

# Van Buren County Economic Development Corporation

March 7, 2022 | 1 p.m.

Location: Board of Commissioners Chambers

## Meeting Minutes

### Roll Call

Member	Term Expires	Present/Absent
<b>Randall Peat, Chair</b>	BOC Appointed	P
<b>Tom Stanek, Vice Chair</b>	2/13/2027	P
<b>Carrie Troyer, Finance Chair</b>	3/13/2024	P
<b>Zachary Morris, Secretary</b>	2/13/2024	P
<b>Daywi Cook, Board Member</b>	2/13/2024	P
<b>Jeff Hannan, Board Member</b>	2/13/2024	A
<b>Mike Toth, Board Member</b>	2/13/2028	P
<b>Paul Schincariol, Board of Commissioners Representative</b>	BOC Appointed	P
<b>Rodney Dragicevich, Board Member</b>	2/13/2026	P

Others in attendance:

- Sarah Snoeyink, Programs & Projects Manager at Market Van Buren
- Riley Lukomski, Economic Development Manager at Market Van Buren
- Julia Wall, Economic Development Coordinator at Market Van Buren

### Call to Order

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

### Approval of Meeting Agenda

Mike Toth moved to approve the agenda. Tom Stanek supported the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

### Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Rodney Dragicevich moved to approve the January 3, 2022 meeting minutes. Mr. Toth supported the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

### New Business

#### *Introduction to MVB staff*

Zach Morris introduced new Market Van Buren staff members, Riley Lukomski and Julia Wall.

#### *Election of Board Chair and Vice Chair*

Mr. Peat resigned as EDC Board Chair but will remain a member of the EDC Board. Mr. Peat recommended Mr. Stanek to be appointed as the new EDC Board Chair. Mr. Toth moved to approve Mr. Stanek as Board Chair. Mr. Dragicevich supported the motion, and the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Dragicevich was nominated as the new Vice Chair. Mr. Toth moved to approve Mr. Dragicevich as Vice Chair. Daywi Cook supported the motion,

and the motion carried unanimously.

#### *Update for County Website: Group Photo and Goals*

Sarah Snoeyink requested that the EDC Board take a group photo so that the County website could be up to date. Ms. Snoeyink took a group picture of the Board.

Mr. Morris and Ms. Snoeyink brought up that there is a candidate interested in joining the EDC Board. Mr. Morris mentioned how the current EDC Board could use the balance of bringing in an individual with technology and education background. A conversation is scheduled between the candidate and Mr. Morris for next week. Mr. Morris will update the Board about the candidate meeting at the next Board meeting. If this candidate does not work out, then Mr. Peat said we should post about an opening on the County Board website.

#### **Open Issues**

##### *Van Buren County Economic Development Review*

Mr. Morris provided an overview of ongoing economic development efforts in Van Buren and Cass County. Discussion followed regarding ongoing projects and local businesses, including efforts to retain American Cooler Technologies and expand Welch's.

##### *GoingPro Update*

Mr. Morris provided an overview of the companies in Cass and Van Buren counties that had received GoingPro funding in the last funding cycle. Discussion followed regarding what could be done to get funding to more local businesses and whether the program was available to local municipalities.

##### *Palisades Update*

Ms. Snoeyink provided an update regarding the Palisades Closing Project and the role Market Van Buren is playing with the process. The next PCAP meeting is Wednesday, March 9 from 6-8 in South Haven. Mr. Peat concluded the conversation with stating how he would like to free up Administrator Frank Hardester's time so the County can have a stronger presence in Lansing.

##### *Broadband Update*

Ms. Snoeyink presented an update regarding the county broadband progress. The Board of Commissioners approved the contractor DCS Technologies to do parcel-by-parcel mapping. The state of Michigan may end up developing their own maps. Cass and Berrien counties are possibly looking to join this effort to make it a regional effort. Maps for the parcel-by-parcel mapping will be done by July 5.

Paul Schincariol continued the conversation by discussing possible problems with the broadband process and further discussion followed.

##### *Review Financial Reports*

Ms. Snoeyink discussed the challenges Pushard Welding has faced since the pandemic and that she is working with them to refinance their loan.

Ms. Snoeyink mentioned that a business is interested in joining the Revolving Loan Fund and would like to expand into Van Buren County. They have a gap in financing and need

support. Ten new positions would open, but some of the positions would be out of the county.

Discussion followed if the board would support this business' loan application. Mr. Schincariol and Ms. Cook asked if fifty percent should work here and the other 50 percent work remotely or relocate. Mr. Morris shared that we did not yet know how many jobs would be local as the company is still discussing its path forward.

*County Strategic Fund Update*

Mr. Morris and Ms. Wall are working with RNS to finalize their loan repayment plan. Mr. Lukomski is working on a payment plan for New Age Laboratories as well.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Morris moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:30 PM. Mr. Schincariol supported the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2022 at 1 p.m.

  
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*Zach Morris, Secretary of the Board*

4/12/2022

*Date*