

**Minutes of Board Meeting  
December 8, 2022  
Perry County Economic Development Authority  
Perry County Business and Tourism Center  
New Bloomfield, PA.**

**Attendees:** Rich Pluta, Marti Roberts, Frank Campbell, Duane Hertzler, Dee Anderson, David Misner, John Gerner, Kevin Fitzpatrick, Patti McLaughlin, Brenda Watson

**Virtual participants:**

**Staff:** Michelle Jones, Kayleigh Spidle

**Absent:** None

**Excused:** Russ Hoover

**Visitors:** Jason Finnerty

**Call to Order:**

The December 2022 PCEDA Board Meeting was called to order by Chair Marti Roberts at 8:32 AM.

**Public Comment:**

Brenda Watson discussed the need to validate the broadband map (coverage and speed test) that will be used in the process of allocating state and Federal funds to enhance broadband coverage in the state. Ms. Watson passed out a flyer that describes the process and provides information on how to validate the map details. She emphasized that the test is location sensitive and should be conducted at our home location. A QR code is provided on the data sheet to get an app for your phone, which will then let you take the speed test. The resulting information goes to the FCC and populates the “fabric maps”. Ms. Watson emphasized that we need to do these tests to prove that the public information is not accurate in Perry County. The speed test results are the most important part of the data being collected. The second part of this test process is to perform the challenges at the bottom of the app page related to availability of service (i.e., location) and the service speeds provided (accuracy). The deadline for completing these tests is currently January 17<sup>th</sup>. Discussion ensued on how to get word out around Perry County and encourage people to perform the tests.

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 79 plans had been submitted this year, which is 24 less than the total in 2021.
- A county-wide Commuter Survey is currently out in the data gathering phase and about 2000 responses have been received so far. They are working with Penn State on the project and have a National Science Foundation grant but are looking for more grant money.
- The comprehensive plan update entitled “Picture Perry” is nearing completion. Two additional components have been added and Mr. Finnerty is currently working on collecting background data on the economy, transportation, and community services in the county. The goal is to have it finished by the end of year.
- In response to a question from Kevin Fitzpatrick about the proposed solar farm project in New Bloomfield, Ms. Watson advised that the project would entail the installation of over

9000 solar panels on 15-20 acres of land – the panels will be very closely spaced. Reportedly a site in Howe Township is under consideration.

#### **Secretary's Report:**

John Gerner presented the minutes of the PCEDA meeting on November 10, 2022, 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, Brenda Watson 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 November 30, 2022, 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, and recent purchases of materials in the branding program discussed at last month's meeting. Duane Hertzler proposed a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented, John Gerner seconded the motion, and it was approved by a voice vote without dissent.

Michelle Jones advised that PCEDA had received an invoice in the amount of \$5380.20 from **PearlJade Marketing** for **\$5380.20** which will need Board approval for payment. John Gerner proposed a motion to authorize payment of this, Duane Hertzler seconded the motion, and it was approved by a voice vote without dissent.

#### **Chair Report:**

Marti Roberts reported as follows:

- PCEDA just received a letter from DCED announcing that our Perry County Hometowns program has been accepted into the Commonwealth's Main Street Program. We have been asked not to announce this acceptance in any public manner pending a state announcement. Our program has been termed a "pilot program" in light of its multi-jurisdictional approach.
- Following the discussions at last month's meeting, the funding level for the façade grants has been increased to \$3000 with a minimum \$1000 match requirement. We have about a half dozen applications in the pipeline.
- The County Commissioners have included a \$70K donation to PCEDA in their proposed 2023 budget. That budget is out for public review prior to its final approval later this month.
- A group of PCEDA Board members and staff met with a young lady, Morgan Dieter, who has proposed a project to rehabilitate the outdoor arena at fairgrounds. We still had \$1500 for engineering costs associated with bringing water and sewer to the fairgrounds and we got DCED approval to revise the budget to support this arena project. Ms. Dieter's goal was to raise \$7K-\$8K, expecting volunteers to help and keep costs down. It seems that there is a lot of deferred maintenance in the arena. As previously discussed, PCEDA and others would like to have a discussion with the Fair Board about what all needs to be improved. It was eye-opening to learn that Perry and neighboring counties were not using the arena because it was considered to be too dangerous. Plan to meet with a few folks from the fair board to discuss what needs to be renovated and how to do it. The arena project is planned to start in March.

- The terms of membership on the PCEDA Board for Dee Anderson, Rich Pluta, John Gerner, and Duane Hertzler are due to expire on the first Monday in January 2023. Each has agreed to serve for another five-year term. The Executive Committee has discussed a few names of new people to add to the board and is currently extending feelers out to gauge interest. David Misner asked if board members had to be residents. A check of the bylaws that members would either be a resident, taxpayer or business owner. He said that a lady in public affairs at PPL had expressed an interest in working with a group like PCEDA. The basis for her membership would be her representation of a company that owns land in the county. After some discussion, it was decided to send this membership/bylaw issue to our Solicitor to see what his interpretation is. Frank Campbell asked if there was anyone who would like to be considered for any of the elected officer positions of PCEDA.

### **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:

- PCEDA's membership in the Pa Association of Non-Profit Organizations (PANO) is up for renewal at an annual rate of \$125 per year. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that we would renew our subscription in support of the work PANO does.
- A photo of proposed improvements to the Chamber/PCEDA office facade using façade improvement grant funding had been circulated to all board members with this month's meeting materials. Ms. Jones said she has discussed the proposed improvements with the property owner, and he has expressed a willingness to allow the improvements to be added. It was agreed to seek estimates for the work involved. John Gerner asked where the funds over and above the grant dollars would come from in our budget. The use of branding funds due to expire at the end of June was put forth but no formal decision was reached.
- Ms. Jones said that she will be working to spending down DCED1 funds by the end of 2023.

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

- November meetings went well. A survey was created and implemented to get feedback about what volunteers want, how they think things are going, and the like. Each session included a presentation by Jasmine Colbert on the Creative Placemaking project and a discussion of project options in each borough. The results of that work were considered to be very productive and helped to build more enthusiasm.
- There are no meetings scheduled in December except for the initial meeting of the Liverpool group. The January meetings will be used to go over goals for the year. Ms. Jones noted that the state wants detailed work plans for the year.
- Rich Pluta asked how the evaluation of alternate recordkeeping software applications is going. Ms. Spidle said she is still researching but feels that Maestro will be the better system for overall date collection and tracking volunteer time. Data is currently in Downtown Diva, but it is not being used to develop work plans because it is considered to be so "clunky". The annual subscription renewal for Downtown Diva is in May. Maestro is \$50 a month.

- Duane Hertzler commented on how nice the holiday decorations/window treatments in Blain look. Ms. Spidle noted that five of the Main Street committees promoted the Very Perry Holiday project and that over 30 businesses are decorating their stores for this program.

**Old Business:**

- Next steps with regard to discussions with the Fair Board regarding improvements to enhance the usefulness of the fair grounds were discussed. The need for an overall Master Plan to guide those improvements was noted. The lack of an improvement plan/strategy has kept the county commissioners from seeking funds for needed improvements. It was agreed that Patti McLaughlin will work to schedule a meeting with the new board president to see what the options are for moving forward.

**New Business/Announcements**

None

**Adjourn:**

Patti McLaughlin proposed a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Rich Pluta and approved by a voice vote without dissent. The meeting adjourned at 9:51 AM.

## Executive Director

Staff report, December 2022

- Working on organization for all PeCo schools Career Fair on April 19<sup>th</sup>
- Working on CareerReadyPeCo.org website
- Coordinating with Jasmine on arts project
- Editing and working on multiple marketing projects with PJM
- Grant administration
- 2023 goal planning
- Organization for upcoming audits

Upcoming:

Need volunteers: Junior Achievement is looking for volunteers for the YES! program at Susquenita Middle School which will be held on 3/3/23. I am reaching out to all prior volunteers to see if you might be able to volunteer again this year. We would love to have you back!

Renew PANO?

## NOVEMBER STAFF REPORT

Date of meeting

Title Main Street Coordinator

Name Kyleigh Spidle

### Announcements

- Liverpool will hold its first meeting Dec 13<sup>th</sup>

### Progression

- Met with all Main Street committees to review strategy board and ideas to start planning for 2023
- Further brainstorming NEA grant with Jasmine Colbert at all Main Street meetings with committee members
- Created a volunteer survey for committee members to complete so that we can see what goals they would like to accomplish in 2023
- Helped with Duncannon subcommittee on planning and decorating for very perry holidays
- Helped with New Bloomfield subcommittee on planning and decorating for very perry holidays
- Attended the Belco Financial Reality Fair at West Perry High School
- Attended a webinar for Radically Rural Heart and Soul on caring for revitalization
- Attended a webinar for Inspiring Storefronts
- Promoted Very Perry Holidays – reminding committee members and businesses to participate
- Continue to work on getting in touch with appropriate point on contact regarding banners/pole specs for downtowns
- Reviewing all volunteer forms to create a spreadsheet of working events/projects/ideas for 2023
- Continue to research volunteer management/ materials/ recruitment under Main Street America
- Continue to review additional software plans for managing downtowns. Prepared to ask PDC for their recommendations
- Research blogs/ educational material that are sharable with committee and community members.

