

***Pulaski County
Redevelopment Commission***

Thursday, 16 April 2026
Pulaski County Courthouse
Winamac, Indiana

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, 19 March 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); Stan Bennett (Board), Kyle Sefchek (Board), Isaiah Tidwell (Council). Department of Community Development ('D.C.D.') Executive Director Nathan P. Origer, D.C.D, Assistant Taylor Bailey.

Members absent:; Joe Cunningham (Board — non-voting advisory member representing local schools) [personal], Jon Frain (Board) [business].

Guests present: Connie Ehrlich, Jennifer Knebel, Kaila Stukofski.

Call to Order

President Ledley called the meeting to order at 5:31 *p.m.*

Consent Agenda

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

Motion: Mr. Tidwell; second: Vice-President Larkin; no discussion; approval: all.

Financial Report

Little had changed from the late-February report other than a few hundred dollars' worth of operations expenditure and regular payroll obligations.. The director noted that information-technology (I.T.) funds had been encumbered from the 2025 budget into 26026, increasing the non-Community Development appropriations by about \$13,000.

Additionally, a small deposit had been made into the C.D.C. Donation Fund, the first Revolving Loan Fund (R.L.F.) application fee since the program had reopened. The two remaining R.L.F. borrowers had been in good standing. The third borrower has completed repayment, leading to a balance of \$397,413.41 available to lend.

Vice-President Larkin asked about the I.T. funds; the director explained that these funds had been budgeted in 2025 but not expended because an invoice had been received too late to be paid before 2026; the Council had approved deducting the amount from the 2025 and adding it to the 2026 appropriation. The financial report was approved as presented.

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

Old Business

Establishing-ordinance affirmation resolution (2026-R.C.-02): Director Origer presented the resolution to the members, explaining that it had been part of the March consent agenda; some members had not realized what they had approved and asked for review. The director encouraged the members to ask questions and proceeded to explain resolution.

The Redevelopment Commission and the Economic Development Commission ('E.D.C.') are statutorily authorized to have departmental staff, but the lack of budgeting capacity and workload had led the County to restructure the Community Development Commission ('C.D.C.') and the D.C.D. to serve all development-oriented commissions, with the president of each commission serving on the C.D.C. The director explained that this

resolution allows the Commission to acknowledge the implementation of this structure and does not alter how the Commission operates.

Vice-President Larkin asked if something had prompted the need for this resolution; the director explained that nothing had, but that he believed it would be advisable for the Commission formally to assent to the County's decision to reassign its hiring and supervisory powers, noting that he would be presenting an identical resolution to the E.D.C. The vice-president asked if the resolution had been reviewed by legal counsel; the original resolutions and ordinances had been reviewed, but this had not, as it is a reflection of the original documents. In the spirit of transparency, Vice-President Larkin requested that the resolution be read aloud to give a better understanding to the public, and the director assented. The vice-president asked if the County had provided the definition of "clearance of areas needing redevelopment"; the director and President Ledley advised that the *Indiana Code* defines this and other relevant terms; the director would disseminate link to the definition.

Future visioning/Pulaski County comprehensive plan — mission and vision:

Secretary Bierrum had drafted a shared Google Doc with proposed ideas for the Commission's mission and vision statements, potentially a motto or slogan, and strategic objectives, Mr. Frain and Director Origer had added to the document; President Ledley and Vice-President Larkin had shared insights by email; and Mr. Bennett had shared directly with the director.

The secretary had attempted to keep the language as vague and aspirational as possible to avoid constraints while still being useful guides. Mr. Tidwell agreed with Secretary Bierrum and shared appreciation for President Ledley's and Director Origer's suggestions. President Ledley expressed that there is a general idea of what the Commission should be doing, some of which is *Code*-driven, and suggesting that the question at the back of members' minds when making decisions should, broadly speaking, be, "What are we doing to make Pulaski County a better place for businesses and families?"

Vice-President Larkin explained the reasoning behind the data compilation that she had shared via email, arguing that too-broad mission and vision statements would not help to prioritize projects, and that more Pulaski County-specific statements should be adopted; President Ledley pushed back, opining that this is more a strategic-planning matter. Director Origer agreed with President Ledley that Vice-President Larkin had gone too deep into the weeds while agreeing with the vice-president that the statements should be specific to the community as help to serve as guardrails to keep the Commission's decision-making process on track. The director further expressed that the extra step Secretary Bierrum had taken by compiling her information into a document bridged that gap and suggested that completing the mission and vision statements should occur first, whereafter the Commission could explore the strategic objectives that the secretary had proposed. The County's forthcoming comprehensive plan should be an important guide for the Commission's future efforts, and members could be working more earnestly on developing objectives and making use of Vice-President Larkin's data once public input from the planning process had been obtained.

Secretary Bierrum suggested that the mission and vision should not change and should outlive any one member's time on the Commission; the contents of the statements should still be true in 15 years. Discussion regarding specific objectives ensued, and Vice-President Larkin opined that the language should be sufficiently specific to Pulaski County, suggesting that things will change but not significantly in the next five to 10 years, and the data she had offered would give members a baseline understanding. Director Origer appreciates Vice-President Larkin's offer to compile the data and believes there may be merit in that when reaching the step of strategic objectives; Origer suggested putting a pause on adopting a Missions/Vision Statement on this day. President Ledley added that he understands the concerns of staying broad in the statements and the need for it to be personalized to Pulaski County; he hopes that once the comprehensive plan is completed, it can serve as a true agenda to help guide the R.C. on what needs to be done. President Ledley

stressed his belief that some type of agenda is needed to accomplish things. Vice-President Larkin shared that she believes Director Origer's recommendation is reasonable at this time.

Mr. Bennett expressed agreement with Vice-President Larkin and suggested adopting a scorecard, noting that this would help to prioritize projects as well as to eliminate unnecessary discussion during future meetings. Director Origer had reviewed Mr. Bennett's documents and contended that they may be the next step in this process, but that discussion presently would be premature. Mr. Bennett noted that his submission for the mission statement had been driven by working backward from the need for a scoring metric. Mr. Bennett had proposed a mission statement similar to those submitted by the director and President Ledley.

Secretary Bierrum suggested the members take the next month to review the submissions and adopt a mission statement in April; ; the director would be sending Mr. Bennett's submission to the members following the meeting. Director Origer encouraged the vice-president to do continue with the data compilation she had begun so that the conversation could be picked up once the mission statement has been adopted. Vice-President Larkin inquired about using committees; the director advised that it could be tricky due to the Open Door Law.

Secretary Bierrum endorsed the use of scoring rubrics, suggesting that each type of project should have its own, rather than the Commission's adopting universal metrics. President Ledley asked if the Commission has bylaws or some type of charter; the director advised that there are only the D.C.D./C.D.C. bylaws, which he would share with the members. The president suggested that the bylaws may be something to share with the community so that they can see how the Commission arrives at decisions on projects.

Further discussion of the matters was tabled until the April meeting.

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

Future visioning/Pulaski County comprehensive plan — façade program: The director presented draft guidelines to the members regarding the Façade Improvement Grant Program; which he had largely copied from Culver's program with various modifications. Significant review and discussion ensued, with following matters having been addressed:

- capping annual awards at \$10,000 and cumulative grants over five years at \$30,000;
- ensuring adequate program flexibility;
- avoiding addressing unforeseen costs with the program, instead leaving this to the applicant and potentially establishing a parallel loan program in the future or creating a streamlined Revolving Loan Fund process for grantees;
- whether the Commission should serve as the review committee or create a committee including commissioners as well as local-community representation;
- whether and how architectural and historical standards should be enforced;
- ensuring that approved projects align with the mission and vision of the Commission;
- excluding sidewalks from eligibility due to Americans with Disabilities Act ('A.D.A.') concerns;
- permitting A.D.A.-compliance improvements associated with ingress/egress doors;
- adopting a scoring rubric for assessing applications;
- whether non-façade wall repair should be permitted;
- allowing parking-lot and driveway repair but potentially scoring them lower;
- language allowing the Commission flexibility to approve or to reject projects not explicitly listed;
- not permitting any kind of demolition work;
- not requiring an application fee, at least at the outset;
- whether only businesses should be capped on the amount funded, or also buildings that may undergo ownership changes;

- accepting applications on a set schedule rather than on a rolling basis;
- ensuring that grant approval is at the full discretion of the Commission;
- ensuring clarity regarding the possibility of changes to the guidelines as deemed to be appropriate;
- ensuring clarity regarding awards being subject to fund availability; and
- whether funds should be provided to applicants as reimbursement or paid directly to contractors.

Director Origer would further investigate other programs on these matters and update the draft guidelines based on the conversation. The director stressed that no deadline for this work to be completed exists because funding has not yet been secured; once a consensus had been reached, the Commission could then present the program to the Board and Council for approval and funding. Mr. Bennett added that grants with which he is familiar in his line of work are taxed, so whether these grants would be subject to taxation should be investigated.

2026 Community Development Summit: This year's Summit would be held on Tuesday, 28 April, at 6:00 *p.m.* Eastern Time at the Winamac Knights of Columbus hall. Redevelopment experts Adam Steuerwald and Ed Curtin would be the guest speakers, engaging in a conversation and taking questions rather than offering standard presentations. Both had been recommended by the Redevelopment Association of Indiana. The director had hoped to offer a cash bar and a champagne toast to celebrate 30 years of the C.D.C.

New Business

2026 meeting schedule: The director presented the full Community Development meeting schedule to the members, who had previously agreed via email on a regular monthly time and date to but had not formally adopted it in public. The Commission would be meeting on the third Thursday each month at 5:30 *p.m.* Eastern Time with the exception of September, when the meeting would be delayed by one week.

The calendar was approved as presented.

Motion: Vice-President Larkin; second: Secretary Bierrum; no discussion; approval: all.

Other Pertinent Business

None.

Public Comment

Jennifer Knebel: Mrs. Knebel, a county commissioner, shared more about her experience with the façade program in Culver. She stressed the importance of keeping the process simple and appreciated Mr. Sefchek's comment earlier about this. Mrs. Knebel explained the application process, noting that applicants not awarded were encouraged to apply in the following year; the program had placed limits on how many times a person could be awarded per year. Mrs. Knebel also shared that branding is important for a business, so limiting how many times a building could be awarded funds may not be advisable; she had not been asked to present color and style choices to the Culver Redevelopment Commission ('C.R.C.') as part of the application process. Director Origer acknowledged that Mrs. Knebel had made a strong case against limiting how many times a building could be funded but wondered if some guidelines should be in place to protect against cost duplication; Mrs. Knebel countered that these kind of updates are expensive and most business owners would not worry about replacing new windows.

The Commission further engaged in discussion with Mrs. Knebel about program specifics, and she suggested not creating too many hoops through which applicants must jump but did suggest that having a committee may be wise, especially early on. President

Ledley asked if Mrs. Knebel had been taxed on the grant; Knebel advised that she had not. She had also not been required to provide evidence that her landlord has authorized her to make changes to the property, speculating that this may have been attributable to the C.R.C's familiarity with the building owner and belief that no objections would have been raised.

Connie Ehrlich: Mrs. Ehrlich asked if the proposed options for the Commission's mission statement could be read aloud; Secretary Bierrum read her, the president's, and the director's suggestions, and the director then read what Mr. Bennett had submitted to him directly.

Adjournment

Motion: Vice-President Larkin; second: Secretary Bierrum; no discussion; approval: all. 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Katelyn Bierrum, Secretary

Taylor Bailey, Office Assistant/Recording Secretary