



## ECLB Board Meeting

Tuesday, May 20, 2025 at 9:00 AM EDT to 10:30 AM EDT

Erie County Land Bank, 1230 Townhall Road West, Erie, PA 16509

### Meeting Details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8145808990?pwd=0alBjbraC45A4AxnLwDF9nyKVlxzki.1&omn=84197959503>

Phone: 1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 814 580 8990

Passcode: ECLB2025

## Minutes

### I. Call to Order & Attendance at 9:02 a.m.

*Board:* Brian McGrath, Jack Lee, James Cardman, David Mitchell, Suzanne Weber, Timofey Bogdanets, Sandy Morrow, Susannah Faulkner

*Additional:* Jennifer Hirneisen, Jeremy Bloeser, Rachel Jessup, Megan Richter, Rock Copeland, Aaron Snippert, Bryant Sapone

*Absent:* Christine Rush

### II. Previous Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve minutes from previous meeting, moved by J. Lee, seconded by S. Weber. All in favor; none opposed. J. Cardman not present for vote.

### III. 2024 Audit Presentation

Bryant Sapone, CPA and Partner, Buseck, Barger, Bleil & Co. did a quick review of the audit report. The opinion section starting on page 1 is similar to last year.

The report starting on page 4 has nothing to report, which is good.

On the balance sheet on page 9, total assets are down about \$200,000.00 likely due to property sales. Liabilities are up about \$70,000.00 due to the GASB 87 lease liability. There isn't a huge change in the net position, although the Restricted amount is significant this year.

CCLT funds on page 10 are a big change. There is a significant loss on the sale of inventory, but that's normal as it changes from year to year. Operating revenue is up about \$118,000.00. Expenses are up about \$800,000.00, with about \$700,000.00 of that being due to the CCLT funds passthrough, and Erie Land Bank and Millcreek Township General Authority project funding. The rest is mainly salaries, taxes, employee benefits, and office expenses. Our net position is down about \$250,000.00 which is expected.

On page 16, note 7 is in regards to the lease liability. Note 8 about the CCLT is included for clarity.

On the budgetary comparison on page 17, it shows we earned about \$316,000.00. A lot was driven by increased expenses and CCLT, which is to be expected.

There were no questions, though D. Mitchell noted that this information shows that we're very active and are executing projects.

- Motion to approve the 2024 Audit, moved by S. Faulkner, seconded by S. Morrow. All in favor; none opposed.

#### **IV. Financial Report**

As an experienced auditor, M. Richter offered a couple of comments on the audit:

It's been mentioned in the last two audits that we have a significant amount of money in one institution; the FDIC only insures to a certain amount, so we may wish to consider moving some money to another account/institution.

There are funds we won't need to touch for several months, so it could be worth considering a short-term CD or other similar account.

- After discussion about various options, D. Mitchell made a motion for J. Bloeser and M. Richter to investigate and come up with a proposal by the next Board meeting; seconded by S. Weber. All in favor; none opposed.

Discussion whether this sort of motion is necessary; S. Morrow is concerned that it hampers the Executive Director, and J. Bloeser agreed that he could investigate and create a proposal without a motion. D. Mitchell indicated that the intention is to show Board support for these actions in case questions arise.

The big loss on property sales is a result of our mission; we're supposed to have loss. Additionally, these sorts of evaluations are conservative, meaning the actual loss is not as great as the "paper loss".

As for the monthly report, the large expense in April database management is actually \$3,000.00 less than last year. Everything else is in line for the year to date.

##### **A. Demolition Fund**

Not reviewed but available online.

- Motion to approve the Financial Report, moved by S. Morrow, seconded by S. Faulkner. All in favor, none opposed.

#### **V. Hearing of the Public**

None.

#### **VI. Erie Land Bank**

The requests this month include movement toward demolition of some Judicial Tax Sale properties. Five properties are about to be added to the MLS for rehab. A. Snippet related that cleaning out properties increase likelihood of sale. While they've spent more than usual on cleanouts, they expect returns with the sale of these properties.

- Motion to approve disbursement to Erie Land Bank in the amount of \$86,921.85 (2023 WP \$1,462.27, 2024 WP \$30,377.77, and 2025 WP \$55,081.81.), moved by D. Mitchell, seconded by S. Morrow. All in favor, none opposed.

A. Snippet reminded the Board of the reception at Cameron Road tomorrow. ELB appreciates the support of the ECLB Board and all are welcome.

#### **VII. Solicitor Updates**

J. Hirneisen has been assisting J. Bloeser and R. Jessup as asked. Currently working on two deeds.

## VIII. Unfinished & New Business

### A. Board Elections

As previously discussed, the procedure for Board Elections is cumbersome. It was agreed that nominations would be made and voted on at this meeting.

It was suggested that a slate be created, but individual voting was decided.

- **Chair:** S. Weber nominated J. Lee; D. Mitchell seconded. No other nominations. All in favor of J. Lee as Chair; none opposed.
- **Vice Chair:** S. Weber nominated J. Cardman; S. Faulkner seconded. No other nominations. All in favor of J. Cardman as Vice Chair; none opposed.
- **Treasurer:** J. Cardman nominated S. Weber; T. Bogdanets seconded. No other nominations. All in favor of S. Weber as Treasurer; none opposed.
- **Secretary:** J. Cardman nominated B. McGrath; J. Lee seconded. No other nominations. All in favor of B. McGrath as Secretary; none opposed.

### B. Properties

#### 1. Dispositions

- **363 South Center Street, Corry sale to the Daleys**
- **402 West Pleasant Street, Corry sale to Troy Jaggi**

These sales previously approved by vote; sales have been completed.

- **19 West Park Place, Corry sale to Bracken Funeral Home:** Previously approved by vote.

Still outstanding taxes on property; need to exonerate before sale completed.

Going forward, J. Hirneisen and team to create exoneration requests and R. Jessup to follow up with county; will refer back to J. Hirneisen if needed.

Using a Developer's Agreement for this sale although the "development" is demolition handled by Buyer.

Reverter clause seems unnecessary in this situation.

S. Morrow questioned removing the reverter clause. J. Bloeser explained that the property needs about \$100,000.00 worth of work; we're not likely to reclaim it. J. Hirneisen also stated that we've never used the right of reverter; whenever we do will be a first time.

J. Cardman inquired whether we could require that the parcels be combined.

J. Hirneisen stated that this clause could be included if the Board wants.

Discussion that this would complicate 5/50 tax recapture calculations.

A. Snippert commented that ELB requires this for side lots, so they don't become ELB properties again.

Agreement that a policy needs to be determined going forward.

## **2. 121 East High Street, Union City**

J. Bloeser spoke with Billie-Jo Higby from MAK Homes; no application yet submitted, but they're interested in purchasing as a reno if we sell for about \$2,000.00-3,000.00 and remove some problem trees.

C. Wells approves the plan.

D. Mitchell stated that it's a good location and a good starter home for a small family.

No vote needed; just gauging interest as to whether the Board would be amenable to the low bid. Will have B. Higby submit an application.

## **3. Realtor Updates**

**503 Euclid St., Corry:** Sale to Habitat for Humanity: Habitat is requesting more time than usual for development.

Typically 60 days to start and 12 months to complete; we already offered them 12 months to start and 24 to complete. They're requesting 24 months to start and 36 to complete as it takes time to build volunteer pool and acquire funding. They may be able to move more quickly but want the cushion.

As there's no other interest in the property, and this could spur development in the area, the Board is would like to continue working with Habitat.



Motion to approve sale of 503 Euclid to Habitat for Humanity, moved by D. Mitchell, seconded by S. Faulkner. All in favor; none opposed. S. Weber abstained from vote; see Conflict of Interest Form attached to these minutes.

**21 Parade St., Union City:** Neighbor John Lowther owns several properties around this one, would like to acquire it for a garage. He had applied at least a year ago but the side lot offer was too low; he has increased his offer by \$1,000.00. Union City approves this plan as long as the build is completed within 12 months.

Has been settling on property where house was. Bidder requesting that the land bank fill the lot to level it.

Concern expressed regarding cost of fill and precedent set if fill is provided.



Motion to authorize the sale of 21 Parade Street to John Lowther without fill, moved by D. Mitchell, seconded by S. Faulkner. All in favor; none opposed. J. Cardman not present for vote.

**Alison Ave. Lot #13, Millcreek:** Sold last year as a Side Lot to the Chalupczynskis. Mrs.

Chalupczynski's parents would like to build a house on the land and are requesting that the sale restriction be lifted on the parcel so they can sell to the parents/in-laws.

Discussed at Governance Committee; questioned whether Millcreek will permit a new build. Governance Committee is fine with a new build if Millcreek is, but does not wish to lift the sale restriction. As former developer's initial plan was to run a street through, S. Weber questioned if this is a paper street; it's not, so is OK to sell/build/etc.

Chalupczynskis investigating permits.

#### **4. 18 Market Street, Union City (Union City Chair)**

J. Bloeser still working with Rick Scaletta. As discussed at Governance Committee, R. Scaletta is concerned about future use of building and wants in writing that the Redevelopment Authority will turn the property over to the Borough after work is complete. Still in discussions.

#### **5. 17 South Main Street, Union City**

J. Bloeser would like to seek quotes on repairs to the envelope of this property. Needs work on roof, rear wall, façade, and to address standing water in the basement.

This is the only property we currently have which can be improved. Could attract buyers if these issues are addressed.

D. Mitchell agrees that the envelope should be dealt with as the property needs to be marketable, and suggests there may be an ECCRA grant available.

#### **6. Demolitions**

- **26 1/2 Grant Street, Union City:** Empire has not yet been paid as they still haven't addressed the damage done to the property; requested partial payment. Debris scattered across ground, very uneven; can't be mowed. City was to be contacted about repairing curb and work to be done by end of next week; no repairs done as of last Wednesday and C. Wells has not been contacted.

As the company has consistently not followed through on promises (work was to be complete last November), J. Hirneisen is drafting a notice to terminate the contract.

- **22 Lincoln Street, Union City**
- **78 Miles Street, Union City**
- **9 Wattsburg Street, Union City**
- **712 West Church Street, Corry**

Recently-acquired properties; all need to be demo'ed.

Motion to put these four properties out for demolition bid, moved by D. Mitchell, seconded by S. Faulkner. All in favor; none opposed. J. Cardman and T. Bogdanets not present for vote.

#### **C. 5/50 Tax Recaptures**

All invoices have been paid; total \$9,828.16 for tax years 2022-2024.

#### **D. ICA's**

- **Wayne Township:** J. Bloeser attended their meeting. One Councilperson was in favor, two were not. No official vote taken. D. Mitchell noted that C. Hornick is in favor and to keep an eye on the election results.

D. Mitchell is planning to stop by Concord soon. Elgin will be more challenging.

- **Fort LeBoeuf School District:** Radio silence since questions were addressed. J. Bloeser planning to attend Board Meeting as a member of the public this summer.

## E. CCLT

J. Bloeser and J. Hirneisen have drafted agreements with Our West Bayfront and Sisters of Saint Joseph to renovate two homes each.

Per the grant, CCLT is committed to seven homes; we currently only have three, which is not good. 19 West Park Place was meant to be ECLB's contribution. ELB's Cameron Street property was initially intended to be ELB's contribution but is now being sold privately.

Grant is through March of 2026. We can request an extension but it might not be approved.

## F. Employee Handbook

Currently no handbook. J. Bloeser working with Mark Kuhar at MIJB for a draft to be presented to the Personnel Committee.

S. Weber suggested saving legal expense by Personnel Committee reviewing existing handbooks and drawing up our own based on those documents.

J. Bloeser responded that Legal will still have to review a self-written handbook. J. Hirneisen confirmed M. Kuhar's department would handle such a review.

M. Kuhar charging \$3,000.00, which is less than Manufacturer's and Business Association and similar consulting firm for handbook creation.

Discussion whether or not it would be greater protection against potential legal issues to have a handbook drawn up or reviewed by Legal.

D. Mitchell pointed out there are currently only two employees. J. Bloeser would like to have the handbook in place before our office expands.

➤ Motion to have M. Kuhar draw up Employee Handbook draft, moved by D. Mitchell, seconded by S. Faulkner. S. Weber opposed; all others in favor. J. Cardman not present for vote.

## G. 2025 Conferences

Board members can let Office know if they wish to attend any of these conferences:

- **Pennsylvania Association of Housing and Redevelopment Authorities 2025 Spring Conference & Showcase:** June 22-25, Gettysburg, PA
- **Rural Pennsylvania Housing Summit:** July 23, State College, PA
- **Deconstruction + Reuse Conference:** August 4-6, Saint Paul, MN
- **National Land Bank Network Summit:** Sept. 8-9, Detroit, MI
- Homes Within Reach Conference not yet announced.

## IX. Notices & Announcements

B. McGrath addressed the current situation with the Casino, which is concerned with revenue flow vs. tax burden and small games flourishing while not being comparably taxed. Conversation about the significant number of small games popping up throughout Erie County.

Harrisburg is reviewing the tax burden. Changes to legislation could impact ECLB.

S. Faulkner noted that legislation on the city level was promised in 2023, but still nothing.

S. Faulkner inquired whether it would be worthwhile for the ECLB Board/organization to draft a letter to our Representatives advocating taxation of small games. D. Mitchell also recommended including the Governor as a recipient.

Discussion whether to reach out to other organizations to join with us on a letter. Decision that collective advocacy may happen, but ECLB will draft our letter for now.

S. Faulkner commented that addressing the impact such legislation could have on the housing crisis and tax bases would be helpful to include.

J. Bloeser to draft the letter.

## **X. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn at 10:43 a.m., moved by B. McGrath, seconded by J. Lee.

**Next meetings: Governance Committee June 3rd; Board Meeting June 17th.**

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST  
ABSTENTION MEMORANDUM**

To: Board Secretary, Erie County Land Bank

From: Sue Weber, Board Member

Date: May 20, 2025

Pursuant to Pennsylvania's Public Official and Employee Ethics Law, I hereby declare that I am required to abstain regarding the following motion:

Any discussion and vote on extending the time allowed to commence and finish building on the lot at Euclid Avenue in Corry by Habitat for Humanity

My reason of abstaining is as follows:

I serve on the Habitat for Humanity site selection committee

Sue Weber 5-20-25