

Board Meeting Minutes for the April 2025 Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

Monthly board meeting called to order by Sam Breene, at 10:40 AM. Those present at the public meeting of the Venango County Economic Development Authority on 4/15/2025, held in person at 100 Seneca Street, Oil City PA (Fifth Floor Conference Room):

Members Present:

- ☒ Sam Breene, *Chair*
- ☒ Maureen James, *Vice-Chair*
- ☒ Bonnie Summers, *Secretary/Treasurer*
- ☒ Ken Bryan
- ☐ Chip Abramovic
- ☒ Alan Schiller
- ☒ Rod Griffin

Staff Present:

- ☒ Emily Lewis, *Executive Director*
- ☒ Rich Winkler, *County Solicitor*
- ☒ Diona Brick, *Finance Director*

Guests Present (List):

- Ashley Zaccari, Venango Chamber

Quorum Present: ☒ Yes ☐ No

The attendance of 6 board members (of the 7 current appointees) was accounted for by Ashley Zaccari.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. 3/25/2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

- ✓ Motion to approve the minutes made by Rod Griffin; Seconded by Ken Bryan. All approved.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

- None.

IV. SPECIAL PURPOSE MATTERS

- a. **Ratification of Package D Change Order 11** – Emily Lewis provided clarification regarding the approval process for change orders. She referenced a discussion held at the previous board meeting concerning preferred procedures for approving such orders. Emily noted that the change order currently being presented for ratification had been approved prior to that discussion, which is why it is appearing before the board as a ratification rather than a new approval.
 - ✓ Motion to approve ratification of package D change order 11 by Ken Bryan, seconded by Maureen James. All approved.
- b. **Approval of Package D Change Order 12** – Emily provided a proposed change order in the amount of \$49,195.84 was presented for consideration. The first two listed costs are final, while the \$46,125.15 item is noted as a "not to exceed" amount. This cost relates to fireproofing work needed to bring a former elevator shaft—now being used as a chase for infrastructure—up to code. Upon gaining full access to the shaft during construction, several wall penetrations were discovered, which compromised the fire rating. Since this wall is shared with a stairwell, it must meet fire code requirements. Competitive pricing for the fireproofing work is still being gathered. Additionally, radiators were found within the shaft and are currently not planned to have to be removed.
 - ✓ Motion to approve package D change order 12 by Ken Bryan, seconded by Alan Schiller. All approved.
- c. **Approval of Kone Access Controls Proposal** – A proposal was presented from Industrial Commercial Elevator to install proprietary access controls from KONE in the building's elevator. These controls will restrict elevator access

afterhours, ensuring that individuals—such as brewery patrons traveling from the first to the second floor—cannot access floors three, four, or five without proper credentials. The access control system will integrate with the building's existing entry and security system, allowing customizable access parameters. For example, authorized personnel like Susan will have 24/7 access via a key fob. The system allows for flexible user access with no set maximum number of users. While it is unclear whether the software component includes a warranty, ICE (Industrial Commercial Elevator) will be responsible for installation and ongoing service of the elevator system and software. There will be three vendors involved in the project:

KONE – supplier of the proprietary software (required since it is a KONE elevator);

ICE – responsible for installation, maintenance, and overall management of the system;

Mobile Comm – responsible for installing the card reader hardware on the elevator interface.

ICE will oversee the full installation and serve as the ongoing point of responsibility for the elevator and access system. The system has an estimated six-week lead time, so prompt ordering is essential to ensure it is operational by or shortly after the brewery opening. Ensuring limited access to currently vacant third and fourth floors is a priority.

✓ Motion to approve Kone Access Controls Proposal with Emily looking into warranty for software by Maureen James, seconded by Rod Griffin. All approved.

V. FINANCIAL REPORT

- a. **Financial Report:** Diona Brick, *Venango County Fiscal Director* – presented the financial report to the Board which summarized all accounts and budget items for the month of March. There were twenty-six (26) invoices paid during the month mostly focus on construction in progress.

✓ Motion to approve made by Rod Griffin; seconded by Ken Bryan. All approved.

VI. ONGOING PROJECTS

- a. **100 Seneca at Cornplanter Square** – Staff updated the board with information about funding across all projects. The grant tracker was reviewed. It was noted that the commercial blight remediation grant for Oil City was not awarded. This application included a proposed match using a congressional earmark sponsored by Senator Casey; however, the earmark was lost when the federal budget was not passed. An application for exterior signage related to the project was also denied. A grant request for downtown building assessments in Franklin was similarly denied, but there are two other pending grant applications related to the Franklin building assessments: one through the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) and another through the USDA. Separately, the Main Street program was awarded \$100,000 and is finalizing contract details for grants up to \$10,000 with matching funds possibly for signage. It was announced that the McElhattan grant request for capacity building was successfully awarded. As a result, funding will support hiring a staff person to assist with related efforts.

An update was provided on the Makerspace project. Marcy and Emily continue to explore options and next steps. A proposal has been received from an architect to design the third-floor Makerspace. They are currently awaiting a proposal from an engineering firm to handle the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems. Once these proposals are received, the team will determine funding sources for both the design and construction phases.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

- Emily Lewis, *Executive Director* – shared that she has been working with the Lyrics Theater to see how VCEDA can be in assistance. They are currently in process of procuring a new architect to complete the plans. Emily is also continuing to work with Cranberry Rec Center on their feasibility study.

VIII. AROUND-THE-TABLE REPORT

- Ken Bryan, *Venango County Commissioner* - provided a brief update highlighting ongoing work on repurposing the county airport—including potential charter service—and progress on a solar project to reduce costs and generate revenue. The ATV initiative is moving forward with 16 municipalities involved and positive talks with PennDOT and DCNR, aiming to boost local tourism and business, especially in Oil City where ATV access is more feasible than in Franklin. The state recently approved allowing up to a one-mile road stretch to connect riding areas, supporting the project's expansion. Nearby counties have seen millions in tourism dollars from similar programs,

and Venango's location positions it well to attract visitors. Emphasis is on safety and community cooperation, with expectations for significant economic growth over the next few years.

- Sam Breene, *Venango County Commissioner* - attended the FIDCA meeting yesterday to answer some questions their board had about our project. ORA was also there doing the same, and it turned into a really productive conversation between several of the economic development agencies. Commissioner Breene mentioned that, especially at the staff level, everyone seems to be working together for the benefit of Venango County. Whether in their specific roles or across organizations, the collaboration feels genuine and less competitive than in the past. It's encouraging to see real teamwork driving our shared goals forward.
- Alan Schiller, *Oil City Redevelopment Authority* – Reported they are continuing work on the Oil City East Side houses and development of that district
- Bonnie Summer, *Cranberry Economic Development* – Reported that Marshalls construction is making great progress and the roller skating rink in Seneca will be opening soon
- Maureen James, *Oil Region Alliance* – shared that Main Street will be hosting First Fridays for music on the square and will be introducing an artist festival on September 13th in Justic Park. She noted that the Oil Region Campus is moving forward and the new facility director is encouraged looking forward. Cleanup day had 200+ signed up to volunteer and the Phase 2 for the hotel property is out to bid.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL

- None

X. ADJOURNMENT

- ✓ Motion to adjourn by Bonnie Summers, seconded by Ken Bryan. All approved at 11:48 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Zaccari, Venango Area Chamber of Commerce