

**Minutes of Board Meeting  
February 9, 2023  
Perry County Economic Development Authority  
Perry County Business and Tourism Center  
New Bloomfield, PA.**

**Attendees:** Rich Pluta, Marti Roberts, Frank Campbell, Russ Hoover, Duane Hertzler, John Gerner, Patti McLaughlin, Brenda Watson

**Virtual participants:** David Misner, Kevin Fitzpatrick

**Staff:** Michelle Jones, Kayleigh Spidle

**Absent:** None

**Excused:** Dee Anderson

**Visitors:** Jason Finnerty

**Call to Order:**

The February 2023 PCEDA Board Meeting was called to order by Chair Marti Roberts at 8:33 AM.

**Public Comment:**

Jason Finnerty, the County Planner, reported as follows:

- No additional land development plans have been received by the County Planning Commission since his report last month. A total of 10 plans have been submitted so far this year, which is 4 less than at this time last year and represents 74 fewer building lots than the plan totals for last year at this time.
- A preliminary land development plan for the proposed warehouse complex in Watts Township is currently under review. The HATS US11/15 Corridor Study is being expanded to include access options for the warehouse complex. On-site water and sewer systems are being proposed, but the developer is considering designing them to be able to expand to provide for future growth in the area. A substantial investment will be required from the developer to increase the electric utility service to the area.
- The comprehensive plan update entitled “Picture Perry” is nearing completion. A public hearing on the draft plan is scheduled for March 6<sup>th</sup> following the 45-day comment period. All county townships and boroughs are being invited to have a representative present at the hearing to answer questions regarding their projects that are included in the plan at this point. Draft resolutions in support of the plan are also being prepared for these jurisdictions to enact. Frank Campbell read a line from the Newport Planning Commission’s letter of support “this is a continuation of a plan to make our county carefully cultivated.”

**Secretary’s Report:**

John Gerner presented the minutes of the PCEDA Annual Meeting on January 12, 2023, which had been distributed to all board members in advance of today’s meeting. Frank Campbell proposed a motion to accept the minutes as presented, Patti McLaughlin seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

Patti McLaughlin presented the Financial Report for the period ending January 31, 2023, prepared by Robert Morris & Co., which was distributed to all board members in advance of

today's meeting. Ms. McLaughlin advised that the report reflects normal monthly expenses and payroll, recent purchases of materials in the branding program, the receipt of the first half of the county's \$70K donation, and a reimbursement from one of our federal grants. Russ Hoover proposed a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented, Duane Hertzler seconded the motion, and it was approved by a voice vote without dissent. Duane Hertzler asked if we had seen an increase in our electric power bill. Michelle Jones advised that the Chamber of Commerce pays the bill, and we reimburse them along with other office expenses on a quarterly basis, and so she cannot answer that question directly.

Marti Roberts advised that the Finance Committee had met prior to this meeting and discussed staff member performance and compensation. The Committee believes that the Executive Director and the Coordinator accomplished a tremendous amount of work over the past year organizing the nine borough work groups, securing the Keystone Communities designation for our downtown revitalization project in addition to advancing all our other programs and projects. In recognition of all these accomplishments, the Committee recommends that Michelle Jones receive a \$2500 bonus and Kyleigh Spidle receive a \$2000 bonus to be paid in one lump sum. Duane Hertzler proposed a motion to approve the payment of a \$2500 bonus to Michelle Jones and a \$2000 bonus to Kyleigh Spidle for their outstanding work efforts during the past year. Frank Campbell seconded the motion, and it was approved by a voice vote without dissent. David Misner noted that it is customary to ask employees to leave the room when performance and salary issues are discussed. Ms. McLaughlin advised that Michelle and Kyleigh were asked to leave the room during the Finance Committee's deliberations.

### **Chair Report:**

Marti Roberts reported as follows:

- The press conference last week to announce that our Perry County Hometowns program has been accepted into the Commonwealth's Main Street Program was deemed a huge success and thanked Michelle and Kyleigh for the intense work that went into organizing the event. Our program has been termed a "pilot program" in light of its multi-jurisdictional approach, yet some of the remarks during the event seemed to indicate that it has been a part of the statewide program all along. There was some media present during the event, and Patti McLaughlin said that the pictures and coverage looked like it was well attended. Ms. Roberts noted that it has been 4 years since we first hosted DCED and PDC representatives to talk about the program and how it could be implemented here in Perry County. It just shows that we had great "stick-to-it-iveness". Surprisingly, the State says it is looking at this as a model in other areas. Ms. Roberts cautioned that there is still a lot of work ahead and whole-hearted support is necessary from all board members to keep the projects moving forward. Duane Hertzler asked for schedule of all the meetings. Ms. Spidle will send out a listing of meeting to all board members. John Gerner asked if we had copies of the press coverage. Ms. Jones said she put links to the coverage in her staff report.
- Ms. Roberts advised that she believes we also need to look at the other things we should be working on. She indicated that we would apply for USDA's Rural Communities Development Initiative grant (RCDI) again in April. Ms. Roberts said that she hopes to have a wide-ranging discussion at our March meeting of other programs/projects that we can pursue.

**Staff Reports:**

Michelle Jones prepared a written report of her activities during the past month and a copy is attached to these minutes. Ms. Jones provided highlights as follows:

- Six of the eight planned Engage program business interviews have been completed. Ms. Jones thanked Frank Campbell for his help in arranging for and participating in these interviews. The insights into these county businesses are truly eye opening.
- The Career Day event being planned and arranged for the four county school districts is going well and Ms. Jones is encouraged by the willingness of businesses to participate.
- Ms. Jones had a very informative discussion with Ms. Mary Kuna, Executive Director of the Cumberland County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, regarding options for addressing affordable housing needs and urban blight. Ms. Kuna talked about the use of land bank procedures to purchase/obtain blighted properties and offer them for redevelopment into affordable housing. Conditions would be set forth on how the properties would be offered to the developers along with timeframes for completion. CCHRA would work with Perry County to initially set up a partnership that could eventually transition to a stand-alone Perry County program. These projects would be worked in conjunction with our revitalization projects in the boroughs but could be expanded to address issues outside the boroughs also. Ms. Kuna pledged to come back with more program's details in the near future. Kevin Fitzpatrick asked if this type of program could be used to address the issue of homelessness. Ms. Jones said that this program is aimed at providing affordable housing for middle income families/business owners while programs like that currently being explored by the Literacy Council are aimed at low-income residents. The consensus among board members was to keep looking at this and a draft plan.
- The Keystone Communities program is promoting the conversion of head in angle parking in many of our boroughs to back in parking as a way to reduce accidents that plague these areas.

Kyleigh Spidle provided a written report on her activities during the past month and a copy is attached to these minutes. Ms. Spidle provided highlights as follows

- The last month and now in February will focus on firming up the calendar of activities for the coming year. The meetings have been going well.
- The Marysville committee may have to be re-established. No one showed up for the January meeting and the building was locked. The loss of the previous borough manager has had a detrimental impact on the local support for the program.
- A total of fifteen façade improvement grants are in various stages of development with four of them having been approved and awaiting contractors to begin work. Three additional business owners are expressed interest in the program.

**Old Business**

None

**New Business/Announcements**

- It has been reported that some are questioning Perry County's continued participation in and funding for SEDA-COG's programs based on the lack of support for projects in our area.

Their belief is that we would be better served by the Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDC in light of the staffing changes in that organization. Access to Appalachian Regional Commission programs and funding might present somewhat of an issue if the change were to be made, but some felt this could be overcome.

- A press release on the fairground area improvement project and PCEDA financial support for the project needs to be developed.
- The need for and benefits of a hotel/tourism tax was discussed briefly.

**Adjourn:**

Russ Hoover proposed a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by John Gerner and approved by a voice vote without dissent. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 AM.

## Staff report February 2023

- Coordinated Main Street Designation press conference in Duncannon with state media department and our local participants.
  - ❖ <https://www.abc27.com/local-news/perry-county-receives-regional-keystone-communities-main-street-designation/>
  - ❖ <https://www.pennlive.com/perry-county-times/2023/02/door-of-opportunity-opens-with-main-street-designation-for-perry-county.html>
  - ❖ <https://www.penncapital-star.com/blog/perry-co-receives-main-street-designation-in-community-and-economic-development-program/>
- Started Engage interviews. Frank's been scheduling and that's a huge help. 5 of 8 scheduled
- Working through Façade projects and paperwork. We have 3 with completed letters of agreement, 1 more approved and about a dozen in process. We continue to promote it.
- Working with PJM to transition website and do some updates. Hosting will cost \$300 annually instead of \$1000 a year.
- Planning career day April 19<sup>th</sup>
- Review of CEDS plan

Organization Name

JANUARY STAFF REPORT

Date of meeting

Title

Main Street Coordinator

Name

Kyleigh Spidle

### Progression

- Met with various businesses and committee members to interview for perry hometowns volunteer video
- Reviewed Keystone Designation with committees
- Composed first education series report on Reporting – reviewed and instructed committee on education series and using the information we give to communicate with the community
- Promoted the volunteer survey and collected the data from the documents

- Reviewed 2023 yearly planner with each committee
- Reviewed example of task list for future events and projects
- Reviewed Maestro with committees and advised to collectively organize information
- Had Bill Arrwood from PDC at office to review program with Michelle and I
- Attended the press conference for designation
- Reviewed and promoted façade grant and applicants with façade committee
- Revisiting Marysville contacts and leads to reassess the main street committee members and meeting location
- Continued research on various education series topics through main street databases