

***Pulaski County  
Tourism Advisory Council***

Wednesday, 18 March 2026  
Pulaski County Courthouse  
Winamac, Indiana

Meeting Notes

Thursday, 29 January 2026  
Pulaski County Courthouse  
Winamac, Indiana

Members present: Diana Day (Board of Commissioners (Board)), Vernon Gillum (County Council (Council)), Anita Messer (Board), Tom Miller (Winamac Town Council (W.T.C.)). Department of Community Development (D.C.D.) Executive Director Nathan P. Origer. D.C.D. Assistant Taylor Bailey, dealing with lunch arrangements and other matters, arrived at 11:47 *a.m.* and temporarily departed at 11:51 *a.m.* Kelsie Zellers (Board) attended via Zoom but could not participate in any votes or count toward a quorum in the absence of a virtual-attendance policy.

Members absent: Beth Hargrove (Main Street Winamac) [personal], Jeff Litke (The UPTOWN Project) [business], Christie Nicholson (Council) [business], Dave Scott (W.T.C.) [personal].

Guests present: Amy DeLong, unidentified YouTube viewers.

Call to Order and Introductions

Director Origer called the meeting to order at 11:31 *a.m.*, acknowledging the lack of quorum, noting that he would be presenting a Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) virtual-attendance resolution at the next meeting, and asking members to introduce themselves.

Consent Agenda

In the absence of a quorum, the consent agenda could not be addressed.

Election of Officers

The director explained the three offices — president, vice-president, secretary — and their responsibilities, noting that, in addition to running meetings and signing documents as appropriate, the president would serve a concurrent term on the Community Development Commission (C.D.C.). The vice-president would conduct meetings in the absence of the president, and the secretary would be asked to review minutes drafted by staff, but not be responsible for preparing them. Mr. Scott had expressed a desire not to continue as president; Mr. Miller had served as vice-president in 2025; and Sue Kast, who had resigned, had been the secretary.

In light of Mrs. Kast's resignation and the inability to hold elections without a quorum, Mr. Gillum agreed to serve as secretary *pro tempore*.

Old Business

*Tourism Strategic Plan:* The director noted that the plan had remained on hold until the completion of the County's new comprehensive plan, explaining that he did not believe resumption of the strategic plan's development would need to await completion of the comprehensive plan but would benefit from any public input received regarding tourism and related matters.

New Business

*Pulaski County comprehensive plan:* The director provided a brief recap of the 2025 effort to develop a new comprehensive plan, noting that it had recently begun anew and emphasizing the need for involvement from the TAC and the other commissions with which he works given the broad range of the request for proposals, perhaps through a multi-commission joint session.

Old Business continued

*Tourism Strategic Plan continued:* Mrs. Day enquired as to the existence of a current tourism strategic plan; the director offered to provide her with the segment of the County's economic-

development strategic plan addressing tourism; a condensed, bullet-pointed plan from 2017; and a partial draft strategic plan from 2024.

### New Business continued

*Pulaski County comprehensive plan continued:* Mrs. Day endorsed a multi-commission joint session to engage with the selected consulting team, and Mr. Miller seconded this. Mrs. Day also suggested creating a Google Drive folder for meeting-packet documents and other.

*2026 marketing budget — Travel Indiana presentation:* Members having previously expressed concern over the portion of the budget dedicated to a print-heavy vendor, Mrs. DeLong had been asked to provide a reduced, digital-heavier proposal for 2026. She guided the members through her two proposal options, discussed the magazine's circulation trends, noted themed editions (including a water-focused story in which the Tippecanoe River would be mentioned), and highlighted *Travel Indiana's* digital components — online publication of the magazine, emailed newsletters, and social-media posts. Discussion ensued regarding interactivity of online ad spots, data tracking, concerns about publishing in a magazine primarily focused on similar advertisements, TAC involvement in content production (include potentially hosting a community photography contest), and the value of publishing during the colder months.

Mrs. Messer enquired as to the TAC's available budget; the director explained that the D.C.D. has a single budget used by the C.D.C. and all constituent commissions, with the Marketing appropriation's \$40,000 use exclusively for tourism purposes. Mr. Milled asked if any of that had been earmarked, and the director noted that only the \$7,000 or so for the D.N.R. hunting and fishing guides had been set aside.

*2026 marketing budget — GreatNews.Life partnership:* Director Origer expressed his appreciation for the partnership with this northwestern-Indiana organization, the breadth of their coverage in Pulaski County, and their extensive communication and local visits but noted that the semi-annual invoices constitute a significant portion of the annual budget. Mr. Miller noted that committing to *Travel Indiana*, the D.N.R. guides, and GreatNews would account for approximately three-quarters of the Marketing allocation, which the director noted had been fairly consistent.

Having pointed out that the current contract runs through mid-April and highlighting the 2024–2025 report that they had provided, the director suggested that a decision regarding this relationship could wait, and the director could take any particular concerns to the GreatNews team before executing the next six-month agreement. Mrs. Day asked about the degree of control the TAC would have over content development; the director explained that GreatNews's coverage has always been based exclusively on input from the D.C.D. Mrs. Day suggested that developing a comprehensive annual calendar of events would be beneficial for content development for GreatNews and other platforms. Discussion ensued regarding the County's online tourism presence.

*2026 marketing budget — Travel Indiana presentation continued:* Mrs. DeLong left copies of the 2025 "Staycation" issue, which featured a Pulaski County weekend-trip itinerary, as well as other past editions, for members to review prior to making a decision at the next meeting. She encouraged the director and members to follow up with any questions that they may have.

*2026 marketing budget — GreatNews.Life partnership continued:* Mr. Gillum noted that pages 14 and 15 of the meeting packet included documentation addressing the digital focus of GreatNews's coverage. He and Mr. Miller highlighted the northwestern-Indiana focus of the publication, noting that neither of them see as much traffic from central or southern Indiana.

*2026 marketing budget — D.N.R. guides:* Noting that these are the only statewide print platforms used to market Pulaski County and the only medium used for highlighting Pulaski County's fishing and hunting opportunities, the director mentioned that he had historically received more positive feedback regarding this than almost any other marketing tactic.

*2026 marketing budget — Towne Post Network:* Members agreed that this organization's publications focus too narrowly on Central Indiana to be worth pursuing, particularly given the region's proximity to other state parks.

*2026 marketing budget — Concepts Marketing:* Mr. Conn had expressed an interest in renewing his contract with the TAC; members agreed that the director should invite Mr. Conn to the

next meeting to speak with them before offering a proposal. Mrs. Messer enquired about Mr. Conn, and Director Origer explained that he is a local marketing consultant who developed content and assisted with social-media management in 2025.

*2026 marketing budget — digital/social, generally:* Ms. Bailey has been investigating and communicating with Indiana-focused influencers who might be good marketing partners.

*2026 marketing budget — other:* None.

*Assistant's role in promotion tourism:* The director and Ms. Bailey had recently met with C.D.C. President Sheila Hazemi regarding making better use of Ms. Bailey's time; Director Origer suggested giving Ms. Bailey more discretion regarding negotiating with social-media influencers who she had deemed to be good fits; although her work would continue to include preparing minutes and non-tourism functions, enhancing her TAC support would be the best fit for her skills and interests.

*2026 marketing budget — digital/social, generally continued:* Mr. Miller asked about influencer costs, and Ms. Bailey recapitulated her conversations with Indiana Hannah, noting that there is no standard fee, and that costs vary depending on the extent of the agreed upon proposal.

*Assistant's role in promotion tourism continued:* Ms. Bailey had taken over business-retention visits to tourism entities, and she and the director had discussed having her staff a D.C.D./TAC booth at local festivals. Mrs. Day suggested some of Ms. Bailey's efforts could be focused on supporting developing a unified, intentional tourism vision and campaign. Mr. Gillum suggested that Ms. Bailey could assist in improving data tracking regarding visitors to the community; the director proposed incorporating that discussion into Ms. Bailey's business visits; Mrs. Day advocated the use of Google Forms or a similar tool for improved data tracking.

*Future Meetings:* Noting the need for a meeting soon to elect officers and to make decisions regarding budget matters discussed at this meeting and the possibility of a later meeting with the comprehensive-plan consultants, the director suggested that he would leave scheduling otherwise to the discretion of the members and could provide email updates between less-frequent in-person sessions if requested. Mrs. Day expressed a desire to meet more often better to keep engaged with programming and spending decisions; Mr. Miller expressed his agreement. The director noted that the virtual-attendance policy should make scheduling easier.

*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 and provided a brief overview of past years' topics.

#### Other Business

*None.*

#### Public Comment

*None.*

#### Adjournment

**Motion: Mr. Miller; second: Mr. Gillum; no discussion; approval: all. 12:43 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

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

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Vernon Gillum, Secretary *pro tempore*