



Venango County

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Board Meeting Minutes for the January 2026 Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

Monthly board meeting called to order by Sam Breene, at 10:32 AM. Those present at the public meeting of the Venango County Economic Development Authority on 01/20/2025, 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
- ☒ Tom Friedhaber
- ☒ Rod Griffin

Staff Present:

- ☒ Emily Lewis, *Executive Director*
- ☒ Joe Brooker, *Grant & Project Manager*
- ☒ Rich Winkler, *County Solicitor*
- ☒ Diona Brick, *Finance Director*

Guests Present (List):

- Kara O'Neil, The Derrick
- Ashley Zaccari, Venango Area Chamber of Commerce

Quorum Present: ☒ Yes ☐ No

The attendance of 7 board members (of the 7 current appointees) was accounted for by Joe Brooker.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. 12/16/2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

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

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

- None.

IV. SPECIAL PURPOSE MATTERS

- a. **2026 Election of Officers** – Sam Breene was elected Board Chair, Maureen James was elected Vice Chair, Bonnie Summers was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

- ✓ Motion to certify the 2026 Election of Officers by Rod Griffin, seconded by Ken Bryan. All approved.

- b. **HVAC Maintenance Contract** – Emily explained that the building's HVAC system needs regularly scheduled maintenance throughout the year. Three quotes were received, HydroClean Products (\$14,820), Rabe Environmental Systems (\$13,924), and Renick Brothers Mechanical Contractors (\$13,740). Emily said building manager Ken Garland prefers HydroClean's proposal the best. HydroClean submitted the most comprehensive bid, has already done some maintenance of the HVAC system, and is able to remotely access the HVAC system through a VPN connection. Tom Friedhaber agreed that the ability to remotely monitor the system made HydroClean the best choice. Sam Breene noted that this was a year-to-year contract, and this could be revisited next if needed. Ken Bryan asked if a three-year contract would be more cost effective. Sam Breene said he would feel more comfortable signing a longer-term contract next year after reviewing what maintenance is required this year. The board elected to ratify the HydroClean Products contract at \$14,820 for the year.

- ✓ Motion to ratify the HVAC Maintenance Contract by Tom Friedhaber, seconded by Maureen James. All approved.

- c. **Charging Station Relocation Proposal** – Emily explained that the electric car charging station located in the building's parking lot needs to be relocated. The charging station has been disconnected since construction



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100 Seneca St, Oil City, PA



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started in the building. The charging station would be moved to the parking space closest to center street on the building side of the parking lot. The work would be paid for by the EDA grant. Once it is relocated it can be a source of revenue for the Authority. Rod Griffin suggested we review rates that other organizations use for their charging stations. Tom Friedhaber asked if we should look at how much revenue the charging station brought in before it was disconnected, Emily does not think this information would be helpful, because it was not active for a long period of time, and the number of electric cars on the road has increased since the charging station was disconnected. The charging station was installed initially to get people to stop in Oil City. To the best of Sam Breene's knowledge, this charging station is the only public charging station between the Barkeyville exit on Interstate 80 and Oil Creek State Park. Two bids were obtained, REJohnson Electric (\$4,695) and Right Electric, Inc. (\$6,191.29). The board decided to select REJohnson's lower bid of \$4,695.

✓ Motion to ratify Charging Station Relocation Proposal by Ken Bryan, seconded by Bonnie Summers. All approved.

- d. **Future Cortex Media Proposal – VSR** – Emily explained that this is a proposal that the Venango Sports and Recreation Center's (VSR) board would like the board to approve for their initial marketing and branding in the amount of \$5,000. The Authority board needs to approve this because it will be paid for by McElhattan Foundation dollars awarded to the Authority.

✓ Motion to approve the Future Cortex Media Proposal by Rod Griffin, seconded by Tom Friedhaber. All approved.

- e. **Desmone Architects Proposal – VSR** – Emily explained that this is a proposal that the VSR's board would like the board to approve for preliminary development of the rec center. This includes architectural support in the amount of \$21,500. The Authority board needs to approve this because it will be paid for by McElhattan Foundation dollars awarded to the Authority. Tom Friedhaber stated that if the VSR board recommends both of these proposals should be accepted, that the Authority should accept them.

✓ Motion to approve the Desmone Architects Proposal by Tom Friedhaber, seconded by Maureen James. All approved.

- f. **FY25-26 PREP Contract** – Emily explained that this is a contract between the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission (Northwest Commission) and the VCEDA. The PREP program is an economic development that promotes connections, where a business approaches the Authority with a problem, and the authority in turn connects the business with a solution. The annual contract is in the amount of \$12,299. By logging these interactions, the Authority gets compensated.

✓ Motion to approve the FY25-26 PREP Contract by Bonnie Summers, seconded by Rod Griffin. All approved.

- g. **FY25-26 Engage! Contract** – Emily explained that this is a contract between the Northwest Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission (Northwest Commission) and the VCEDA. The Engage! program, similar to the PREP program is an economic development program where the Authority visits local businesses to learn about what they do and see if the business is having any issues that the Authority can help them find assistance. The annual contract is in the amount of \$4,500. By logging these interactions, the Authority gets compensated.

✓ Motion to approve the FY25-26 Engage Contract by Ken Bryan, seconded by Tom Friedhaber. All approved.

V. FINANCIAL REPORT

- ✓ **Financial Report:** Diona Brick, *Venango County Fiscal Director* – Diona presented the financial report. She stated that in December 2025 the Authority received \$71,500 from the McElhattan foundation for the VSR project, as well as some EDA funding. At the end of December 2025, the Authority had \$509,534.59 in cash on hand. At the end of December 2025, the Authority had used 91.8% of its revised annual budget. However, at the end of December 2025, the 100 Seneca at Cornplanter Square project was 222.6% over budget, this was due to electric costs, building maintenance, and administrative costs. Diona stated that the Authority is working with Gary at the County to negotiate electric rates. There was also an issue with a security deposit on one electric bill, which was eventually paid. Tom Friedhaber asked Diona if she ever found out if 100 Seneca has mechanical insurance, a question that was initially raised at the November 2025 Authority Board meeting. Diona stated that she did find out that the building does not have that coverage, and that she is actively trying to get the coverage.

✓ Motion to approve the financial report made by Maureen James, seconded by Rod Griffin. All approved.

VI. ONGOING PROJECTS

- a. **100 Seneca at Cornplanter Square** – Emily updated the board on the ongoing projects. No grants applications were submitted by the Authority in December 2025. Emily stated that the Venango Makerspace leadership had approached her asking if they could relocate the Makerspace to the creek side of the 5th floor, where Ken Garland currently sits. The Makerspace team would like to have a larger space to offer expanded programming that they planned to host on the 3rd floor. However, the team is unsure if they will receive the grant funding they have asked for, and even if the grants are awarded, construction could take some time. By moving the Makerspace to the larger space, they can prove their success to allow for a stronger grant application in the future. Emily said that she and Joe met with Christi Martone with PA DCED to discuss the Mixed-Use Revitalization Program (MURP) grant application related to the Cranberry Mall and the VSR project. This grant application opens in June 2026 and closes in August. Emily said she has also met with a real estate developer for the space on the 3rd and 4th floor. Rod Griffin then asked Emily if she would update the proforma and present it to the Board. Emily said she will update the proforma with lease revenue and provide it to the Board in the future.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

- Emily Lewis, *Executive Director* – Emily said she has had meetings with Makerspace leadership. She also has met with a commercial real estate broker, giving them a tour of the building. She has met with PennDOT to discuss access to county owned property near the airport. She and Joe also met to discuss 2026 VCEDA projects and goals.
- Joe Brooker, *Grants & Project Manager* – Joe said that he had not submitted any grant applications in December 2025. He and Emily met with Christi Martone from PA DCED to discuss the Mixed-Use Revitalization Program. He is also getting quotes for an awning and bronze plaque for the Main Street Façade Grant program. He and Emily met with Spark Community Capital to discuss 100 Seneca's 100-year birthday, he has been acquiring pictures and memorabilia from the building. Part of Emily and Joe's visioning session involved getting the coworking space occupied.

VIII. AROUND-THE-TABLE REPORT

- Maureen James – The Oil City Main Street Program is working on its redesignation in 2026. Façade Grant Applications are open. ARMA Fest will be held in September. Bridge Fest will be held in August. Some Oil City businesses are working on an event calendar.
- Rod Griffin – Vince Witherup is now the chair of the FICDA Board, and Rod is the vice-chair.
- Bonnie Summers – Skate Capital is now open. Cranberry Township is working to allow for river access near the gravel company.
- Ken Bryan – Congratulated Chip on his new job. He is cautiously optimistic for 2026.
- Ashley Zaccari – The Venango Area Chamber of Commerce's Annual Dinner will be held on February 25 at Cross Creek. Nominations are open for the FLEX Young Professional of the Year. FLEX is hosting a millennial DJ night on Friday, February 13 at 8pm at Trails 2 in Frankltn.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL

- None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

- ✓ Motion to adjourn to executive session by Rod Griffin, seconded by Ken Bryan. All approved at 11:28 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Brooker, Venango County Economic Development Authority