

Board Meeting Minutes for the March 2025 Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

Monthly board meeting called to order by Sam Breene, at 11:03 AM. Those present at the public meeting of the Venango County Economic Development Authority on 3/25/2025, 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
- Marcy Hall, Maker Space

Quorum Present: ☒ Yes ☐ No

The attendance of 5 board members (of the 7 current appointees) was accounted for by Ashley Zaccari.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. 2/18/2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

b. 3/18/2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

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

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

- None.

IV. SPECIAL PURPOSE MATTERS

- a. **Appointment of Makerspace Board** – Emily Lewis presented the seven (7) proposed appointees for the nonprofit Friends of the Makerspace Board. The board will serve as the governing body for the Makerspace nonprofit.
 - ✓ Motion to approve the makerspace board by Maureen James, seconded by Alan Schiller. All approved.
- b. **Ratification of Package D Change Orders 8-10** – Emily reviewed formal Change Orders 8–10 for Package D, previously approved but requiring ratification. The total amount was \$164,000, funded from contingency, leaving a remaining balance of \$77,205.06.
 - ✓ Motion to ratify the approval of package D's change orders 8-10 by Maureen James, seconded by Bonnie Summers. All approved.
- c. **Ratification of Window Washing Quote** – Emily shared details of a previously email-approved window washing quote for \$4,735.02, scheduled for May. The cleaning will include exterior and certain interior windows of floors 1, 2, and 5. Discussion ensued about frequency and coordination with other building owners.
 - ✓ Motion to ratify the approval of window washing quote by Rod Griffin, seconded by Alan Schiller. All approved.
- d. **Approval of ICE Service Contract** – Emily presented a three-year service contract for elevator maintenance with Industrial Commercial Elevator (ICE), a vendor used successfully by the County and other local entities. Current elevator status: waiting for parts with anticipated delivery of mid-April with two weeks labor after receiving parts.
 - ✓ Motion to approve the ICE Service Contract by Alan Schiller, seconded by Bonnie Summers. All approved.

- e. **Approval of Woods & River Lease** - Emily introduced a lease agreement with Woods & River, marking them as the second first-floor tenant. The lease follows the previously issued Letter of Intent and was signed by the tenant.
 - ✓ Motion to approve the Woods & River lease by Rod Griffen, seconded by Maureen James. 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 February. There were twenty-one (21) invoices paid during the month.
 - ✓ Motion to approve the financial report as presented by Maureen James; seconded by Bonnie Summers. 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* – As part of the ongoing first-floor renovation at 100 Seneca, Emily Lewis shared details about the paint color selection process. Local artists and interior design professionals Barbara Pierce and CJ Hurley of Century Arts were brought in to assist with historically sensitive and visually impactful color choices. The selection focused on using bold, rich tones to complement the building's architecture and historic character, moving away from neutral trends. Emphasis was placed on how color can influence visitor experience, create warmth in large spaces, and preserve original design elements. Darker accent colors were chosen for alcoves, while complementary tones were selected for woodwork, metal surfaces, and restored paneling. Board members expressed support for the selections and appreciation for the thoughtful and professional design process. The group agreed that the final choices will contribute to a unique and inviting public space that honors the building's past while creating a welcoming environment for future tenants and visitors. Emily noted that chandeliers and track lighting will also be installed to highlight architectural features and support the selected color palette.

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 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 raised the idea of organizing volunteer support for spring cleanup efforts around 100 Seneca and the nearby gardens. While the gardens are city-owned, the appearance reflects on the building. The board agreed that encouraging tenants, volunteers, and community members to help with outdoor maintenance is important.

- Marcy Hall gave an update on Makerspace activity. In-person meetups have been on pause due to elevator access issues, but behind-the-scenes planning continues, including discussions with partners on upcoming grant applications. A state Digital Connectivity Grant is being explored in collaboration with the library and the rural robotics program to potentially bring laptops and digital resources to the Makerspace. Marcy also plans to start working on-site multiple days a week to allow public access to equipment once it is fully operational.
- Bonnie Summers shared updates from Cranberry Township, including the upcoming Easter Egg Hunt at Morrison Park on April 19 and progress on the Cranberry Mall redevelopment and senior housing discussions. She also expressed excitement about the opening of Marshalls and other new commercial activity.
- Maureen James (also in her role with Main Street) noted several major events: Community Cleanup Day – April 16, South Side Wine Walk – April 25 (18 vendors expected), Music on the Square begins June 6 (held on First Fridays), Bridge Fest – August 15–16, New Allegheny Art & Music Festival – September 12–13
- Rod Griffin shared insights from the manufacturing and fitness sectors. He also mentioned a valuable upcoming Northwest Commission seminar on tariffs, international trade, and economic trends.
- Alan Schiller provided a Redevelopment Authority update. Demolition work was completed at 615 East First Street, with additional blight removal projects underway. A second home on the 1000 block is in progress, and plans are being made for a future demo on Wilson Avenue due to extensive water damage.

X. ADJOURNMENT

- ✓ Motion to adjourn by Maureen James, seconded by Alan Schiller. All approved at 12:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ashley Zaccari, Venango Area Chamber of Commerce