

# Van Buren County Economic Development Corporation

September 9, 2024 | 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	2/13/2029	P
Daywi Cook, Board Member	2/13/2029	P
Kurt Doroh, Board of Commissioners Representative	BOC Appointed	P
Randall Peat, Board of Commissioners Representative	BOC Appointed	A
Paul Schincariol, Board of Commissioners Representative	BOC Appointed	P
Stephanie Timmer, Board Member	2/13/2028	P
Mike Toth, Board Member	2/13/2028	P

Others in attendance:

- Katie Multhauf, Economic Development Manager at Market One
- Courtney Michalka, Community Development Manager at Market One
- Lisa Ransler, Van Buren County Community Services Director
- Jennifer Gilliam, Midwest Energy & Communications

### Call to Order

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

### Approval of Meeting Agenda

Rodney Dragicevich moved to approve the meeting agenda. Kurt Doroh supported the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

### Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

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

### Open Issues

#### *Palisades, Broadband Update*

There are no recent updates regarding Palisades. Daywi Cook announced the Project Compass Merit Grant for Covert Township.

a. *Presentation by Midwest Energy & Communications*

Jennifer Gilliam with Midwest Energy & Communications (MEC) provided an update on the ROBIN Grant work being performed by MEC. Ms. Gilliam noted several townships have already been built out, while others are in design phase or waiting to be permitted. She noted they are ahead of schedule due to a light winter. Mr. Doroh noted the Village of Breedsville had their water/sewer infrastructure damaged by underground boring. Ms. Gilliam noted that Breedsville didn't have their utility information in Miss Dig and MEC reached out for engineering information. MEC offered to help municipalities who do not have their utility information in the system.

*Financial Update*

Mr. Morris gave a brief update regarding the Revolving Loan Fund and the County Strategic Fund.

a. *Revolving Loan Fund*

Paul Schincariol outlined some concerns stated by the County Finance and Administration team around the taking in of payments and accounting for them correctly due to some payments being late, partial or over the scheduled amounts. Zach Morris stated that was a topic of his conversation with the administration the week prior and they are working to find ways to improve the process, including better software to track payments and balances.

*Loan Prospects*

Mr. Morris provided an update on the loan prospect presented in August. He stated an update was given to the prospect on the need for bringing a banking partner to the table, along with improving his balance sheet. Mr. Morris also updated the board that he met with County Administration on the use of the funds. A potential use could include housing development, specifically matching funds for grant funding.

b. *County Strategic Fund*

There were no updates for the County Strategic Fund.

*Community Grant Development Update*

Ms. Michalka gave an update regarding community grant updates. The County has been approved to receive a \$107k grant from the USDA- Housing Preservation. New Growth Group, a consultant provided by Market One, assisted the County in applying for the grant. Ms. Michalka shared the annual Huntington grant was awarded to Market One. She is also working with Van Buren County and two other communities interested in the MI Neighborhoods opportunity. Ms. Michalka mentioned New Growth Group is assisting on a submission for Pathways to Removing Obstacles opportunity through HUD. These funds will assist the eastside of the county to develop a Water and Sewer Authority.

*Van Buren County Economic Development Review*

Ms. Multhauf gave an update on economic development, specifically attraction efforts and industrial site readiness. She gave an update on the pipeline of projects. Two projects will be breaking ground within the next two months. Ms. Multhauf updated the board on new state strategic initiatives with MDARD focusing on dairy processing. Lastly, the last month of BR&E visits have focused on automation and referrals to the MMTC and the Spencer Manufacturing ribbon cutting.

**Additional Announcements**

Ms. Cook respectfully submitted her resignation, citing multiple commitments and the need to focus her time on issues impacting Covert Township. Chairman Stanek accepted her resignation.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Dragicevich moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:03 p.m. Mr. Doroh supported the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 7, 2024 at 1 p.m.



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Zach Morris, Secretary of the Board

10-7-2024

Date