

***Pulaski County
Community Development Commission***

Tuesday, 16 January 2024
Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex
Winamac, Indiana

Meeting Notes

Wednesday, 31 May 2023
Fratco Production Plant
Francesville, Indiana

Members present: President Sheila Jimenez (Winamac), Secretary Brandon DeLorenzo, Bill Champion; Brad Bonnell (County Council); Blake Kasten. Executive Director Nathan P. Origer, Assistant Taylor Bailey.

Members absent: Vice-President Maurice Loehmer (County Commissioners), Membership Officer Kelsie Zellers; Doug Denton (Monterey) [personal]; Brian Ledley; Breann Wilson.

Guests present: Christine Brucker, Connie Ehrlich.

Call to Order

President Jimenez called the meeting to order at 5:38 *p.m.*; Director Origer noted the lack of a quorum.

Approval of Minutes

The March and April minutes could not be approved in the absence of a quorum.

Consent Agenda

No members requested the extraction and discussion of any of the included reports.

New Business

2024 budget: Director Origer provided and reviewed the final budgets of past years for reference to the 2024 proposed budget to show the changes, noting that the 2024 budget is substantially smaller than previous years' base budgets because of funds appropriated for the courthouse and justice-center projects. These would no longer be necessary in 2024, as the courthouse bond would have been issued by then. Significant discussion ensued regarding the rationale behind various increases in the budget, particularly the addition of a third full-time position in the office, and the County's plans for implementing wage adjustments.

Director Origer asked if he should make any amendments to the proposal before submitting it; President Jimenez and Mr. Champion agreed that it should be presented to the Auditor's Office as-is.

Main Street Winamac intern: The C.D.C. had been asked to provide \$4,000-5,000 in support to hire a summer intern; the candidate they had lined up is a Ball State Planning student. This intern would conduct a comprehensive downtown-building assessment would provide a database of potentially available properties. With the lack of a quorum, Director Origer, asked if there were any objections on the matter; Mr. Champion expressed approval as long as the C.D.C. had the funds available. President Jimenez asked out of which fund this expense would be paid and the current balance of the account; Director Origer stated that the Economic Development appropriation, with a current unpledged balance of \$20,000, would be used. The president also enquired as to what Main Street Winamac (M.S.W.) intended to do with the information from the assessment; the director noted that the information found would be used to market properties, as well as to connect the owners with resources to put money back into the property, which could create opportunities for restoring second-floor apartments and making more retail space available. Mr. Champion noted that it would give a good sense of the space available.

Strategic Plan Implementation Report

Restructuring and reorganization: Legal review of the two ordinances and one resolution had been completed, and Director Origer would be reconciling the revised versions and the originals and then presenting them to the commissioners; the Tourism Advisory Committee resolution had not yet

been finished. The director and Ms. Bailey had completed the large-group tourism-partner meetings, and Ms. Bailey had been visiting tourism partners one-on-one and made a few potential connections.

Community Foundation partnership projects: M.S.W. would be shifting to weekly meetings to attempt to make more progress. The UPTOWN Project Economic Restructuring Committee had conducted a survey of residents and businesses; the data would be compiled and prepared for a community roundtable.

The \$50,000 housing pre-development funding had been secured, and the director had moved on to discussing a memorandum of understanding with the Housing Resource Hub. Site evaluation remained ongoing, but the County Farm property seemed still to be the frontrunner for the catalyst site. Director Origer would be meeting with an owner of a different property that could be an alternate, as well as working on a parallel track with owners of other projects to generate more interest in their properties. Funding for the catalyst property would be for READI 2 funding consideration.

With a new grant opportunity opening, the Broadband Taskforce had implemented a temporary hold on using American Rescue Plan money to fund a request for proposals or quotations. Another round of Next Level Connections grants would be opening soon; the broadband consultant had been in frequent contact with providers.

Implementation, other: Pulaski Memorial Hospital and the Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce had expressed willingness to partnership for the coffee hour at the Francesville Market. The Ag Strategy implementation project had been moving slowly due to various personnel changes in neighboring counties. MatchBOX had launched the Regional Accelerator Program for entrepreneurs in Pulaski County; after struggling with attendance, they had reimagined the program for the two individuals who had remained engaged. They also had been working on a more flexible model for the future, and a second Pulaski County opportunity could arise in the future.

A representative from the Indiana Economic Development Corporation would be returning to the Pulaski County Industrial Forum in June and accompanying Director Origer on one-on-one company visits at that time. The director had met with Kathy Neary from the Center of Workforce Innovations regarding reconnecting and improving services provided locally. The Sheriff's Office had still hoped to revitalize work-release programming; it could be scaled down at first and expand later.

The Director had met with website developers to discuss strategies to improve our website as a tourism-marketing tool; discussions regarding a new video in the near future had also occurred.

Old Business

Revolving Loan Fund matters — general updates: After both Pulaski County judges had recused themselves, White County Superior Judge Woolley had accepted the I.B.C.T. foreclosure case involving Mr. Voranoff; after some research, Director Origer had confirmed that Mr. Voranoff had been involved in multiple cases regarding finances over the past two years. Multiple parties had expressed interested in buying the property. One delinquent borrower had been making payments, but had not yet caught up, while another borrower remained slightly behind.

Revolving Loan Fund matters — program review: With no C.D.C. meetings until the executive-board meeting in August and full-commission meeting in September, Director Origer noted that this would be an opportune time for the Revolving Loan Fund Committee to meet and to get the program live again.

Solar-energy development: The Council had adopted the preliminary tax-abatement resolution for the Bottlebrush project in May, and a public hearing would be held on 12 June. Baker Tilly had completed the tax- and economic-impact studies on the proposed project; economic-development payments remained to be negotiated. Baker Tilly's report showed that if the project were to move forward with the tax abatement, it would still pay an estimated 74% of the cumulative maximum-levy growth for Pulaski County, Salem and Beaver Townships, West Central Schools, and the Francesville-Salem Township Public Library over the abatement period, saving taxpayers an estimated \$2.65-million. With no abatement, Bottlebrush would save the taxpayers about \$17.34-million over the next 10 years, but the County and other units would only receive \$3.55-million in new, restricted revenue.

Other Pertinent Business

None.

Public Comment

Christine Brucker re: Revolving Loan Fund: Mrs. Brucker asked for confirmation of a foreclosure and if there is a committee regarding the Revolving Loan Fund; Director Origer noted that a committee had been working on the program rules and that the committee has no role in the foreclosure or the individual property itself. Mrs. Brucker thought that no money was available in the fund; Director Origer noted that it had a balance of \$134,807, but that the program had been put on hiatus while the rules were under review.

Adjournment

Motion: President Jimenez; second: Mr. Champion; no discussion; approval: all 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Taylor Bailey, Assistant/Recording Secretary
Brandon DeLorenzo, Secretary