

Van Buren County Economic Development Corporation

February 3, 2025 | 1 p.m.
Location: Board of Commissioners Chambers

Meeting Minutes

Roll Call

Member	Term Expires	Present/Absent
Tom Stanek, Chair	2/13/2027	P
Rodney Dragicevich, Vice Chair	2/13/2026	P
Zachary Morris, Secretary	2/13/2030	P
Kurt Doroh, Board of Commissioners Representative	BOC Appointed	P
Randall Peat, Board of Commissioners Representative	BOC Appointed	P
Paul Schincariol, Board of Commissioners Representative	BOC Appointed	A
Stephanie Timmer, Board Member	2/13/2028	P
Mike Toth, Board Member	2/13/2028	P

Others in attendance:

- Julia Wall, External Affairs Manager at Market One
- Lisa Ransler, Van Buren County Community Services Director
- Becky Grabemeyer, Van Buren County Finance Director*

*Indicates virtual attendance

Call to Order

Tom Stanek, Chair of the Board, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Agenda

Randy Peat moved to approve the meeting agenda. Kurt Doroh supported the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Mr. Doroh moved to approve the December 2024 meeting minutes. Mr. Peat supported the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Strategic Priorities

Zach Morris encouraged the board to brainstorm ideas on what the board would like learn about and new goals to tackle as an economic development effort.

Brainstorming Ideas:

- Connect with Kalamazoo County regarding housing (specifically homelessness issue)
- Bring in the South Haven Area Business Hub for an educational session
- Revolving Loan Fund – What is our risk tolerance with these loans?
- Consider secondary and tertiary options through Palisades reopening. Talk to Nick Culp about possible program from Governor Whitmer.

Open Issues

Palisades, Broadband Update

Mr. Morris said that Holtec is slightly concerned about projects being delayed due to the new administration.

Mr. Doroh said that Mercury Broadband has delayed work in Geneva Township due to leadership changes in leadership, so Bloomingdale Communications and Midwest Energy and Communications are bidding on it.

Financial Update

a. Revolving Loan Fund

Mr. Morris gave an update on the revolving loan fund. Mr. Faul and Mr. Morris met regarding the new program/plan for the revolving loan fund. A potential plan would be that the County would take on the invoicing and Market One staff will continue to do the majority of the administration. The County would be reimbursed for their time working on the program. More details need to be finalized before new action is taken.

Letters were sent to RNS and Pushard with the editions from the board review due to their delinquent accounts. Neither business has responded yet, so the board discussed next steps. Discussion included refinancing Pushard's loan and preparing a judgment for RNS. Regarding Lucky Girl, an appeal to the business owner needs to be made one more time and then strict action needs to be taken.

Loan Prospects

Sunberry is the only current loan prospect.

The board discussed how to find other loan prospect ideas. Market One could reach out to municipalities to see if there is interest. Mr. Peat said he would be open to being the second position on a \$20,000 loan.

Improvements to Amortization Process

No updates at this time.

b. County Strategic Fund

No updates at this time.

Community Grant Development Update

Mr. Morris gave an update on grants. We helped submit applications for the RAP Façade program with the City of South Haven for their ice rink/farmer's market area along with several businesses in downtown Paw Paw.

Van Buren County Economic Development Review

Mr. Morris gave an update on economic Development in Van Buren County. Special-Lite in Decatur is expanding their facility. We are working with several businesses who are looking to expand and also working with site selectors on the best sites for new development coming in. The Life Sciences park in Mattawan is gaining a lot of interest. And the Hartford site has a lot of interest with data centers.

Additional Announcements/Public Comment

No comments.

Adjournment

Mr. Peat moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:02 p.m. Rodney Dragicevich supported the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 3, 2025 at 1 p.m.



Zach Morris, Secretary of the Board

3-3-2025

Date