

Board Meeting Minutes for the February 2025 Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

Monthly board meeting called to order by Sam Breene, at 10:35 AM. Those present at the public meeting of the Venango County Economic Development Authority on 2/18/2025, 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
- Susan Williams, Venango Chamber

Quorum Present: ☒ Yes ☐ No

The attendance of 4 board members (of the 7 current appointees) was accounted for by Ashley Zaccari.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. 1/21/2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

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

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

- None.

IV. SPECIAL PURPOSE MATTERS

- a. **Ratification of ICE Proposal** – Emily Lewis reported that this is a ratification to the proposal that was approved and signed with Industrial Commercial Elevator to make the necessary repairs to the elevator at 100 Seneca. She also noted that she requested they provide a service contract for them to be the long term elevator service contractor, and that ICE is the same that the county has started to use on their elevators as well. Emily plans to present the service contract to the board next month.
 - ✓ Motion to approve the ratification of ICE proposal by Ken Bryan, seconded by Maureen James. All approved.
- b. **Resolution to file USDA application** – Emily shared a resolution to file a USDA application. She's going to be submitting an application to the rural business development grant in the amount of 99,500 to support the efforts in downtown Franklin, for assessments of buildings for upper story development. She has already applied for a main street matters application, but since we are waiting to hear back on that she will be submitting this USDA application.
 - ✓ Motion to approve the resolution to file USDA application by Maureen James, seconded by Alan Schiller. 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 January. There were eight (8) invoices paid during the month.

- ✓ Motion to approve the financial report as presented by Alan Schiller; seconded by Maureen James. 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. Emily noted that the Federal Congressional Appropriations Request is waiting for the federal government to pass their budget to hear back. All other grant applications are still pending responses.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

- Emily Lewis, *Executive Director* – provided an update on ongoing projects, including continued work on the Cranberry Recreation Center project. Additionally, they are collaborating with the Transit Building on its 2025 work plan and various anticipated projects. Support has also been provided for the Lyric Theater project and the organizations involved in its development. The goal for opening the first floor will be the end of June, and Marcy Hall is working on the third-floor layout for maker space. Marcy has provided the March upcoming events. Emily also noted that she submitted a grant to the McElhattan Foundation for staffing capacity building.

It was noted that a change order request related to the first floor of 100 Seneca, is forthcoming. The change order is still under review and was not ready for the current board meeting and cannot be deferred to the next meeting. The request will be sent via email in the coming days for review.

VIII. AROUND-THE-TABLE REPORT

- Maureen James, *Oil Region Alliance* – shared that the upcoming Bluegrass Festival on March 1 is a collaborative effort between CASA and the Arts Council, taking place all day at the Moose, and community members are encouraged to attend and support the event. Looking ahead, the South Side Wine Walk is scheduled for April 25, featuring at least 14 vendors. With city approval, Linden Alley—the space between Clifford’s Carpet and Farmers Bank—will be blocked off to host live music as part of the festivities. Efforts are also underway to find interested developers for the former hotel space, an exciting opportunity on the horizon. Regarding the Venango Campus, things have been going well, as seen at last week’s Bridge Builders event. Seth Herrick has been actively promoting the space, and it is being well utilized. Additionally, the closing on the Venango Catholic property is expected any day now, and a tenant, Nutrition, has already established a presence there. Exciting upcoming events include the Allegheny River Music and Arts Festival on September 12-13, which will take place throughout Justice Park in collaboration with Main Street and other groups, as well as Bridge Fest on August 15-16, with family-focused activities on Friday at Center Street and entertainment for the over-21 crowd on the bridge.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL

- Susan Williams, Venango Chamber of Commerce – noted that tomorrow is the Chamber’s Annual Dinner and Monday night is the Travel to Italy tour trip educational session. The Justus Park public meeting was well-attended with around 35 community members present and feedback was consistent with prior discussions. River access remains a key interest and the ORA is exploring options for improved river access outside of the current feasibility study.
- Ashley Smith, Venango Chamber of Commerce – mentioned that she is hosting a Venango Heart & Soul event on outdoor recreation in Venango at Trails to Ales on Tuesday night. The discussion will center on personal stories about what people love about the area, identifying barriers to outdoor recreation, and gathering input on potential improvements. A visioning component will also be included, encouraging attendees to share their hopes and dreams for the future of outdoor recreation in the community.

X. ADJOURNMENT

- ✓ Motion to adjourn by Maureen James, seconded by Alan Schiller. All approved at 11:03 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Zaccari, Venango Area Chamber of Commerce