



ECLB Board Meeting

Erie County Land Bank

Tuesday, April 15, 2025 at 9:00 AM EDT to Tuesday, April 15, 2025 at 10:30 AM EDT
1230 Townhall Road West, Erie, PA 16509

Meeting Details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8145808990?pwd=0alBjbraC45A4AxnLwDF9nyKVlxzki.1&omn=87215404653>

Phone: 1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 814 580 8990

Passcode: ECLB2025

Minutes

I. Call to Order & Attendance at 9:03 a.m.

Board: Brian McGrath, Christine Rush, Jack Lee, David Mitchell, Suzanne Weber, Tim Bogdanets, Sandy Morrow, Susannah Faulkner

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

Absent: James Cardman

II. Previous Meeting Minutes

S. Weber requested that she be removed from the attendance list in the previous meeting minutes, as she was only present for the last few minutes.

- Motion to approve minutes from previous meeting with requested change, moved by D. Mitchell, seconded by J. Lee. All in favor; none opposed.

III. Financial Report

M. Richter reviewed financial reports. Restricted funds and specific ELB Work Plans have been delineated in the reports. 5/50 tax recapture invoicing and payments are very clear and can be searched by property or billed entity.

Payroll has been transferred from Paychex to M. Richter's office as of last pay as approved.

A. Demolition Fund

\$10,858.50 deposited for March 2025

Dashboard available at

<https://eriecopa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/3977a1a65b4d4e9b83eb45ac86cc3954> or
go to ErieCountyLandBank.org > Programs > Act 152 Demo Fund

ELB and ECLB have pending demolitions.

- Motion to approve Financial Report, moved by J. Lee, seconded by S. Morrow. All in favor; none opposed.

IV. Hearing of the Public

None.

V. Erie Land Bank

No disbursement requests this month; will be added to next month. Currently working on Judicial Sale properties.

VI. Solicitor Updates

Deferred until Bylaw discussion.

VII. Unfinished & New Business

A. Board Elections

Per Bylaws, elections supposed to occur in January, but have been occurring in May after the audit for some time; possibly the first election happened in May.

At the Governance Committee meeting, it was discussed to eliminate the Nominating Committee and simplify the process.

Elections will be held next month, then annually in January beginning 2026.

B. Bylaw Voting

Deferred to end of meeting.

C. CCLT Updates

PFHA grant has been pulled back from CCLT. J. Bloeser and J. Hirneisen working on developer agreements with organizations; 75% of funds to be provided up front, remaining 25% when ready to be sold to family.

Not fully funding projects but providing a large portion of the funding.

CCLT isn't progressing as quickly as hoped. Not in violation of PFHA as long as we sell to a low-income family, regardless of CCLT.

Seven houses to be developed. Four currently in progress with Our West Bayfront and Sisters of St. Joseph. A participating group will likely have to take on the one house ECLB was to develop since we no longer have a property. ELB no longer has original property but has other options.

Fetterman funding no longer coming in. Discussions with local organizations in search of further funding; Erie Community Foundation suggested a grant to apply for. Going back to local funders, but needs staff to pursue grants and funding.

Staffing being discussed; in need of an Executive Director. Could be housed in offices of a participating organization; ECLB a good candidate and other organizations are also interested. J. Bloeser will bring forward when idea is more developed.

CCLT has a board consisting of individuals from ECLB, ELB, OWB, SSJ, Erie's Black Wall Street, Impact Corry, Housing Authority, Corry RDA.

Corry RDA is working on three new builds; would they qualify as CCLT properties? – Krista Arnold is on CCLT board, so possibly.

D. Mitchell expressed interest in housing CCLT staff at ECLB, as we're financially well-situated. Is concerned about getting involved in low-incoming housing due to potential inability of homeowners to maintain buildings. Recommended setting aside money as an emergency fund.

J. Bloeser said houses are starting out in excellent condition, and a small fee (similar to a PMI) is included in monthly payments due from homeowners, which goes into a pool available for emergencies.

S. Faulkner agreed ECLB could absorb the CCLT administrative individual. We serve at a county level, and CLT's are very aligned with our mission. Could we auto-enroll the homebuyers in the next round of Master Homeowner?

D. Mitchell noted that working on the county level rather than a municipal level could also help with seeking funding.

C. Rush felt that the Land Bank Board should spend less time on this discussion, as the homebuyers will be vetted ahead of time. Is offended by the "them" and "those people" nature of low-income homebuyers conversations. Disrepair isn't always due to income and can happen to anyone. Felt that education can be offered but shouldn't be required.

J. Bloeser suggested that classes could be recommended.

S. Faulkner suggested subsidizing classes to the homebuyers; no cost to them. Requested that CCLT discuss the Master Homeowner classes at the next meeting.

D. Property Updates

1. 18 Market St. (Union City Chair)

Subdivision completed and recorded. Donation agreement sent to church. Once donation is finished, we'll notify Erie County RDA and move forward with steps to transfer to them.

2. 9 Wattsburg St., Union City updates

Previous occupant has still been entering and using property. J. Bloeser has posted signs and added our locks. Working with previous occupant on clearing out remaining belongings. This will be a demo.

3. 19 W. Park Place, Corry - Bracken Funeral Home

Governance Committee recommended accepting Bracken Funeral Home application.

Bracken offering \$10,000.00, estimating \$14,000.00 in demolition costs. Sale is not conditional on demolition.

We can remove DAWGS at closing and save about \$400.00 per month.

D. Mitchell noted that this sales makes sense with the neighborhood and flow of traffic.

Motion to accept Bracken Funeral Home application, moved by D. Mitchell, seconded by S. Weber. All in favor; none opposed.

4. D. Mitchell inquired about 516 S. 2nd St. (controlled burn) demo.

Contract through April 30th. Permits have been obtained. J. Bloeser to check in next week.

E. Demolition Bids

- 26 Franklin St., Corry
- 34 W. Bond St., Corry

Erie Insurance recommended E. E. Jones to BEST, who recommended them to ECLB. A. Snippert said that ELB has worked with them and was pleased.

- Motion to award both demo contracts to lowest bidder, E. E. Jones Contracting Co., moved by D. Mitchell, seconded by S. Faulkner. All in favor; none opposed.

F. Realtor Listing Updates

Pat Groner given nine properties to list, five in Corry and four in Union City (in progress).

Offers need to include our paperwork for Municipality and Board approval.

P. Groner concerned that three Corry properties have deficiencies and are unlikely to sell as buildable lots. Corry does not want these sold as side lots. Some other vacant lots in the area have been listed for 1-3 years without selling, but ours are priced lower. LERTA is advertised in the MLS listings.

If not going to sell at our prices, aren't going to sell for builds. We don't want to hold onto lots forever.

J. Hirneisen suggested listing for one year on MLS, then looking at as possible side lots.

D. Mitchell suggested reaching out to area businesses who need workforce; they could recruit and look at these lots for builds.

J. Bloeser noted that we're more concerned with having properties built on than with the sale prices.

Rupert Drive: Ensure listing includes info that buyer will have cost of public sewer right-of-way.

- Motion to list 7228 Rupert Drive, Fairview, with Pat Groner, moved by S. Morrow, seconded by S. Faulkner.

G. Millcreek SWAT Training at 34 W. Bond St., Corry

This Thursday, April 17, SWAT will be doing training at 34 West Bond.

H. ICA Updates

- **Fort LeBoeuf School District** – Working toward agreement. List of questions and concerns sent over from School District was addressed. J. Bloeser has been told that partnering is in discussions; however, it wasn't on the latest meeting agenda. Working on reaching out to Superintendent and School Board members.
- **Wayne Township** – J. Bloeser attending next meeting. Also speaking with Venango Township.

I. 5/50 Tax Recapture Updates

Received payments from:

- Millcreek Township

- Millcreek Township School District
- Union City Borough

Only waiting on Erie County now.

J. Bloeser reached out to Paul Lichtenwalter and Terry Scutella at R. Copeland's advice; working on it.

J. Master Homeowner Program

J. Bloeser remarked that varying opinions of the program were expressed during one-on-one sessions with Board members; discussed at Governance Committee meeting. Interest in hosting has been expressed by members of the community, such as an area at Gannon University with interested contractors.

Governance Committee wants us to find partnerships. J. Bloeser scheduling large meeting with groups who might be interested.

D. Mitchell attended several classes and said the project was "fabulous" but recommends keeping it out of downtown Erie due to ease of access for individuals from the county.

J. Bloeser said we do work closely with ELB so could partner to have it in the City if wanted.

Recommendations for locations/partnerships included Erie County Technical School, Erie County Community College, Builders' Association, BIU.

K. Rapid Reset Program

Currently vetting five or six applications. As discussed in the Governance Committee meeting, J. Bloeser is on the board for Groundwork Erie, who employs youth for summer landscaping projects. Could do a lot of the work and then hire a landscaper for heavier work, such as stump removal.

J. Bloeser reviewed a few applicant properties with Groundwork Erie Executive Director Erin Carey last week. 22 Cherry Street, Union City, seems perfect.

B. McGrath noted that this is a good, low-cost way to battle blight.

S. Morrow questioned whether the Board was approving projects or a budget, which echoed J. Bloeser's query to the Governance Committee; most of these projects are under the bidding threshold.

B. McGrath replied that Staff can handle most projects and just bring big-ticket items to the Board.

S. Faulkner commented that SSJ has had a great experience working with Groundwork Erie.

D. Mitchell pointed out that some landscaping might make our vacant lots more attractive to buyers.

S. Weber shared her thoughts on our current lots for sale; most left something to be desired, but Euclid St. has left the best impression on her.

L. Audit

Current audit is underway with Buseck, Barger, Bleil & Co., Inc.; they're currently busy with tax season and will complete our audit afterward.

Bids received from McGill, Power, Bell & Associates and Maher Dussel. Maher Dussel about \$1,000.00 less than McGill, Power, Bell & Associates.

Governance Committee recommends signing with Maher Dussel.



Motion to sign with Maher Dussel, moved by J. Lee, seconded by S. Morrow. All in favor; none opposed.

M. Statements of Financial Interest

-- DUE MAY 1st. --

Can be filed online (please provide a hard copy to the ECLB office)

<https://www.pa.gov/services/ethic/file-a-statement-of-financial-interests.html> or with the attached form.

Three still outstanding; have been emailed individually. Staff will reach out again.

N. Board Technology & OnBoard Training

Training is possible through OnBoard.

As discussed at the Governance Committee meeting, OnBoard came up in one-on-one conversations with J. Bloeser and Board members. Staff find the program very useful.

Devices used by Board members to access OnBoard are diverse in operating system and age; technology could be a barrier to use. Some organizations provide tech for board members. We've looked at light laptops or tablets. Is the Board interested?

General concurrence that it's not worth the expense, though a couple of Board members would be interested. Many Board members just use the meeting materials R. Jessup emails out prior to meetings.

VIII. Bylaws

J. Hirneisen distributed a sheet (attached) summarizing the edits incorporated into the most current copy of the Bylaws.

Section 208:

Question raised whether the Board has the ability to remove a member; Land Bank Act permits this. Question raised whether it would be better for Board to vote to recommend to the appointing authority that a Board member be removed.

R. Copeland doesn't believe that County Council or the County Executive have the ability to remove appointments. Appointees remaining in their roles provide continuity during changes in Administration. Recommended clear definitions of causes for removal.

Decided that language should be added that the issue will be communicated to the Board member and to the appointing authority prior to a vote for removal.

Section 210:

Mentions of Appointing Entity to be removed based on changes to Section 208.

Discussion regarding conflict of interest to be added to actions which could cause removal from the Board. Decided that b. iii. to have point 4 added: "any violation of Section 207".

Section 408 (c):

Based on decision regarding Board elections earlier in this meeting, the Nominating Committee was removed from the list of standing committees.

Section 411 (a):

Discussion that abstaining from voting means little if a Board member with a conflict of interest has participated in the conversation before voting. Decided to alter the second sentence to read, "Prior to the discussion and vote being taken..."

A template was requested for written disclosure of conflicts of interest.

- Motion to approve this edited version of the Bylaws with the discussed amendments, moved by S. Weber, seconded by S. Faulkner. All in favor; none opposed.

IX. Notices & Announcements

S. Faulkner announced new position as Executive Director of Erie Arts & Culture. Congratulations were extended all around.

S. Weber inquired about the possibility of ECLB becoming involved in demolition of 1850 West Gore Road, Millcreek. Would make an ideal Habitat for Humanity lot, and she would like to see ECLB help facilitate. Unlikely the owner can sell for much due to liens; Habitat unlikely to buy directly because of those liens.

Demolition by Millcreek Township to occur within next couple of days; too late.

Could be a good opportunity to establish relationship with Code Enforcement so we could possibly be involved in future projects.

X. Adjournment at 11:21 a.m.

- Motion to adjourn, moved by D. Mitchell, seconded by S. Faulkner.

Next meetings: Governance Committee May 6th; Board Meeting May 20th.