

ECLB Board Meeting



Erie County Land Bank
Tuesday, December 16, 2025 at 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. EST
1230 Townhall Road West, Erie, PA 16509

Minutes

I. Call to Order & Attendance at 9:00 a.m.

Board: Jack Lee, Suzanne Weber, Brian McGrath, Scott Harris, Susannah Faulkner, Sandy Morrow, David Mitchell

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

Absent: James Cardman, Timofey Bogdanets

II. Previous Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve minutes from previous meeting, moved by S. Weber, seconded by D. Mitchell; all in favor except B. McGrath abstained; none opposed.

III. Financial Report

M. Richter reviewed financial report. Interest has been accruing. Conference funds are being well spent. Audit is approaching. Lines for office supplies and property management reduced in 2026 budget due to less needed or spent.

Question re: line for Project Management in 2024; what was that spent on? Possibly intern; M. Richter to look into this.

Diversified investments are new this year. Restricted funds now delineated on report.

M. Richter planning to clean up lines for prepaid insurance, software, and rent.

- Motion to approve financial report, moved by B. McGrath, seconded by S. Morrow; all in favor, none opposed.

A. Demolition Fund

Deposit amount for November 2025 unavailable at time of document prep. Emailed to R. Jessup immediately before meeting; was \$13,623.00.

B. Update on CD's

CD's renewing soon. \$8,000.00 earned in interest; will just roll over unless we make changes.

Discussion regarding likelihood of interest rates to decrease, and whether to keep higher six-month enrollment rate or protect against lowering overall interest rates by enrolling for twelve months. J. Bloeser to discuss with bank.

- Motion for J. Bloeser to research and determine whether to roll CD's over into six or twelve months, and to proceed accordingly, moved by D. Mitchell, seconded by S. Morrow; all in favor, none opposed.

IV. Hearing of the Public

None.

V. Erie Land Bank

Slow month. Received a promising donation recently.

➤ Motion to approve disbursement to Erie Land Bank for WP25 in the amount of \$11,979.06, moved by S. Weber, seconded by S. Morrow; all in favor, none opposed.

VI. Solicitor Updates

Not much. Still waiting for Union City Chair building/18 Market Street mortgage to be released.

VII. Unfinished & New Business

A. Properties

2025 Judicial Tax Sale: 5 properties had been approved by Board at previous meeting for acquisition. One turned out to be occupied and taxes were paid, so will be using priority bid for four properties.

ELB using priority bid for nineteen properties. Short list this year, mostly mobile homes.

1. 2052 Water Street, Wesleyville update

Property has been on our watchlist for some time. J. Bloeser spoke with owner; had hoped to reno and acquired an interest-only loan which turned out to be predatory. Wants to donate but can't afford to ruin credit by walking away from loan, around \$29,000.00. Tried to sell to investors for reno but property is too deteriorated. Owner hasn't been inside home in months.

S. Morrow said Google Street View (from April 2024) looks much nicer than current condition of house or of the neighborhood, which has been deteriorating in large part due to the condition of this house, which is causing property values to decrease.

D. Mitchell floated idea of motioning to acquire, since we have the means; possibly even reno if foundation is good. Can J. Bloeser get into house to evaluate?

S. Weber wondered if ECLB acquisition and listing property on MLS would help with finding buyer to reno.

When asked, J. Bloeser said ECLB would put about \$35,000.00 at a minimum into acquisition. B. McGrath remarked that recouping funds through sale would be nice, but our mission is to improve the area.

J. Bloeser to get loan payoff details and look inside.

S. Weber and S. Harris would like to accompany J. Bloeser when viewing interior.

D. Mitchell noted that ECLB improving this house could inspire others on street to follow, as happened in Corry.

2. Realtor Listings

Two properties hadn't been voted on to be listed, and a couple of properties that were voted on hadn't yet been listed. J. Bloeser reached out about those.

➤ Motion to approve listing the following properties with Pat Groner, moved by S. Weber, seconded by B. McGrath; all in favor, none opposed:

- 48 Miles Street, Union City
- 146 Mott Street, Corry

B. McGrath inquired about Pennzoil Station on West 8th Street. Spoke with Matt Waldinger about property; no tax delinquencies.

Staff has sent letters out to all addresses found for owner; some returned by Post Office, no response to others. How do we speak with him to discuss selling?

Possibly look into conservatorship?

Parcel could provide more parking for Pittsburgh Inn – new owner, so this would be good timing.

Underground fuel tanks are long gone; Millcreek worked with DEP on funding to remove tanks.

J. Bloeser noted that many properties municipalities express a need for help with are former service stations and mobile homes.

J. Hirneisen indicated that MIJB has teams who work on these kind of projects; could schedule time to explore and discuss options, as well as challenges.

Discussion about possibility of charitable tax write-off as incentive for owner to donate property. Owner would need to have an appraisal done; Land Bank isn't allowed to value property, and would have to be a total donation – no money exchanged.

J. Lee suggested looking into whether Millcreek Supervisors can help.

B. 2026 Meeting Schedule

No holidays off coincide with dates on the schedule, although St. Patrick's Day is a meeting date.

D. Mitchell reiterated previous request for meetings to be held in partnering locations over the summer; agreement that this is a good idea, though nothing definite scheduled at this time.

D. Mitchell also expressed interest in holding a brainstorming/idea sharing session with Staff at some point.

➤ Motion to approve the 2026 Meeting Calendar, moved by D. Mitchell, seconded by B. McGrath; all in favor, none opposed.

C. Employee Handbook final draft

Edits from Personnel Committee were passed to Mark Kuhar; draft in meeting documents is final version. Clarified business hours, vacation structure, and sick time.

B. McGrath expressed concern over clause in "Searches and Inspection" section on page 15, which was shared by other Board members upon discussion. Questioning whether Land Bank personnel should be conducting searches of persons or property. Clause was written by attorneys, not by Land Bank.

General agreement that such searches should be handled by authorities rather than Land Bank personnel and that wording in Handbook should reflect that.

Wording under "Gifts" and "Social Media" sections questioned but determined to be acceptable.

Discussion that “Bereavement” section should include one day off for grandparents and in-laws, with “in-laws” to be more specifically defined while working with attorneys on this update.

Approval of the Employee Handbook tabled until changes are discussed with M. Kuhar.

D. Additional Employee Benefits

Price sheet recommended for approval by Personnel Committee after reviewing several plans.

Medical flex account reflects Land Bank fees. This price remains the same even if we add a couple of employees. Can revisit this benefit in future to assess employee use.

Short-term disability cost will increase if employees added.

Typo on life insurance: up to \$200,000.00.

EAP provides up to six therapy sessions per issue per year.

Question whether short-term disability is redundant with sick time. Doctor’s excuse required for short-term disability; doesn’t kick in immediately, so used after or along with sick time.

Question regarding what percentage of ECLB annual budget is spent on admin. M. Richter responded that due to the small staff size and most financial admin under her responsibilities, most payroll is for programming; almost nothing goes to admin.

➤ Motion to approve Personnel Committee recommendations as presented, moved by S. Morrow, seconded by S. Weber; all in favor, none opposed.

J. Bloeser to work on getting these benefits implemented as soon as possible.

J. Lee is very pleased with how 2025 has gone with the Land Bank. He and other Board members expressed gratitude toward the Staff for their work this year. D. Mitchell commented that the organization is maturing.

E. Board Member Orientation

Following conversation at previous Board meeting regarding need for an orientation, R. Jessup created a PowerPoint presentation. J. Bloeser to either set up a time for S. Harris and any other interested Board members, or orientation may be added to January Board agenda if agenda is light.

VIII. Executive Session

Jeremy Bloeser annual review.

J. Bloeser provided assessment tool from S. Faulkner, as well as list of completed accomplishments and procedural improvements in 2025, and list of goals for 2026.

➤ Motion to accept J. Bloeser’s goals as presented, moved by S. Weber, seconded by B. McGrath; all in favor, none opposed.

➤ Motion to grant J. Bloeser a 4% salary increase, and beginning in 2026 to grant one additional day of vacation per year through year five, at which point additional vacation days to be reassessed; moved by S. Weber, seconded by S. Morrow; all in favor, none opposed.

S. Harris expressed appreciation for his one-on-one session with J. Bloeser and felt it to be valuable and helpful.

IX. Notices & Announcements

A. Conferences

1. Homes Within Reach Recap

More sessions geared toward land banking this year than in prior years. J. Bloeser, D. Mitchell, and R. Jessup “divided and conquered” to attend as many sessions and gather as much info as possible.

D. Mitchell appreciated the opportunity to attend, and suggested that ECLB and ELB possibly present in 2026.

2. Reclaiming Vacant Properties

September 22-25, 2026, Pittsburgh, PA

<https://communityprogress.org/rvp26/>

Pre-early bird registration has ended. Early bird registration opens Apr. 6th.

Currently registered: Jeremy, Rachel, Susannah

B. Board Elections

Reminder that Governance Committee elections will be held next meeting.

X. Adjournment at 10:37 a.m.

➤ Motion to adjourn, moved by D. Mitchell, seconded by B. McGrath.

Next meeting: Governance Committee Jan. 6; Board Meeting Jan. 20