

Van Buren County Economic Development Corporation

March 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	A
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	P
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
- Katie Multhauf, Economic Development Manager at Market One
- Katie Vanderhulst, Community Development Director at Market One
- Lisa Ransler, Van Buren County Community Services Director

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 February 2025 meeting minutes. Mr. Peat supported the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

New Business

Introduction of the Community Development Director, Katie Vanderhulst

Zach Morris introduced Katie Vanderhulst, the new Community Development Director for Market One.

Open Issues

Palisades, Broadband Update

Mr. Morris said there are now no concerns from Holtec about reopening due to administration changes. Mr. Peat announced that Hyundai is partnering with Holtec.

Mr. Morris said that MEC is putting in an application to serve the territories that will be unserved since Mercury is unable to finish their projects. Mr. Doroh brought up concerns about projects in Lawrence possibly not being completed until 2030.

Financial Update

a. Revolving Loan Fund

Mr. Morris gave an update on the revolving loan fund. Mr. Faul and Mr. Morris recently met regarding utilizing the T-Value process with the County Finance team and Market One staff. That program has been confirmed and will be utilized moving forward.

Pushard Refinance

Mr. Morris shared the new loan amortization schedule for Pushard. They are open to working with us to refinance. Mr. Morris asked the EDC Board for a vote to recommend refinancing the loan for Pushard Welding to the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners. Mr. Peat made a motion to recommend the refinancing for Pushard Welding. Mr. Doroh supported the motion and motion carried unanimously. Some board members asked if we need to have parameters in place for other businesses when it comes to refinancing.

Loan Prospects

Jeremiah Smith Enterprises

Mr. Smith is looking for an equipment loan for \$35,000 for a washing machine over 7 years. The EDC Board will hold a public hearing on this proposed loan at the April 7 EDC Board meeting.

Longship Brewing Company

Mr. Joe Magers from Longship Brewing Company is looking for \$125,000 in working capital to increase company revenue by putting in a canning line. The EDC Subcommittee will review the financials and follow-up with the group next month.

Improvements to Amortization Process

Mr. Morris Explained the T-Value process with County Finance moving forward.

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 which will fund a little over \$600,000. Katie Multhauf is supporting the Food and Agricultural Investment Program pre-packet applications for Burnette Foods and St. Julian's. Awardees will be announced in June.

Van Buren County Economic Development Review

Ms. Multhauf gave an update on economic development in Van Buren County. The Underserved and Value-Added grant program from MDARD will be starting its new cycle this spring. She submitted a business attraction application for the Hartford Site and is working to engage our manufacturers for Industry 4.0. There are two Van Buren County businesses who will be announced as winners in the Industry 4.0 program within the coming week and awarded \$25,000 towards automation. The Going Pro Talent fund will be launched in April.

Strategic Priorities

Mr. Morris reminded the board of our initial conversations and brainstorming from last month regarding strategic priorities.

Brainstorming:

- Connect with Kalamazoo County regarding housing (specifically homelessness issue)
- Bring in the South Haven Area Business Hub for 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.
- What happens when we deplete our RLF funds? We should ask if we would get more funds.
- Promoting Van Buren County as the center of nuclear energy in America. Capitalize on the nuclear power plant, energy generation and industry structure strategy. Consider making this a regional partnership?

Additional Announcements/Public Comment

Mr. Morris announced that a virtual option (Zoom) to attend the meetings will no longer be used monthly. The virtual option will only be used if a community member requests it. Julia Wall will have this posted on the EDC page on the County website.

Ms. Wall announced that the 2025 Best New Business Award Nominations are open and that the Market One team is looking for businesses to be nominated until March 10.

Mr. Doroh brought up that the poor quality of roads caused by the harsh winter cold has affected trucking locally.

Adjournment

Mr. Peat moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:16 p.m. Mr. Morris supported the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 7, 2025 at 1 p.m.

Zach Morris

Zach Morris, Secretary of the Board

4-18-2025
Date