

***Pulaski County
Community Development Commission***

Tuesday, 12 May 2026
Pulaski County Courthouse
Winamac, Indiana

Minutes

Tuesday, 10 February 2026
Pulaski County Courthouse
Winamac, Indiana

Members present: Don Street (Board of Commissioners (Board)), Sheila Hazemi (County Council (Council)), Doug Roth (Advisory Commission on Industrial Development (ACID)), Al Breyfogle (Economic Development Commission (E.D.C)), Brian Ledley (Redevelopment Commission (R.C.)), Diana Day (Tourism Advisory Council (TAC)). Department of Community Development (D.C.D.) Executive Director Nathan P. Origer, D.C.D. Assistant Taylor Bailey.

Members absent: None.

Guests present: Connie Ehrlich.

Call to Order

Director Origer called the meeting to order at 6:00 *p.m.*, introducing Mr. Roth and Mrs. Day as new members.

Consent Agenda

The director acknowledged the absence of minutes from the November public meeting and that he had failed to disseminate some documents timely, asking if members required a moment to review anything or wanted to extract anything for discussion or tabling. With no requests for extraction having been made, the consent agenda was approved.

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

Election of Officers

Director Origer, noting that Councilor Hazemi, Bill Champion, and Mr. Ledley had served as president, vice-president, and secretary, respectively, in 2025 and explaining the responsibilities of each office, called for nominations and volunteers for these positions. Councilor Hazemi and Mr. Ledley volunteered to continue in their 2025 roles; Commissioner Street nominated Mr. Breyfogle to serve as vice-president, and the latter accepted. With no other nominations having been made, or other members having volunteered, nominations were closed, and the slate was approved as presented.

Motion: Mr. Ledley; second: Mr. Loehmer; no discussion; approval: all.

Reports

Strategic-plan highlights report — executive director's goals and objectives: Two of three Revolving Loan Fund (R.L.F.) borrowers had been in good standing, and the third borrower had planned to catch up within the next week. Clear Decision Filtration's loan would be paid in full in April.

The Board had enlisted a consultant to perform assessments of the County's two annexes to begin the next steps regarding County-facilities improvements and possible footprint reduction. The director had voiced his opinions and concerns regarding the matter but would not be involved in the process until asked. The Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) had provided comments regarding the draft broadband plan for the consultants to implement prior to final submission. Director Origer reiterated that, eventually, assessing what role he would need to play in implementing the plan would be necessary.

The TAC had planned to host a networking, education, and information-collecting event for tourism and adjacent businesses; this would allow for connections to be made as well as strengthen existing relationships. An education component focused on business marketing for some of the smaller tourism businesses has been discussed; this also would allow the TAC to collect information on events businesses may be hosting to do a better job at promoting them.

Brief additional discussion ensued regarding current and planned broadband service in various parts of the county and the providers behind these plans.

Strategic-plan highlights report — other: The R.C would be meeting monthly for the time being to allow for a deeper dive into project and program planning and design; it had continued to work on a way to prioritize potential projects, with some ideas being explored including a façade-grant program, housing,

small-business and farmers'-market support, and potential school partnerships (which would include conversations with school leadership to identify where opportunities exist).

Director Origer had served on the interview committee for the Uptown Project and Town of Francesville's downtown planning-grant application process; the grant had been awarded. A planning grant had also been approved for the Medaryville-gymnasium project. The director had also been involved in conversations exploring value-added-agricultural opportunities involving Doral solar projects.

The comprehensive-plan request for proposals had included a request for recommendations regarding appropriate Community Development and Building, Planning, and Zoning staffing for plan implementation. Director Origer had continued to partner with and to check in with the Community Foundation of Pulaski County as appropriate.

The strategic-plan highlights report was approved as presented.

Motion: Vice-President Breyfogle; second: Mr. Loehmer; no discussion; approval: all.

Financial report — end-2025: The LIT-Economic Development Fund had ended the year with a cash balance of \$2,610,221 and \$580,000 in a certificate of deposit, an increase of about \$623,000 from the end of 2024 attributable to an increase in annual revenue, judicious spending by the D.C.D., and a reimbursement of \$76,000 from Doral to cover the costs of various studies related to a tax-abatement request. The director noted that 9.7% of the non-D.C.D. budget within the fund had been left unexpended. The Donation Fund had ended the year with a healthy balance, the R.L.F. had an available balance of \$370,821.34, and the two industrial-park funds combined contained about \$111,000.

Financial report — mid-February: The 2026 budget had climbed from \$1,697,758.98 last year to \$1,766,891; the D.C.D's \$459,981 appropriation had reflected a decrease of about 10% from 2025, which the director had proposed in an attempt to add a third staff position without any net increase. Director Origer advised that, other than cuts to the Professional Services line item, the D.C.D. would not likely experience any struggles due to these cuts. The Professional Services appropriation could require additional funding later in the year, and the director had already spoken to the Council about this. The non-D.C.D. budget had grown by about 10 percent to \$1,307,000; the bulk of the amount is allocated for information-technology costs and liability insurance.

Director Origer had estimated a year-end cash balance of \$2,591,423.96, although this total had not accounted for any interest accrued. Little money had been expended out of the budget thus far. Minimal change had occurred in the R.L.F. over the first six weeks of the year, and there had been no change to the industrial-park funds or the C.D.C. Donation Fund.

Secretary Ledley asked for clarification on numbers reflected in the report regarding the 2025 D.C.D. budget; the director explained that he had entered incorrect numbers here and would fix the report and disseminate a corrected version.

The financial reports were approved with the corrections to 2025 numbers.

Motion: Vice-President Breyfogle; second: Mr. Loehmer; no discussion; approval: all.

Old Business

Revolving Loan Fund program review: Director Origer reported that the Board had reopened the program, and he already had provided information to one potential borrower and had spoken with another from whom he had been waiting to receive more information. Alisha and Jeff Becker had hoped to pay off their existing Mina's Market loan and to refinance the commercial loan they had borrowed to acquire their current property with a new County loan. President Hazemi noted that she had thought that refinancing had been eliminated as an eligible program use; the director explained that the update rules permit this under limited circumstances and on a case-by-case basis.

The director had been working to promote the program more aggressively: running a quarterly advertisement in the *Journal*, occasionally posting reminders on Facebook, presenting the program at an Uptown Project small-business breakfast in March, and doing something similar with Main Street Winamac in the future. Mrs. Day suggested attending a Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce's Women in Business luncheon. President Hazemi suggested speaking with local banks, which could allow for business owners seeking a loan who may have been denied by a bank to be referred to program.

Secretary Ledley asked what the general terms of the program are or if they are entirely case-by-case; Director Origer advised that he would send the guidelines to the secretary and explained that any request under \$20,000 is handled in-house, while anything over \$20,000 is sent to the Regional Development Company. The director further explained that interest rates are staggered based on loan tiers. All of the details and guidelines are available on the County's website.

Secretary Ledley suggested that members could do a better job of helping to market the program in the community and also that setting some threshold regarding reporting delinquencies to the Commission would be preferable; President Hazemi agreed. Director Origer advised that the program guidelines outline a process for dealing with delinquencies; the president added that if the director would continue to provide a program report each month, this should be sufficient.

Solar-energy development: Doral had been nearing completion of the construction of the Mammoth Solar project. Having received a tax abatement and entered into an economic-development agreement with the County for their Mammoth Grazing Lands/Mammoth Pastures project, Doral had now been working toward applying for a building permit. Other developers had been working toward starting construction of their projects, but none had reached that point yet. Commissioner Street added that V.S. Engineering had remained in constant communication with the County and been providing updates at Board meetings.

Pulaski County comprehensive plan: Following months' worth of discussions and a withdrawn grant-application effort in August, the Board and Council had approved self-funding a new plan with a \$120,000 maximum project cost to be split between the D.C.D. budget and the Rainy Day Fund. The director had disseminated a new request for proposals, and proposals would be due at the end of February. Received proposals would be reviewed and scored, and then shortlisted firms would be invited to be interviewed by a committee who would then make a recommendation to the Board.

Once the updated plan had been completed, it would be used as a framework for future changes to the *Pulaski County Unified Development Ordinance*; Board of Zoning Appeals decisions; Council guidelines for solar-funds disbursements; strategic-plan, housing-plan, tourism-plan, and entrepreneurship-plan review and amendments; and anything else in which the County may see value. The request for proposed that the director had prepared had a broad scope, addressing land use; transportation; arts, culture, and recreation; redevelopment; economic development; health and human services, and solar and other renewables and other potential large-scale projects.

Secretary Ledley asked how many firms have responded; the director had sent the request to 12 firms and had it posted on the website of the Indiana Chapter of the American Planning Association; six of the 12 firms had responded in some way. Mrs. Day enquired as to the final deadline for submissions: 4:00 *p.m.* on Friday, 27 February.

Director Origer had hoped to hold a joint session of the Commission all of constituent commissions during the planning process; this would allow for a cross-pollination of ideas and avoid having to schedule more meetings with the consultants than necessary. Commissioner Street suggested using a scoring rubric to evaluate the firms that submit; the director advised that he had been drafting such a tool. The commissioner asked if all firms would be interviewed, or if the scoring rubric would be used to narrow the field; Director Origer confirmed the latter.

New Business

2026 Economic Development Summit — C.D.C. 30th anniversary: With the Commission having completed its 30th year at the end of 2025, the director had wanted to enhance this year's Summit in addition to providing his annual State of the County Economy address and hosting a guest speaker; he encouraged members to share any ideas or concerns about the event. Discussion ensued regarding whether to keep the event on a Tuesday or to explore other options. Director Origer suggested putting together a planning committee rather than making the decisions at this meeting. Secretary Ledley noted that the event has not had a problem with attendance, adding that some of the planning would be driven by whoever would be chosen as the keynote speaker.

Commissioner Street asked who the speaker would, and the director advised that he had no specific individuals in mind but would like to discuss which topic the speaker should address, nothing that the R.C. had endorsed the idea of finding someone who had served as staff to or a member of a successful redevelopment commission in a similarly sized community. Ideally, the speaker would talk about accomplishments and where they had started compared to where they had arrived. President Hazemi suggested starting a group email for continuing conversation and updates on the matter. Further discussion ensued regarding the day of the week and specific date options for the event.

Secretary Ledley elaborated on the R.C.'s support for a redevelopment-focused speaker, explaining that the R.C. had spent significant time brainstorming potential opportunities and arguing that, at some point, words need to lead to action, and hearing from someone with relevant, small-community redevelopment projects would be beneficial. Director Origer would contact the Redevelopment Association of Indiana to see if they could connect him with a strong speaker candidate.

The director noted that a cash bar and a champagne toast had been featured at the 20th-anniversary celebration, and he had hoped to offer these again in 2026, noting that there had been no issues with excessive consumption or irresponsible behavior and asking members if they were comfortable with him moving forward with this as long as the selected venue would permit it. No objections were raised.

Other Pertinent Business

None.

Public Comment

None.

Adjournment

Motion: Vice-President Breyfogle; second: Mr. Loehmer; no discussion; approval: all 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Taylor Bailey, Office Assistant/Recording Secretary

Brian Ledley, Secretary