

**Pulaski County
Community Development Commission**

Tuesday, 12 August 2025
Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex
Winamac, Indiana

Minutes

Tuesday, 11 February 2025
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Members present: Al Breyfogle (Economic Development Commission (E.D.C.)), Sheila Hazemi (County Council (Council)), Brian Ledley (Redevelopment Commission (R.C.)), Don Street (Board of Commissioners (Board)). Department of Community Development (D.C.D.) Executive Director Nathan P. Origer, D.C.D. Assistant Taylor Bailey.

Members absent: Bill Champion (Advisory Commission on Industrial Development (ACID)) [business], Maurice Loehmer (agriculture sector) [business], David Scott (Tourism Advisory Council (TAC)) [personal].

Guests present: Diana Day, Brandi Larkin.

Call to Order

Director Origer called the meeting to order at 6:00 *p.m.*

Consent Agenda

With no requests for extraction having been made, the consent agenda was adopted.

Motion: Mr. Ledley; second: Mr. Breyfogle; no discussion: approval: all.

Election of Officers

Director Origer, noting that Ms. Hazemi, Bill Champion, and Mr. Ledley had served as president, vice-president, and secretary, respectively, in 2024, called for nominations and volunteers for these positions. Mr. Street nominated the 2024 officers to continue serving; the president and secretary accepted, and the director would confer with Mr. Champion. With no volunteers having spoken or other nominations having been made, nominations were closed, and the slate was approved as presented.

Motion: Mr. Breyfogle; second: Commissioner Street; no discussion; approval: all.

Financial Report

2024 year-end review: The Local Income Tax–Economic Development Fund (‘Fund’) ended the year with \$1,927,077.14 in cash and a \$580,000 certificate of deposit for a total of \$2,507,077.14. Personnel appropriations totaling \$77,870.92 went unexpended, due largely to over budgeting for healthcare insurance: when the Council had declined to fund a third position in the office, they had not reduced the healthcare appropriation. Expenditures for the year included the \$350,000 loan to Willow Creek Villas and \$433,069.31 toward the courthouse before the fund was reimbursed. Unexpended operations funds totaled \$103,837.91; President Hazemi questioned if the unexpended dollars would return to the C.D.C. budget, and the director advised the funds would be returned to the Fund and then be re-appropriated as appropriate. The County left \$56,675.30 unspent in the non-C.D.C. components of the Fund’s budget out of \$1,221,509.18.

The C.D.C. Donation Fund ended the year with a balance of \$8,643.12, while the Revolving Loan Fund had a year-end balance of \$286,057.04. The General Donation Fund had a year-end balance of \$73,279.49, and the Industrial Park Fund had a year-end balance of \$43,643.86.

President Hazemi suggested that, when the director prepares the 2026 budget, he explain to the Council that the C.D.C. came in under budgeted and request that the unexpended money be put back into the Marketing budget for tourism; the director agreed.

End-January report: The Fund had a cash balance of \$1,632,720.68. A lot of front-end expenditures are made out of the Fund; eventually, monthly disbursements from the State would catch up to spending, but, at present, the Fund had an unappropriated cash balance of \$333,294.17, compared to appropriations totaling \$1,299,426.51. Director Origer estimated the Fund’s remaining 2025 revenue in the ballpark of \$1.557-million, notwithstanding any refunds, reimbursements, or special distributions, leading to an anticipated minimum year-end cash balance of \$1,890,537.17. While most of the early expenditures out of the Fund had been made by the commissioners, the C.D.C. had been responsible for several larger payments: local match to KIRPC for the regional transportation-grant project, a solar-project legal-fees bill from Barnes

& Thornburg, and the penultimate invoice for the rebuild of the County website among them. The Donation Fund had a balance of \$8,643.12 and the Revolving Loan Fund had a current balance of \$292,246.39. There had been no changes to the Industrial Park Fund or the General Donation Fund.

Director Origer presented the requested Revolving Loan Fund tracking spreadsheet, noting that all borrowers were in good standing and reviewing all of the outstanding loans.

The financial report was approved as presented.

Motion: Mr. Breyfogle; second: Mr. Street; no discussion; approval: all.

Strategic Plan Implementation Report

The director noted that, going forward, he would include this report with his other reports in the consent agenda, planning to provide an oral report only when particular circumstances called for discussion, a Commission vote, or both. The members approved of this plan.

By consensus.

C.D.C. restructuring: The final seat on the C.D.C. had been filled by Maurice Loehmer; after he had finished his term as a commissioner, the Board had appointed him to fill the vacant agriculture seat. Mr. Street had filled the seat vacated by Mr. Loehmer.

Mr. Breyfogle had been nominated by the Winamac Town Council to fill the vacancy on the E.D.C. created by the death of Claude LeMere, and the members of the E.D.C. had elected him president; the director welcomed Mr. Breyfogle to the C.D.C. and noted that the E.D.C. would probably not reconvene until a tax-abatement request had been made, or when the Revolving Loan Fund Program had been re-opened, and an application submitted. Otherwise, the director would likely reconvene the E.D.C. in the third quarter or early in the fourth to update the members.

The R.C. had spent time in a visioning process, considering ways it could add value to the community when its powers regarding TIF districts and bonding are not relevant. The R.C. has the power to purchase property, to renovate it, and then to sell or to lease the property, a power not afforded to all governmental entities have for the purpose of revenue generation. Some buildings in the community had been discussed as ideal targets if the financial resources were to be made available to the R.C. Lengthy discussion regarding the possibility of recreational improvements, such as the development of a multi-sport complex that could serve Pulaski County and also attract outside teams, had occurred. The need for a hotel in the community had also been discussed, and Director Origer had hoped to reconvene the R.C. in March.

The TAC had continued working on the Tourism Strategic Plan; the Strategic Planning Committee would need to reconvene again before the next full TAC meeting. The TAC had decided to move forward with producing a new rack card, which would be used to draw attention to Pulaski County and the website. Kelsie Zellers has moved from representing Main Street Winamac (M.S.W.) to an at-large position, and Beth Hargrove now represents M.S.W..

Mr. Street asked if anyone had expressed interest in bringing a hotel to Pulaski County. Director Origer explained that, when the subject was brought up in previous years, a developer from Wisconsin-based Cobblestone Hotels had approached Pulaski County, a third-party feasibility study had been conducted. The consultant found that, at that particular time, a 34-room hotel could succeed in Winamac. Unfortunately, not enough local investors could be found to partner with Cobblestone, and the project died. The director mentioned that, during his business-retention meetings in 2023, he surveyed local manufacturers about the need for a hotel, among other matters; despite the increase in short-term rentals in the community, he had received largely favorable responses regarding the construction of a hotel in Winamac.

Aspirations-in-Action-based programming: M.S.W. had been working toward applying to Indiana Main Street for first-tier recognition this year and had already started preparing for the second annual Tri-Tender. A group of members had had the opportunity to attend Monticello's Main Street organization's annual meeting in the previous week.

Sullivan Development had broken ground on the Willow Creek Villas project in mid-December; contractors had been slightly ahead of schedule, and things had been going well. Director Origer added that at least one lot in the subdivision had sold as a result of the attention brought to the neighborhood by this project. The future of the Housing Taskforce's proposed catalyst-site project had remained uncertain, with the director still waiting for appraisals of the Galbreath property to see if a land swap would be feasible.

Pulaski County had been awarded two grants late in 2024 for broadband planning: a C.D.B.G. planning grant through OCRA exclusively for developing a countywide broadband engineering plan, and a U.S.D.A. Rural Development grant that could be used for planning as well, but also had come with a broader list of eligible uses. The Broadband Taskforce and the Community Foundation of Pulaski County had been

working to determine a better use of the U.S.D.A. funds. Fulton County-based R.T.C. had notified households in the Tippecanoe River State Park area of new fiber service coming soon; work had started southeast of the state park and would continue in a clockwise direction. An individual in Beardstown had told the director that he had received notification from R.T.C.

Implementation, other: The director had begun making business-retention/-expansion visits, with trips to Crossroads Seamless USA and BraunAbility having occurred in recent months.

Executive director's 2025 goals: The director presented a list of goals and objectives for himself, asking for the C.D.C.'s additions, corrections, or deletions as appropriate and formal approval of the list.

The members approved the goals and objectives as presented.

Motion: President Hazemi; second: Mr. Breyfogle; no discussion; approval: all.

Old Business

Revolving Loan Fund program review: The director has spoken with the County's attorney, who had suggested meeting with him to review the proposed program changes. The Board had officially authorized the previous attorney's final review late in 2024, but he ran out of time in his tenure with the County before accomplishing this. The new Board had approved the new attorney's review.

Solar-energy development: The Council had deadlocked on a vote on two preliminary resolutions for assessed-value deductions; one resolution would have added parcels to the approved abatement for Mammoth Solar project, while the other pertained to Mammoth Grazing, a second project proposed by Doral. Compliance-monitoring agreements had been executed with V.S. Engineering and all four developers that have projects permitted or in the permitting process. This supplements services being provided directly to the Building Department by B. F. & S; Director Origer noted that he had invoiced all four companies for initial deposits, and payment had been received from NextEra for the Moss Creek project, while Lightsource bp had already initiated a transfer of \$30,000 to the County for the Mayapple project and requested an invoice for a second payment. The director had just received confirmation that Doral would be transferring the funds on 20 February for Mammoth. Invenergy with Bottlebrush Solar should have started their process by the following week. The director was unsure if V.S. Engineering had done much work yet; Mr. Street confirmed that they have already begun scheduling meetings and site visits.

Doral had begun preconstruction work on sites been closing in on construction. The Advisory Plan Commission (A.P.C.) had recommended a substantial increase to the fee schedule; Director Origer had attended the public hearing on the matter and spoken out against the proposed fee schedule, arguing that it would not meet the *Indiana Code's* reasonableness test. The A.P.C. had also recommended an 18-month moratorium on battery energy-storage systems (BESS); the director had argued that room exists for improving regulations pertaining to BESS, but that 18 months is far too long. These recommendations would now be presented to the Board for approval, amendment, or rejection.

New Business

Pulaski County comprehensive plan: Director Origer, noting that discussion on the matter had arisen at a recent meeting of the ACID, explained that the County had not updated its comprehensive plan since it was adopted in 2009, while the economic-development strategic plan had been updated twice since then, along with the development of a housing plan and initial work on a tourism strategic plan. An entirely new zoning ordinance had been adopted since the comprehensive plan had been adopted without any adjustments to the plan, and the director opined that an updated had been overdue. Mr. Street asked the director to present this at the next commissioners meeting.

President Hazemi asked if the C.D.C. would fund the new plan; the director stated that the A.P.C. should be responsible for funding it. Discussion ensued, and the members agreed that the director should raise the issue at the next meeting.

By consensus.

2025 Economic Development Summit: Typically, this event has been held in April, and no members objected to continuing as such. Historically, the Summit location had rotated among the four incorporated towns (or near them); the 2024 event had occurred in Winamac, and, per the rotation schedule, this year's location should be in or near Francesville. The president suggested that it would be best regularly to hold the Summit in Winamac due to its central location and its tendency to draw better attendance. Secretary Ledley noted that the 2022 Summit in Medaryville had been well attended. Discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of each possible location; Brandi Larkin suggested Bethel Bible Church as a possible venue given its central location in the county, and Diana Day added that Bethel Bible does not charge to use their

space, but accepts and appreciates donations. The secretary expressed support for investigation this option, while Mr. Breyfogle opined that the Summit should be held in Winamac because it is the county seat, and the office is located there.

The members agreed to the plan, including preferred and backup locations of Bethel Bible and an in-Winamac spot, preferred and backup dates of 29 and 22 April, and a topic for the guest speaker.

By consensus.

Other Pertinent Business

None.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Motion: President Hazemi; second: Mr. Breyfogle; no discussion; approval: all 7:10 *p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Ledley, Secretary

Taylor Bailey, Assistant/Recording Secretary