

***Pulaski County
Redevelopment Commission***

Thursday, 19 March 2026
Pulaski County Courthouse
Winamac, Indiana

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, 26 February 2026
Pulaski County Courthouse
Winamac, Indiana

Members present: President Brian Ledley (County Council ('Council')), Vice-President Brandi Larkin (Board of Commissioners ('Board')), Secretary Katelyn Bierrum (Council); Jon Frain (Board), Kyle Sefchek (Board), Isaiah Tidwell (Council). Department of Community Development ('D.C.D.') Executive Director Nathan P. Origer.

Members absent: Stan Bennett (Board); Joe Cunningham (Board — non-voting advisory member representing local schools) [personal]. D.C.D, Assistant Taylor Bailey [personal].

Guests present: Chris Brucker, Connie Ehrlich, Jennifer Knebel, Josh Stamper, Pam Weaver.

Call to Order

President Ledley called the meeting to order at 5:30 *p.m.*

Consent Agenda

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

Motion: Secretary Bierrum; second: Mr. Tidwell; no discussion; approval: all.

Financial Report

Director Origer highlighted the significant unappropriated cash balance in the Local Income Tax – Economic Development Fund — more than \$1.1-million in cash and \$580,000 invested in a certificate of deposit —, noted that the D.C.D's budget constitutes only 26 percent of the total 2026 budget, and forecast a minimum year-end fund balance of about \$3.154-million, adding that this was a conservative estimate. Brief discussion ensued regarding clarification of the numbers that the director had presented.

One Revolving Loan Fund borrower had made a payment earlier in the day, so the director corrected both the fund balance and the recent-revenue total by \$400, highlighting a current available balance of \$374,946.37.

The financial report was approved with the corrections to the Revolving Loan Fund information.

Motion: Mr. Frain; second: Secretary Bierrum; no discussion; approval: all.

Old Business

Future visioning/Pulaski County comprehensive plan — plan-component review: Director Origer had thus far received proposals from three firms and expected to receive at least two or three more by the next day's deadline. The director guided members through sections of the comprehensive-plan requests for proposal most relevant to the Commission's efforts:

- Economic Development (particularly entrepreneurial development);
- Redevelopment (especially, but not exclusively, in the county's downtowns);
- Tourism, Recreation, and Culture (likely in partnership with the Tourism Advisory Council);
- Education (specifically the potential for partnerships with local schools and building-rehabilitation projects that could support childcare programming);
- Housing;
- Agriculture, Food Networks, and Food Security (particularly regarding food deserts, supporting local producers, and farmers'-market support); and
- Health and Human Services (primarily through partnerships, connecting food and health issues, or building-rehabilitation projects).

Future visioning/Pulaski County comprehensive plan — strategic-plan review: Suggesting that it may need to be revisited by the C.D.C., the Commission, and other constituent commissions after the comprehensive plan had been completed, the director then reviewed pertinent sections of the 2021 economic-development strategic plan:

- Entrepreneurial Development (a mentoring program, financial assistance, start-up check-ins, incubation and co-working spaces, attraction in the future, business-pitch competition, youth entrepreneurship (school partnerships, a student business-plan competition) —

President Ledley enquired about past business-training programming; the D.C.D. had hosted and noted that he would be presenting on the Revolving Loan Fund at an Uptown Project business breakfast in March. Mr. Frain reflected on his time volunteering at Junior Achievement's BizTown program, suggesting that this could present a partnership opportunity. The director discussed past efforts running a business-plan competition at Winamac Community High School; Mr. Tidwell spoke favorably of his experience in that program. Director Origer suggested that entrepreneurship could be an easy way to begin school partnerships; President Ledley, Mr. Frain, and Mr. Tidwell agreed. Vice-President Larkin asked if the director saw this as something specifically for the Commission to pursue; the day-to-day work would likely be staff responsibility, but the members could serve as judges or otherwise engage in the program directly. Discussion ensued, with the Commission largely favorably disposed toward this programming, the vice-president cautioning that any project or program undertaken align with the Commission's responsibilities and objectives, and Secretary Bierrum suggesting that plans could be required to target existing buildings in the county for hosting proposed businesses. In response to the secretary, Director Origer and the vice-president discussed the SCORE entrepreneur-mentoring organization. —;

- Tourism Development (particularly if the need for hotel development were to arise) —

Brief discussion ensued regarding the innkeeper's tax, its benefits, the lack thereof in Pulaski County, and the possibility of revisiting the matter with the Council. —;

- Community Capacity Building/Housing and /Childcare;
- Downtown Development; and
- Institutional Capacity Building/Commission staff.

Brief further discussion ensued regarding the comprehensive-planning process and the current work being undertaken to address childcare needs in the community; the president mentioned forthcoming changes at the Winamac Early Learning Academy driven by regulatory restrictions.

Future visioning/Pulaski County comprehensive plan — mission and vision: After significant discussion regarding the need for guiding frameworks and County and public input on the Commission's mission, vision, goals, and objectives, members agreed that the director should provide statements from other redevelopment commissions, and the members could provide their own suggestions and review the provided examples, before further discussion at the next meeting. The vice-president volunteered to collate all of the submitted information into a form for the members to use for contributing and voting.

Future visioning/Pulaski County comprehensive plan — façade program: The director presented the Culver, Indiana, Redevelopment Commission's program guidelines and applications, sharing his thoughts on how it might be applicable to Pulaski County and what might need to be amended.

Significant discussion ensued regarding

- adaptability to unexpected problems and costs encountered by building owners/tenants;
- whether a program would be open to all commercial buildings or just those in designated areas;
- soliciting input from and coordinating with municipal leaders;
- partnerships with Main Street organizations, the Town of Francesville's upcoming downtown-plan grant project, and the possibility of using Community Development Block Grant funds from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs to support façade improvements;
- ensuring that the program could operate in all four towns;
- potential impacts of the program, being able to show them, and planning the case to be made to solicit funding for the program; and
- historic-preservation concerns, architectural standards, and accessibility.

President Ledley suggested that a loan component, similar to programs the director highlighted in Culver; Franklin, Indiana; and the Radius Indiana regional area, could be beneficial for addressing

unforeseen expenses. Director Origer also highlighted Franklin's residential-rehabilitation grant program, suggesting that establishing a similar program might be a reasonable long-term goal. Secretary Bierrum mentioned Franklin's Property Recovery Task Force, which operates similarly to a land bank but also rehabilitates the houses acquired as part of the program. Mr. Frain expressed interest in the budget and amount of annual activity of Franklin's programs, and the secretary noted the great value for the community that similar programs could create.

Future visioning/Pulaski County comprehensive plan — funding matrix and program + project matrix: The director briefly highlighted the existing and potential funding sources for Commission operations, projects, and programs, not that he had intentionally excluded bonding and tax-increment financing for the time being. Further discussion regarding funding sources and projects and programs was tabled until mission and vision statements had been developed.

Motion: Mr. Frain; second: Vice-President Larkin; discussion: Secretary Bierrum expressed interest in the Pike County incubator/coworking space/makerspace highlighted in the matrix; the director noted that he would be participating in a panel discussion with Pike County's economic-development director in the spring and had hoped to pick her brain given the similar population sizes of Pulaski and Pike Counties and Vice-President Larkin suggested that project-cost estimates be investigated to the end of more objectively assessing the project costs and impact; **approval: all.**

2026 Economic Development Summit: Barring any unforeseen obstacles, the event would be held on the evening of Tuesday, 28 April; in addition to the catered meal, a cash bar and a toast would likely be offered in celebration of the Community Development Commission's thirtieth anniversary. The director had secured two speakers — an attorney well-versed in redevelopment commissions and a redevelopment consultant with a long and successful résumé in local government — who would present jointly, most likely using a conversational format. The director had not yet confirmed the venue.

New Business

None.

Other Pertinent Business

Mr. Frain: Mr. Frain expressed his appreciation to the director for all of the information he had provided for this meeting's discussions.

Public Comment

Pam Weaver: Ms. Weaver introduced herself as a resident of the newly constructed Willow Creek Villas apartment complex and expressed concerns with problems she and others had faced since moving into their units; Director Origer promised to contact Sullivan Development about this matter. Ms. Weaver additionally noted that the Winamac Eagles had made a donation to a local nonprofit that no longer was operating and had had concerns about what had become of their contribution.

Jennifer Knebel: Mrs. Knebel reported that she had participated in Culver's façade program and found it to be easy and worthwhile, offering her support for a similar program in Pulaski County.

Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Frain; second: Vice-President. Larkin; no discussion; approval: all 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Katelyn Bierrum, Secretary

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