

***Pulaski County  
Tourism Advisory Council***

Monday, 9 February 2026  
Pulaski County Courthouse  
Winamac, Indiana

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, 20 March 2025  
Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex  
Winamac, Indiana

Members present: President Dave Scott (Winamac Town Council (W.T.C.); Vernon Gillum (County Council (Council)), Beth Hargrove (Main Street Winamac), Raymond Heabel (Board of Commissioners (Board)), Christie Nicholson (Council) Kelsie Zellers (Board). Department of Community Development (D.C.D.) Executive Director Nathan P. Origer, D.C.D. Assistant Taylor Bailey. Jeff Litke (The UPTOWN Project) arrived at 5:32 *p.m.*

Members absent: Vice-President Tom Miller (W.T.C.), Secretary Sue Kast (Board) [business].

Guests present: Diana Day, Donna Heabel.

Call to Order

President Scott called the meeting to order at 5:30 *p.m.* In the absence of the secretary, Mr. Gillum agreed to serve *pro tempore*.

Consent Agenda

With no extractions having been made, the consent agenda was approved.

**Motion: Mrs. Zellers; second: President Scott; no discussion; approval: all.**

Old Business

*2025 Economic Development Summit:* The Summit would be held at 6:00 *p.m.* on Tuesday, 29 April, at either the Bethel Bible Church or the Knights of Columbus hall. Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute President Stephanie Wells would be the guest speaker.

*2025 tourism-marketing budget — WGN Radio proposal:* The director gave a quick overview of what is included in the \$7,500 WGN Radio proposal, noting that an estimated \$13,000 remained in the Marketing budget. At this point, conversation veered into other discussion items.

*2025 tourism-marketing budget — use of a consultant, intern, or both:* President Scott had spoken with Brad Conn of Concepts Marketing; for \$5,000–\$7,000, Concepts Marketing could manage a six-month promotion, with content to be utilized on Facebook and Instagram and potentially for Google Ads. Concepts' work product would highlight spring and summer events, activities, restaurants, and festivals in Pulaski County; motion graphics, graphics, publishing scheduling, targeted boosting, and insight tracking and reporting would be provided.

Mrs. Nicholson had had difficulty connecting with someone in Videography, Photography, or Marketing at Purdue regarding connecting with a student to discuss the possibility of an internship, with spring break seemingly contributing to the delay.

Mrs. Nicholson suggested that both an intern and Concepts Marketing might be necessary, adding that business owners could provide content. Discussion ensued regarding costs and which appropriations could be used to pay Concepts; Mrs. Nicholson suggested the use of K.P.I's and website integration with social media if the TAC were to move forward with Concepts, and discussion regarding metrics and assessment ensued, followed by additional discussion regarding costs, with Mrs. Hargrove asking if \$1,000 per month would be excessive, and Mrs. Nicholson noting that Acorn Oaks pays more and sees value. Conversation returned to the first discussion item.

*2025 tourism-marketing budget — WGN Radio proposal continued:* Mrs. Nicholson asked if any members' businesses utilize radio advertising; no members currently do. She then added that she would be skeptical of this proposal, due to it not being productive for local businesses and likely would not be productive for county tourism. The director expressed partial agreement but pointed out that WGN is one of the most powerful A.M. radio stations in the country, with a substantially larger reach than local stations have. Mrs. Hargrove asked who would participate in the live portion of the radio package; Director Origer advised that it would be he a TAC member, or both, possibly

with a local tourism-business owner. Mrs. Nicholson suggested producing social-media reels and contests of our own to use on social media versus the radio. Responding to Mrs. Nicholson, the director noted that the package offers significant airtime for ads and comes with the guarantee of at least one new visitor to Pulaski County. Mr. Litke asked how Concepts Marketing would target the Chicagoland audience; the director noted that he could not respond definitively but knows that geographic parameters could be set.

Mrs. Hargrove emphasized the need for tracking so that the TAC would have a better sense of how to allocate Marketing funds in 2026. Director Origer noted that the tourism website tracks some data, adding that it is helpful, but not perfect, and also that he had not yet learned what sort of analytics component the revamped website would feature. Mrs. Hargrove then asked how the remaining money would be spent if the TAC were to reject the WGN proposal. The director explained that the remaining balance would be sufficient to cover the WGN proposal and digital advertising. President Scott asked what the content of the 30-second WGN commercials would be with the WGN proposal; Mrs. Zellers added that WGN would also share this content on social media

*2025 tourism-marketing budget — use of a consultant, intern, or both continued:* Mr. Gillum asked what the time frame would be for Concepts Marketing to have everything up and running; Mrs. Hargrove and the president suggested that it should only take one or two weeks. Director Origer noted that if Concepts Marketing could start by April, the six-month promotion would last through September, which would cover most of Pulaski County's tourist season. Mrs. Nicholson added that, if the TAC could have Concepts' work running by mid-April, the six months would actually last through mid-October, which she believed would be ideal. Mrs. Hargrove reiterated the importance of track the traffic from this to ensure that funds are being spent in the right place.

*2025 tourism-marketing budget — WGN Radio proposal continued:* Mrs. Hargrove reiterated her question about how the funds would be used if the WGN proposal were not accepted. Mrs. Nicholson reminded the members of previous discussions regarding the development of a new rack card; the director suggested that little of that cost would come out of the Marketing appropriation. Discussion ensued regarding how businesses would be prioritized, and how this could be done fairly, with points made about the greater flexibility in this regard offered by social-media marketing. Mrs. Nicholson added that more avenues for online traffic exist than do for radio traffic. Further discussion ensued, with Mr. Heabel speaking favorably of WGN's reach and impact.

*2025 tourism-marketing budget — digital-marketing allocation:* Mrs. Nicholson asked if anyone had familiarity with buying digital streaming ads; the director noted that WGN's proposal includes a streaming component. Mrs. Nicholson specifically highlighted streaming platforms such as Netflix, suggesting that if a new commercial were to be produced, rather than running it on local news stations, the TAC should consider streaming advertising. The director expressed support for doing this if and when a new commercial would be produced. Discussion began regarding the origin of the original commercial, what could be included in an updated commercial, and if Concepts Marketing could provide reels for social media. The director suggested working with Concepts for at least one year and assessing the value of the relationship before making decisions about the future.

*2025 tourism-marketing budget — WGN Radio proposal continued:* Mr. Heabel, as a former Chicagoland resident, noted that he had seen the County's tourism television commercial and urged the TAC to accept the radio proposal to reach this market as well as working with Concepts. The director explained to Mrs. Zellers that the cost for producing a commercial would come out of a different appropriation. Mrs. Hargrove expressed concern that having relevant radio-traffic data to assess the value of the proposal after the fact would be unlikely; Mr. Heabel suggested aligning the WGN spots with Concepts work to create synergy. President Scott reiterated his concern about what a radio spot or live discussion would cover, and the director noted that he could "talk about what to do in Pulaski County until they kick [him] out"; discussion ensued.

The members rejected the WGN proposal following a motion to accept it.

**Motion: Mr. Heabel; second: Mrs. Zellers; no discussion; approval: Mr. Heabel and Mrs. Zellers; denial: all other members present.**

*2025 tourism-marketing budget — digital-marketing allocation continued:* Mrs. Nicholson suggested investing heavily Meta advertising and Google Ads, using funds not allocated toward

Conncepts Marketing to develop additional content. Mrs. Zellers asked if Conncepts Marketing has the ability to target certain areas across social media; the director suggested that this is likely. Discussion ensued regarding social-media video content and its potential impact. President Scott suggested scheduling another meeting after the director had spoken with Conncepts Marketing; at that time the TAC could make an informed decision. Mrs. Hargrove expressed concern about putting all of the remaining budget into one outlet, arguing that spending should be diversified. President Scott asked if Mrs. Nicholson agreed to the president's request that she meet with Conncepts.

*2025 tourism-marketing budget — use of a consultant, intern, or both continued:* Nicholson suggested allocating \$5,000 to Conncepts Marketing while having them run the county tourism social media pages to build different content; then at the end of the season instruct them to utilize the different content to put together a few different commercials as part of the additional monies. Vernon Gillum suggested approving a not-to-exceed amount and having a few members meet with Brad to discuss what he will be providing. Nicholson added that after meeting with him the members can decide if they would like to allocate more to Conncepts Marketing for added content and possible commercial options. The director expressed agreement that the remaining budget should be spent diversely to have different perspectives creating content. Significant additional discussion ensued regarding time constraints pertaining to the hiring of an intern, sponsoring Indiana-relevant podcasts, linking social media and websites, and partnering with relevant social-media influencers.

Director Origer was instructed to engage Conncepts Marketing to provide services for six months at a cost of \$1,000 per month. This will leave an estimated \$7,000–\$8,000 to be used on other content. The director requested that members compile a lists of influencers and podcasts they believe would be the right fit; staff would also investigate options. The TAC agreed to convene next on Wednesday, 9 April, at 5:00 *p.m.*; the director would be inviting Mr. Conn to this meeting as well.

**Motion: Mrs. Hargrove; second: Mrs. Nicholson; no discussion; approval: all.**

#### Other Business

*Francesville Fall Festival support:* Mr. Litke, who serves on the Francesville Fall Festival Committee, asked if the TAC would provide financial support for this year's event, specifically to assist with the cost of welcoming the Tunnels to Towers 9/11 tribute. The total cost to have the tribute displayed would be \$17,000 with a \$4,000 down payment; the committee had already raised \$3,000. Mr. Litke's research suggests that Tunnels to Towers attracts many visitors to wherever it is on display, contending that this would be a great tourism opportunity. Mr. Heabel suggested contributing \$500, and Mr. Gillum inquired as to how the committee would pay for the remaining \$13,000. Mr. Litke advised that once the downpayment had been made, the committee would amplify its fundraising efforts and investigate grant opportunities. A \$500 contribution was approved.

**Motion: Mrs. Hargrove; second: Mr. Heabel; no discussion; approval: all.**

*Website review:* Director Origer asked if one or two members would review the tourism section of the updated County website before it went live; the president and Mrs. Zellers volunteered.

#### Public Comment

*None.*

#### Adjournment

**Motion: Mrs. Hargrove; second: President Scott; no discussion; approval: all,**  
6:36 *p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

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Taylor Bailey, Assistant/Recording Secretary

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Vernon Gillum, Secretary *pro tempore*