the April meeting, for which the director would provide additional information for deliberation.

Other Pertinent Business

Acknowledgements: Director Nathan Origer thanked Ms. Thompson for her service, noting that Councilor Brad Bonnell would official replace her on the commission as of 1 March.

Adjournment

Motion: Secretary DeLorenzo; second: Ms. Thompson; no discussion; approval: all. 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan P. Origer, Executive Director/Recording Secretary *pro tempore*
Brandon DeLorenzo, Secretary