

ECLB Board Meeting Minutes



Erie County Land Bank

Wednesday, July 31, 2024 at 9:00 AM EDT to Wednesday, July 31, 2024 at 10:30 AM EDT
1230 Townhall Road West, Suite 500, Erie, PA 16509

Meeting Details: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87564493882?pwd=L0k0VE9JSVhZVE9sQ2pibU9lVWRydz09>

1-309-205-3325

Meeting ID: 875 6449 3882

Passcode: ECLB2024

Agenda

I. Call to Order & Attendance

Call to Order: 9:04 a.m.

Board: Brian McGrath, Christine Rush, James Cardman, Dave Mitchell, Suzanne Weber, Tim Bogdanets

Additional: Jennifer Hirneisen, Christie Mahany, Aaron Snippert, Krista Arnold, Rachel Jessup

Absent: Jack Lee, Sandy Morrow

II. Review Minutes from Previous Meeting

- Motion to approve minutes from previous meeting by C. Rush, seconded by J. Cardman; all in favor, none opposed.

B. McGrath brought up roll call voting at meetings.

1. J. Hirneisen reminded all attendees to speak one at a time for clarity.
2. Roll call vote to be held.

Roll call vote to approve minutes:

1. C. Rush: Yea
2. T. Bogdanets: Yea
3. J. Cardman: Yea
4. D. Mitchell: Yea
5. S. Weber: Yea

None opposed.

Question raised regarding whether a roll call vote is necessary for approval of minutes, agenda, et cetera.

1. J. Hirneisen suggested if a vote is unanimous, a roll call vote is not necessary. If anyone objects, then hold roll call vote.
2. Roll call vote for any motion involving expenditure of funds.

III. Financial Report

Two deposits:

1. \$24,000.00 for 59-61 West Main Street, North East.
 - a. Work is beginning.
 - b. The buyer is willing to participate in our social media/marketing; highlights how the reno is being incorporated into the community (e.g., bike trails).
2. \$500.00 for 18 Gillette Street, Union City

Mainly on or ahead of budget. Property sales have been higher than expected.

Available funds in Accounts Payable include CCLT funds; these aren't our funds, we're just acting as pass-through.

Demolition Fund

1. \$13,993.50 is the most recent deposit
2. The Demolition Funds dashboard was presented:
<https://eriecopa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/3977a1a65b4d4e9b83eb45ac86cc3954>
or go to ErieCountyLandBank.org > Programs > Act 152 Demo Fund
 - a. This dashboard is publicly available.
 - b. The information is reported annually, but the dashboard includes real-time updates and offers clear transparency.
 - c. Options to drill down on specific information.
 - d. C. Rush pointed out that it only takes two clicks to access the dashboard from the ECLB website.

- Motion to approve financial report by D. Mitchell, seconded by C. Rush; all in favor, none opposed.

I. Hearing of the Public

None.

II. Erie Land Bank

- Motion to approve disbursement to Erie Land Bank in the amount of \$16,485.31 (2023 WP \$850.75 and 2024 WP \$15,634.56) by D. Mitchell, seconded by J. Cardman; all in favor, none opposed.

2022 WP Funds: Discussion regarding memo from A. Snippet:

1. When properties are remediated, they are no longer associated with a Work Plan, they're just tracked.

2. To eliminate three open financial amounts (“grants” from ECLB to ELB), A. Snippet is requesting to transfer remaining funds from WP22 to WP24 for additional rehab projects. This final amount will be confirmed with C. Mahany.



Motion to approve transfer of the remaining funds from WP22 to WP24 by D. Mitchell, seconded by T. Bogdanets.

3. Comment that ELB was under budget the first two years; D. Mitchell commented that “the progress in the City of Erie has been remarkable”; and the LB’s partnering rather than competing is beneficial.
4. This hasn’t been done previously, but nothing exists to prevent it and there’s no negative impact.
5. ELB reporting of WP fund usage has been good.
6. Roll call vote to approve motion for transfer of funds from WP22 to WP24:
 - a. J. Cardman: Yea
 - b. D. Mitchell: Yea
 - c. S. Weber: Yea
 - d. C. Rush: Yea
 - e. T. Bogdanets: Yea
 - f. B. McGrath: Yea

None opposed.

R. Jessup to create roll call motion checklist for subsequent Board Meetings.

III. Solicitor Updates

Concerns regarding hiring of personnel brought up by S. Weber during the Governance Committee Meeting on July 17, 2024.

Recommended actions:

We recommend that at the board meeting on July 31, 2024 the board ratify the actions by the Personnel Committee on March 12, 2024 where the committee listed the role of the Executive Director as hiring, firing and managing. Further, the board should ratify the Governance Committee's approval on April 10th, 2024 of the recommendations from the Personnel Committee for hiring an administrative assistant and intern, and for actions taken at the June 5, 2024 meeting to approve the hiring of the administrative assistant and intern.

- 1. "Motion to ratify the Personnel Committee's actions on March 12, 2024 approving the role of the Executive Director to hire, fire and manage."**
- 2. "Motion to ratify the actions of the Governance Committee on April 10th, 2024 recommending the hiring of an administrative assistant and an intern"**
- 3. "Motion to ratify the actions of the Governance Committee on June 5, 2024 to approve the hiring of the administrative assistant and the intern."**
- 4. Finally, the Land Bank Board of Directors should vote to delegate hiring authority to the Executive Director and make it effective retroactively to April 24, 2024.**

We propose the following language for the motion to delegate hiring authority.

"Motion, in accordance with section 2105 (h)(2)(iii) of the Pennsylvania Land Bank Act, and Section 408 of the Land Bank's bylaws, the board votes to delegate its authority to hire or fire an employee or contractor of the Land Bank to the Executive Director. This authority includes but is not limited to advertising, reviewing applications, interviewing, and making an offer to the candidate chosen by the Executive Director."

S. Weber made the request regarding Motion #4 to add the language, "pre-approval from the Governance Committee in each instance of hiring or firing specific people"; does not think this should be independently handled by Executive Director.

- a. This would make the Governance Committee responsible for each hire or termination.
- b. B. McGrath asked if termination is run past Legal; C. Mahany confirmed that Legal would always be consulted regarding termination.
- c. A. Snippert re: ELB:
 - i. Has authorization from the Board for 100% authority over hiring, terminations, and salary.
 - 1. Board has no input unless over budget with payroll.
 - ii. Terminations are rare; however, Board has been kept aware and Legal has been regularly consulted as a situation developed. An Executive Session was held notifying the Board regarding a recent termination.
 - iii. Any legal action involves a hearing, so the Board is fully aware.
 - iv. Candidates for hire are never reviewed by the Board, and no Board permission is required before hiring; the new hire is introduced to the Board.
 - v. There is no Personnel or Governance Committee. Employment is through the Redevelopment Authority, not the Erie Land Bank.
 - vi. Handbook was approved by Board in 2003; approves updates as needed.
- d. D. Mitchell commented that ECLB Board handles hiring and termination of Executive Director.
 - i. Executive Director evaluates candidates based on qualifications and also on how they will fit into the team and organization. The Board is not always able to evaluate that criteria.
 - ii. If the Board feels an Executive Director is unable to handle hiring and terminations, the Executive Director would need to be terminated.
 - iii. Terminations will always need to involve notification of the Board and Legal as a situation is developing.
 - 1. The initial request for added language to Motion #4 was indicated to be due to concerns solely regarding terminations.

2. B. McGrath proposed to add the language, "Prior to any termination, the Solicitor and Board will be notified of the plan of action."
3. J. Hirneisen gave the reminder that the Solicitor's office has a Labor & Employment department available.
 - a. It was confirmed that C. Mahany regularly consults with the Solicitor's office as needed.



Motion to ratify the Personnel Committee's actions on March 12, 2024 approving the role of the Executive Director to hire, fire and manage, moved by C. Rush and seconded by D. Mitchell:

- a. S. Weber: Yea
- b. C. Rush: Yea
- c. T. Bogdanets: Yea
- d. B. McGrath: Yea
- e. J. Cardman: Yea
- f. D. Mitchell: Yea

None opposed.



Motion to ratify the actions of the Governance Committee on April 10th, 2024 recommending the hiring of an administrative assistant and an intern, moved by T. Bogdanets and seconded by C. Rush:

- a. S. Weber: Yea
- b. C. Rush: Yea
- c. T. Bogdanets: Yea
- d. J. Cardman: Yea
- e. D. Mitchell: Yea
- f. B. McGrath: Yea

None opposed.



Motion to ratify the actions of the Governance Committee on June 5, 2024 to approve the hiring of the administrative assistant and the intern, moved by C. Rush and seconded by D. Mitchell:

- a. S. Weber: Yea
- b. C. Rush: Yea
- c. T. Bogdanets: Yea
- d. J. Cardman: Yea
- e. D. Mitchell: Yea
- f. B. McGrath: Yea

None opposed.



Motion, in accordance with section 2105 (h)(2)(iii) of the Pennsylvania Land Bank Act, and Section 408 of the Land Bank's bylaws, the board votes to delegate its authority to hire or fire an employee or contractor of the Land Bank to the Executive Director. Prior

to any termination, the Solicitor and Board will be notified of the plan of action. This authority includes but is not limited to advertising, reviewing applications, interviewing, and making an offer to the candidate chosen by the Executive Director. Motion by J. Cardman and seconded by C. Rush.

- a. S. Weber: Yea
- b. C. Rush: Yea
- c. T. Bogdanets: Yea
- d. J. Cardman: Yea
- e. D. Mitchell: Yea
- f. B. McGrath: Yea

None opposed.

IV. Unfinished & New Business

Comment by D. Mitchell that C. Mahany “did a great job” with presentation to Rotary Club in Corry on July 2.

A. Properties

1. Property Acquisition: 7 Grove Street, Corry

K. Arnold explained that a local developer who has previously purchased ECLB properties was interested in rehabbing this property, but is unable to do so due to hurdles involved with clearing title.

- a. Typical situation for ECLB acquisitions; only difference is being approached by interested developer.
- b. Purchase price had been discussed between homeowner and developer; CNI will cover purchase price.
 - i. CNI often acquires properties in Corry and transfers to ECLB.
- c. If ECLB acquires property, we will evaluate if rehab is possible. Property will be listed and open for any applications as usual; will not be earmarked for this developer.
 - i. This would be a potential renovation rather than demolition.
 - ii. D. Mitchell commented that this city block faces potential decline; addressing the property will improve land values and help the local community.
 - iii. CNI will not require renovation of property if deemed unsuitable.
 - iv. B. McGrath inquired as to how we know the property is suitable for demolition. Developer has assessed property as suitable for renovation; K. Arnold can gain access if necessary, although “it’s a delicate situation.”
 - v. Addressing blight whether reno or demo.
 - vi. City of Corry was set to approve acquisition at 7/15 meeting; we have not been notified of results but do not expect any issues.



Motion to approve the acquisition of 7 Grove Street, Corry, moved by D. Mitchell and seconded by S. Weber:

- i. S. Weber: Yea
- ii. C. Rush: Yea
- iii. T. Bogdanets: Yea
- iv. J. Cardman: Yea
- v. D. Mitchell: Yea
- vi. B. McGrath: Yea

None opposed.

2. 516 South 2nd Avenue asbestos testing

Asbestos testing was discussed and awarded to Michael Baker International for no greater than \$1,500.00 during the Governance Committee Meeting on July 17, 2024. BluSky provided a phone quote of \$583.70 shortly after the meeting.

- a. Michael Baker International has not yet been notified of the award decision, so we will not be breaking any agreement.
- b. BluSky was not aware of other bid amounts or of the award decision. The ECLB office was previously unaware that BluSky does asbestos testing.



Motion to approve an amendment to the award for asbestos testing quotes from Michael Baker International in the amount of \$1,500.00 to BluSky in the amount of \$583.70 (phone quote), moved by J. Cardman and seconded by S. Weber:

- i. S. Weber: Yea
- ii. C. Rush: not present
- iii. T. Bogdanets: Yea
- iv. J. Cardman: Yea
- v. D. Mitchell: Yea
- vi. B. McGrath: Yea

None opposed.

S. Weber and J. Cardman questioned why the award was voted during Governance Committee meeting; should these be presented to the full board?

- a. B. McGrath responded that it is for timing; frees up time in Board Meetings.
- b. C. Mahany added that it allows for two opportunities per month to address approvals.

Should the Board set an approval limit and permit the office to handle items such as asbestos testing and cleanouts under that amount?

- a. Already approved for tree services.
- b. Is \$5,000.00 a reasonable limit?
 - i. For asbestos testing, yes; typically under \$2,000.00.
 - ii. For cleanouts, no; typically \$5,000.00 - \$10,000.00.

- c. A minimum of three quotes should be required.
 - i. Resources are limited for some services, and we may only get two quotes.
 - 1. Document all contractors the office contacts for quotes.
 - 2. “Not interested” is a valid reply.

- d. A. Snippet commented that a Board-adopted Procurement Standard is often required for grants.

Motion that services \$5,000.00 and under may be handled via quotes by the office without requiring Board approval and services \$5,000.01 and higher are to be presented to the Governance Committee. As always, a minimum of three quotes is to be required for each service. Moved by J. Cardman and seconded by S. Weber.

- 1. S. Weber: Yea
- 2. C. Rush: Yea
- 3. T. Bogdanets: Yea
- 4. J. Cardman: Yea
- 5. D. Mitchell: Yea
- 6. B. McGrath: Yea

None opposed.

- i. A Procurement Policy will be discussed and will include these requirements.

J. Hirneisen noted that the Bylaws will need to be updated regarding roll call voting; bylaws currently state that every motion requires a roll call vote.

- i. Concurrence that “current system is smooth”.

B. Program Updates

1. Exterior Clean Up Progress: Rapid Reset Program

Information is posted on our website:

<https://www.eriecountylandbank.org/programs/cleanup/>

Applications are being accepted through November 1st.

Please tell your municipalities about this program; they can submit suggested properties on the website.

2. Master Homeowner Program

Information is posted on our website:

<https://www.eriecountylandbank.org/programs/educational-programs/>

Registration is open.

<https://corryhied.coursestorm.com/searchResults?search=master+homeowner>

Points:

- a. Beginning Sept. 12, 2024 at Corry Higher-Ed.

- b. Open to anyone.
 - i. Limited seats available since it's hands-on.
- c. Classes run 1.5 to two hours.

This is a trial run.

- a. The Corry groups have been instrumental in helping us get up and running.
- b. Goal is to hold sessions throughout Erie County on a recurring basis.
 - i. West Virginia Habitat for Humanity runs sessions biannually. Also holds annual sessions for kids aged 10-16 years, as they're often home alone and need to know how to handle emergency issues.
- c. Once this session is finished, we will evaluate and make plans for future sessions.

CNI, Corry Higher Ed, and ECLB are promoting.

Unions are helping with displays.

Cost is to encourage attendance and will be applied toward expenses such as food and giveaways (tools, gift cards, et cetera).

- a. Also seeking grants and donations for giveaways; goal is to give attendees more than cost of attendance.

This program has been in development for three years; comment by C. Rush that "very progressive work has happened in the background" in order to bring the program to fruition.

- a. Comments that all communities will benefit, especially underserved communities; great if City of Erie benefits as well.

Suggestions:

- a. D. Mitchell suggested partnership with insurance companies for underwriting
- b. The Jefferson has networks within the community and advertising experience
- c. S. Weber commented that St. Martin's Center has previously done similar classes
- d. Insurance programs for people without insurance
 - i. Have had conversations with Rossbacher
 - ii. Looking into discount program with insurance companies if we offer certification
- e. Tom Ridge Center for environmental topics, e.g. storm water management and flood maintenance
- f. International Institute for individuals/families who have recently moved here
- g. Sisters of St. Joseph - Little Italy
- h. Our West Bayfront and East Bayfront
- i. Focus in on smaller community areas

B. McGrath inquired whether partnerships with CNI and Corry Higher Ed could continue if the program isn't in Corry?

- a. Possibly, we'd have to discuss and evaluate.
- b. Gearing toward community we're in for service providers, catering, insurance, and so forth.

V. Notices & Announcements

Reclaiming Vacant Properties Conference | October 9-11, 2024 | St. Louis, MO

1. <https://communityprogress.org/rvp24/>
2. Early Bird registration ends tomorrow
3. National conference; Board members have always been encouraged to attend
4. Board members please let C. Mahany know if they want to attend

Social Media links sent via email this morning.

1. A. Qayumov has been making great updates to our social media and stories
2. Meet Adam and Rooster! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_IdyfgbVTk

Website Updates

1. Several updates: Agenda, Calendar, Minutes, Act 152 Demo Dashboard, Programs, Master Homeowner Registration, Contact info and open hours, News and social media
2. Working with WerkBot on updates

If there's an update you're not seeing, let C. Mahany know

REALTOR RFP: ErieCountyLandBank.org/Contract-Opportunities

1. Sent out by Board of Realtors
2. Appraisal is a specific realty term, is like a market analysis
3. Quick deadline to encourage applications from interested parties who may wait until the last minute; can extend the deadline if needed.

VI. Executive Session

Personnel matters

Applications of candidates interviewed for Administrative Assistant and Intern positions reviewed.

VII. Adjournment

➤ Motion to Adjourn by J. Cardman, seconded by D. Mitchell.