

***Pulaski County
Redevelopment Commission***

Thursday, 26 February 2026
Pulaski County Courthouse
Winamac, Indiana

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, 29 January 2026
Pulaski County Courthouse
Winamac, Indiana

Members present: Katelyn Bierrum (County Council ('Council')), Brandi Larkin (Board of Commissioners ('Board')), Brian Ledley (Council), Kyle Sefchek (Board), Isaiah Tidwell (Council); Joe Cunningham (Board — non-voting advisory member representing local schools). Department of Community Development (D.C.D.) Executive Director Nathan P. Origer, D.C.D, Assistant Taylor Bailey. Jon Frain (Board) arrived at 4:34 *p.m.*

Members absent: Stan Bennett (Board).

Guests present: None.

Call to Order

Director Origer called the meeting to order at 4:31 *p.m.*, introduced himself and Ms. Bailey, and asked the members to introduce themselves.

Election of Officers

The director inadvertently opened the election process before addressing the consent agenda, mentioning that Mr. Ledley, Mr. Sefchek, and Ms. Bierrum had served as the 2025 president, vice-president, and secretary, respectively. Director Origer further explained that whoever would be elected president would be by virtue thereof appointed to a concurrent term on the Community Development Commission ('C.D.C.') and highlight each officer's primary responsibilities.

No nominations were made, and the following members volunteered to serve:

Mrs. Larkin as president (rescinded),
Mr. Ledley as president,
Mrs. Larkin as vice-president, and
Ms. Bierrum as secretary.

With no other nominations having been made, or volunteers having spoken up, nominations were closed, and the slate was elected as presented.

Motion: Mrs. Larkin; second: Ms. Bierrum; no discussion; approval: all.

Consent Agenda

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

Motion: Secretary Bierrum; second: President Ledley; no discussion; approval: all.

Old Business

Housing projects — Catalyst-site housing project: The County-farm property on the south side of County Road 60 South had originally been targeted; this would have allowed the project to move forward without purchasing any additional land. Eventually, it was determined that this would not be ideal due to the need for the Town of Winamac to annex the property as well as utility-related concerns.

Conversation had then pivoted to the Galbreath property east of U.S. 35 and north of the North Plaza. Director Origer has had conversations with Eric Galbreath regarding the project, appraisals had been completed, and Pulaski County had been tentatively awarded \$1-million in READI 2.0 funds to support development. The READI 2.0 grant would have required local-match funding that would have been provided by the County and other participants, including individual developers. The County would have traded part of the County-owned farmland to the Galbreaths so that the north-side land could have been acquired without expending any cash; as a part of the deal, the County would have generated about \$198,000 in cash. As of now, the Board of Commissioners are not comfortable with disposing of farmland; it will be kept for the purposes of annual income generation. Additionally, the director had grown increasingly uncomfortable with developing a neighborhood-scale project and wanted to pivot to a lot-by-lot infill approach, which the land swap's cash considerations could have supported. Discussion ensued

regarding the County-farm property; the commissioners had given the director permission to have the property surveyed and split, which had not yet been completed.

Discussion ensued regarding other potential sites for housing development. The vice-president enquired as to the driving factor behind a push for new housing given the local population's downward trend; reiterating skepticism toward larger-scale development and expressing frustration regarding when the State will provide incentives for improving existing housing stock, Director Origer explained that a study completed for the Housing Taskforce had shown an unmet housing demand in the area and that, though it largely appears to have been sound, it may have overestimated the need. In part, the driving factor had been addressing the substantial workforce that commutes to Pulaski County from neighboring counties and may be unable to find the right housing at the right price point. The director had previously had conversations with a few major employers who had expressed interest in partnering with the County toward the end of workforce-housing development.

Housing projects — Willow Creek Villas: Construction had been completed, and all 34 units had been leased. Vice-President Larkin asked if this project has absorbed some of the housing need in the area; Director Origer advised that it potentially could have in part, offering the caveat that the income requirements likely mean that the overlap between the targeted residents of the catalyst-site project and Willow Creek Villas is not substantial and noting that it would be interesting to see how the previous landlords of new Willow Creek tenants might react to this market disruption. President Ledley asked if the success of Willow Creek Villas would attract other developers to the area; Director Origer suggested that it may be possible, but that enough information may not yet be available to judge this.

Housing projects — Catalyst-site housing project continued: Secretary Bierrum enquired as to restrictions on using the READI Funds and if path forward still existed; without the land swap for the cash, the value of the land, or both, this did not seem to be likely, particularly given the four-to-one local-match requirement. The secretary further asked if the comprehensive plan would put the County in a better position to use funding that may become available, which the director suggested would be the case. Further discussion ensued, and Mr. Frain added that the new owners of the mobile-home community in Winamac have done an impressive job of updating it. A lengthy discussion began regarding the allowed uses of READI 2.0 fund.

The director suggested that discussion of the catalyst-site project and Willow Creek Villas could be removed from the agenda going forward; brief discussion regarding the possibility of additional housing development by Sullivan Development adjacent to Willow Creek Villa ensued.

New Business

Pulaski County comprehensive plan: After providing background information on the stalled effort that occurred earlier in 2025, the director advised that the Board and Council had authorized self-funding a comprehensive plan with a project-cost cap of \$120,000; half of the cost would be covered by the D.C.D. budget, while the Rainy Day Fund would be responsible for the other half.

The request for proposals had gone to 12 firms and been posted online; the director had already received some kind of response from five firms. Proposals would be due at the end of February; a committee would then review proposals and interview a select number of interested firms. By late spring or early summer, the comprehensive-planning process should be moving forward.

The comprehensive plan would ultimately be the Advisory Plan Commission's responsibility, but the C.D.C. and its constituent commissions ultimately would need to play a role. Per Vice-President Larkin's suggestion, the director had anticipated scheduling an all-commission meeting with the consultants but suggested that the Commission may require a separate, additional meeting because of the wide range of powers it has and its ongoing visioning work. The director encouraged members to participate in the public-engagement component of the process.

Old Business continued

Future visioning: Director Origer highlighted a previously discussed emphasis on starting small to avoid making a too-risky investment; Secretary Bierrum expressed her recollection that this caveat had not been made to preclude the Commission from exploring opportunities, but to avoid overextension. President Ledley and the secretary suggested that a façade program would be a great starting point because it would be a small-risk, large-impact project that could create a more inviting environment. Discussion ensued regarding partnering with Francesville's and Winamac's Main Street organizations

and the town governments or other entities in Medaryville and Monterey, with Mr. Frain stressing the need not to focus solely on Winamac and the vice-president highlighting the role that the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs could play in providing grant funding.

Vice-President Larkin emphasized the need for data and impact to decide which projects to prioritize, adding that community input could help to prioritize the projects, and that waiting for the completion of the comprehensive plan may not be advisable. Director Origer had hoped that these conversations would help to drive the development of the comprehensive plan; projects that could be implemented prior to the adoption of the new plan would likely be limited to those that could be funded with minimal or no reliance on the Council, as council leadership had expressed opposition to allocation of revenues from solar-energy projects until the Council had developed funding guidelines based on the comprehensive plan. Mr. Frain requested a visual representation of what funding opportunities are available, including a list of community partners. The director would develop and distribute a chart outlining potential projects, costs and funding sources, impact, *et c.* toward the goal of prioritization.

Vice-President Larkin enquired as to the expectations the State, County or both may have of the Commission; the director advised that the Commission is guided by what the *Indiana Code* permits. Mr. Frain suggested that the need for a mission statement may exist; the director agreed to redistribute a document highlighting statutory powers that the secretary noted he previously had provided to members. Vice-President Larkin asked if the Commission has a budget; Director Origer advised that the D.C.D.'s budget covers Commission operations, but that he had hoped to work with the auditor soon to establish individual budgets for the Commission and the Economic Development Commission. The director estimated that \$50,000 within the approved D.C.D. budget could be available for a project in 2026, and discussion about budgeting, prioritization, and strategy ensued.

Secretary Bierrum suggested that a façade program could be implemented in 2026: it could show small, real successes on a small budget; the \$50,000 in the existing D.C.D. budget could be used; and it would allow the Commission to develop countywide partnerships. Discussion ensued regarding the potential impacts of the program, both short- and long-term, as well as how program partnerships might work. Vice-President Larkin suggested devoting future meeting time to working through façade-project rules and partnership conversations; President Ledley stressed the importance of public relations and the possible benefits of seeking community input. Mr. Frain suggested developing a survey or otherwise soliciting public input; the director expressed sympathy for this but cautioned against establishing a second public-engagement track when the comprehensive-planning process would entail substantial interaction with the public. Vice-President Larkin suggested prioritizing two projects for community members to show support for and moving forward with the project that receives the most interest.

After briefly commenting on potential ways to support housing development and to support small businesses, the director questioned where opportunities for partnering with local schools might exist, explaining that the Pulaski County Industrial Forum engages with Eastern Pulaski and West Central on the workforce-development front and noting that, in the past, he had facilitated in-class business-plan competitions at Winamac Community High School, which might be revisited in such a way that having students present to the Commission could be explored. Mr. Frain endorsed this idea and stressed the importance of soliciting input from students and school leadership regarding what partnership opportunities might be ideal.

Director Origer suggested the Commission's venturing into building acquisition and renovation could have multiple benefits, breathing new life into a building and its neighborhood, helping an existing agency or business, and possibly assisting the County as it seeks to vacate the east annex.

New Business continued

Pulaski County comprehensive plan continued: The director briefly directed members' attention to the components of the request for proposal where he saw the most relevance to the Commission.

Future meetings: The director expressed a desire to meet again relatively soon but noted that he would like to not have to set regular meetings, preferring to meet when necessary. Given the Commission's near-future workload, Vice-President Larkin suggested scheduling monthly meetings with the flexibility to cancel in the event of a lack of pressing business; Mr. Frain agreed. The director would follow up with the members to determine the best standing-meeting date.

2026 Economic Development Summit: The annual Summit would be held in late April at a to-be-determined venue. The director asked for recommendations regarding the guest speaker and speaker's

topic, suggesting that a focus on rural/small-town redevelopment efforts might be idea; Vice-President Larkin endorsed this idea, and Mr. Frain suggested finding someone who has done a façade program in a community similar to Pulaski County.

Other Pertinent Business

Potential Chicago Bears relocation: Mr. Frain joked about the possibility of attracting the Beardstown Bears, and the director countered with a proposal to rename Medaryville 'Mebearyville'.

Director's reports: Noting that he includes written reports on staff efforts and scheduling and finances in the consent agenda for C.D.C. meetings, the director asked if the members would like to see something similar for their meetings; Mr. Frain asked that the director do so.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Motion: Secretary Bierrum; second: Mr. Frain; no discussion; approval: all 6:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Katelyn Bierrum, Secretary

Taylor Bailey, Office Assistant/Recording Secretary