

***Pulaski County
Community Development Commission***

Tuesday, 10 February 2026
Pulaski County Courthouse
Winamac, Indiana

Minutes

Wednesday, 5 November 2025
Winamac Municipal Utilities Complex
Winamac, Indiana

Members present: President Sheila Hazemi (County Council (Council)), Secretary Brian Ledley (Redevelopment Commission (R.C.)); Al Breyfogle (Economic Development Commission (E.D.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: Vice-President Bill Champion (Advisory Commission on Industrial Development (ACID)) [personal]; David Scott (Tourism Advisory Council (TAC)) [personal], Maurice Loehmer (agriculture sector).

Guests present: Chris Brucker, Connie Ehrlich, Brandi Larkin, Jamie Murray, Deb Rogers.

Call to Order

President Hazemi called the meeting to order at 6:02 *p.m.*

Consent Agenda

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

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

Reports

Strategic-plan highlights report: Director Origer had been working with various parties on a proposal to update the Pulaski County Comprehensive Plan, which had not moved forward and might be revisited.

Clear Decision Filtration and the Casey Williams Company had been up-to-date with their Revolving Loan Fund payments, President Hazemi had paid off the Tippy's loan in full; and the Beckers had made a substantial payment after selling a portion of their property and planned to resume payments for the Mina's Market loan in January.

Conversations had been held regarding allocating solar-project revenues, but this had not moved forward without a new comprehensive plan to guide discussions regarding an expenditure framework. Director Origer had not yet begun investigating the possibility of grant funding for increasing staff without affecting the County's budget; the position had been included in the 2026 budget proposal and denied by the Council. Director Origer had attended Francesville, Medaryville, and Monterey Town Council meetings in 2025 and hosted a coffee hour in Medaryville; he had intended to host another in Monterey in January.

The director had continued working with the Broadband Taskforce, the Community Foundation of Pulaski County (C.F.P.C.), and consultants; the first draft of the broadband-readiness plan had been submitted to the Office of Community and Rural Affairs, and revisions had begun. Once completed, determining how to transition from plan development to implementation, including seeking funding sources, would need to be addressed.

Conversations with the R.C. and the Board regarding the proposed land swap for housing development, and the director would be discussing it with the Board at their next meeting in light of the cessation of operations of the County's long-time farm tenant.

Construction of the Willow Creek Villas project had been nearing completion; Director Origer had walked through of one of the units; the C.F.P.C. and the Early Learning Network had been working with the developers on the possibility of providing childcare in the clubhouse. Mr. Breyfogle had been keeping track of progress and reported that things had seemed to be moving forward smoothly, with landscaping and sidewalks now being installed; Winamac had been working on addressing traffic issues in the neighborhood. Secretary Ledley enquired if tenants had already been signing up to move in; the director reported that several potential tenants had been added to the waitlist. Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of additional development on the eastern edge of the property, which Sullivan Development had not included in this project.

Strategic-plan highlights report — executive director's goals and objectives: Director Origer had had a handful of email conversations but had not been able to continue with in-person business-retention visits over the past few months. The director had been waiting to hear back from the Small Business Development Center regarding a workshop to be held later in the month, noting that it may not happen due to time constraints.

The director had hoped to schedule an Industrial Forum meeting for December to check in with participant-businesses and to plan for next year. Director Origer had received an email from Tyler DeMoss at West Central regarding the new graduation requirements that apply to workforce training; Mr. DeMoss runs the manufacturing classes at West Central and had hoped to meet with local employers to discuss what needs exist.

A more aggressive approach to social-media tourism marketing had been driven by Ms. Bailey and warm-season consultant Concepts Marketing.

Financial Report: The LIT-Economic Development fund had ended October with a cash balance of \$2.586-million and a remaining appropriations balance of just under \$600,000, including \$192,341.16 available for D.C.D. operations; the director had projected a minimum year-end cash balance of \$2,274,329.80 in addition to \$580,000 in a certificate of deposit.

Director Origer highlighted noteworthy recent expenditures, detailed the remaining non-D.C.D. appropriations in the fund, and reviewed the other funds available to the D.C.D. All Revolving Loan Fund borrowers had been in good standing, and the fund had a balance of \$368,297.

The financial report was approved as presented.

Motion: Secretary Ledley; second: Commissioner Street; no discussion; approval: all.

Old Business

Revolving Loan Fund program review: Director Origer had met with the County's attorney in August to discuss the program; no progress had yet been made. The fund would continue to accumulate money each month and would have a healthy balance upon reopening.

Solar-energy development: Mammoth Solar had been under construction; work on Bottlebrush, Mayapple, and Moss Creek had not yet begun; Commissioner Street added that he had expected construction of the next one to commence in the summer of 2026.

The Council had conducted a public hearing regarding the Mammoth Grazing Lands/Mammoth Pastures request for a tax abatement in October; discussion and final decision had been tabled until outside counsel had been retained and the negotiation of the terms of a proposed economic-development agreement had been completed. The director had expected the Council to take final action in December; he had spoken with Rick Hall of Barnes & Thornburg earlier in the day, and Mr. Hall would be sending a letter of engagement that the County would be asked to execute.

A six-month moratorium on the permitting of battery energy-storage systems had been implemented after the Advisory Plan Commission had accepted the Board's response to the original recommendation.

Pulaski County comprehensive plan: The project had been delayed due to grant-related cost issues and limitations on the number of active grant applications permitted now that the County had agreed to serve as the applicant of record for a new fire station in Medaryville. Conversations had occurred regarding self-funding the plan, which would increase the County's cost burden but allow for greater flexibility. Discussion ensued regarding the potential cost of the project and related budget and staffing concerns.

Commissioner Street asked if the original request for proposals could be reused; Director Origer explained that the original request was basic and concise for publication purposes and did not provide and did not express the depth and breadth of need, current circumstances, and vision that a new document could offer. Secretary Ledley suggested that it would be challenging to provide effective direction to staff without an effective roadmap. Discussion ensued about the planning process, the need for balancing plan implementation with daily operations, the need to prioritize in light of Senate Enrolled Act 1 of 2025, and addressing both short- and long-term needs; President Hazemi emphasized the importance of proactivity.

Pulaski County comprehensive plan — proposed related goals and plans: Nothing addressed.

Pulaski County comprehensive plan — departmental restructuring/staff realignment: This proposal had been shelved with no clear plan in place for revisiting it; the director suggested that

any renewed conversation should entail more engagement with the Advisory Plan Commission. Director Origer contended that, although a departmental merger could offer cost savings, if the County were serious about having and successfully implementing a strong comprehensive plan, then it should be viewed less as an opportunity for cost savings and more as an opportunity for streamlining processes, providing cross-training, sharing burdens, and arming the County for effective development, which might require adding and not just restructuring positions. Mr. Breyfogle enquired as to who decides the number of positions and roles; Director Origer answered that this could be addressed by the comprehensive plan, clarifying that the staffing question is not just about the comprehensive plan but about balancing plan implementation and daily operations.

New Business

Executive director's performance evaluation: Director Origer reported that he had received an aggregated score of 82.8 out of 100. Mr. Breyfogle commented on his having relied on a combination of his own observations and input he had solicited from others as he had continued to get comfortable in his roles on the E.D.C. and the Commission.

Executive director's 2026 goals and objectives: Significant discussion occurred regarding the director's 2026 priorities, with focus points include carry-over goals from 2025 and the inclusion of new goals such working with elected leaders and consultants to develop facilities and strategic-operations plans for Pulaski County, with the director highlighting needing to continue reducing the County's footprint, to address critical facilities issues, and to facilitate adaptive reuse of certain County-owned properties. Secretary Ledley offered partial support for this new goal but emphasized the need for balancing bigger-picture County issues with Director Origer's core responsibilities.

The secretary suggested eliminating further investigation of a proposed departmental merger and leaving this matter to County leadership. The last new objective the director highlighted was how to celebrate the Commission's 30th anniversary; Director Origer expressed a desire to enhance this year's Summit in light of this milestone; President Hazemi suggested using generic language for now and fleshing out details as the Summit drew nearer; Secretary Ledley agreed.

Secretary Ledley had heard about heating concerns in the Pulaski County Human Services (P.C.H.S.) building and asked if the Commission could assist; Director Origer had had a number of conversations with P.C.H.S. Executive Director Jacki Frain and noted that KIRPC would be making improvements to serve its upstairs classrooms. Significant discussion ensued regarding the building and support for P.C.H.S. The secretary enquired as to the ownership of the building; Director Origer reported that it belongs to P.C.H.S. itself owns the building. The director stated he would add broad language regarding supporting P.C.H.S. to his 2026 goals and objectives.

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

2024-2025 achievements report: Director Origer explained that the report had not been prepared in several years but had been included among his 2025 goals and objectives, adding that it serves as a centralized, comprehensive record of everything done by the D.C.D. The Commission was asked if anything needed to be added or removed. The report was approved as presented.

Motion: Secretary Ledley; second: Commissioner Street; no discussion; approval: all.

2026 meeting schedule: Constituent commissions' schedules had not yet been established, and the director would be scheduling with each individual commission; the E.D.C. would meet in February pursuant to statutory requirements, while all others would convene in January. The director had included the quarterly coffee hours in the calendar, and the annual Economic Development Summit would occur in April. Director Origer expressed concern about holding the second meeting in May because, historically, attaining a quorum at this meeting, at which the next year's draft budget is reviewed, had been challenging, and asked if moving the meeting should be considered. President Hazemi suggested moving meetings to Wednesdays; Secretary Ledley reported an ongoing conflict on Wednesdays, and the president withdrew her recommendation. Mr. Breyfogle enquired about there being only one E.D.C. meeting on the calendar; the E.D.C. is statutorily required to meet only in February, with other meetings to be scheduled when there is pertinent business. Mr. Breyfogle expressed his appreciation of not scheduling meetings for the sake of meeting.

Motion: Commissioner Street; second: President Hazemi; no discussion; approval: all.

2026 membership: President Hazemi and Commissioner Street would remain in place unless they were to step down or otherwise be replaced by their appointing bodies. Vice-President Champion's ACID term would end in December 2026; his Commission membership would depend on the 2026 ACID officer elections. Mr. Breyfogle's term on the E.D.C. would end in January 2029; his Commission membership would depend on the 2026 E.D.C. officer elections. The director asked Secretary Ledley if he would wish to remain on the Redevelopment Commission if the Council would reappoint him; he confirmed. Director Origer had spoken with Dave Scott, who had reported wanting to remain on the TAC but not to serve as president or on the Commission. Maurice Loehmer serves as the pleasure of the Board; Director Origer had planned to enquire as to his interest in continuing.

Other Pertinent Business

None.

Public Comment

Brandi Larkin: Mrs. Larkin enquired if the Executive Director's Goals & Objectives Report is made available to the public; the director explained that this is the first year that it had been used and could be made public once it had been updated to reflect this meeting's discussion. Mrs. Larkin also asked if the Achievement Report includes specific measurable outcomes and timelines; Director Origer advised that some do, depending on the specific goal or objective, and confirmed that the report would be made available online.

Mrs. Larkin also requested more information regarding appointed Commission seats and if open seats would be advertised; Director Origer advised that they would be advertised with pertinent information on the County's and Commission's Facebook pages and the County's website. Mrs. Larkin also asked if the executive director's written report, including the financial report, is available to the public; Director Origer confirmed this.

Chris Brucker: Mrs. Brucker shared her hope that the community could come together to help resolve the issues at the P.C.H.S. building, particularly regarding the Head Start program. P.C.H.S. due to its proximity to the current playground; Director Origer expressed regarding the building's ability to meet Head Start requirements, and Mrs. Brucker added that a restroom must be present in each classroom. The president noted that it is the newest building in downtown Winamac and asked how many children are enrolled in the program; Director Origer advised there are two classrooms with 16–18 children in each. The director would discuss relocation options with the Head Start director and KIRPC's finance director. Discussion ensued regarding Mr. Galbreath's building and concerns with the P.C.H.S. building.

Adjournment

Motion: President Hazemi; second: Mr. Breyfogle; no discussion: approval: all.
7:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Taylor Bailey, Office Assistant/Recording Secretary

Brian Ledley, Secretary