

GROW Licking County Community Improvement Corporation

Regular Board Meeting Minutes - 12:00 PM 5/12/2025

Monroe Twp. Fire Station

186 E. Coshocton Street, Johnstown, Ohio 43031

Minutes recorded by Amy Dell, Board Secretary

1. Call to Order and Roll Call - Chair Robertson

Call to order and roll call by Board Chair Robertson at 12:03 PM, 5/12/2025

Board members:

Board Chair: Joseph Roberston - P

Board Vice Chair: Corey Alton - P

Board Treasurer: Erin Grigsby - E

Board Secretary: Amy Dell - P

Dr. John Berry - P

Jennifer McDonald - P

Robert O'Neill - P

Mike Compton - E

Jennifer Ellis-Brunn - P

Brandon Hess - E

Jim Roberts - E

Mark Mauter - P

Tim Bubb - P

Mark Johns - P

Robert Montagnese - P

Staff:

Executive Director - Alexis Fitzsimmons - P

Marketing and Communications Manager - Reaghan Willison - P

Economic Development Manager - Gabriel Kelvin - P

Jennifer McDonald moved to excuse the absent members, and was seconded by Vice Chair Alton. The absent board members were excused unanimously.

2. Welcome - Chair Robertson, Monroe Township Trustee

Chair Robertson welcomed the board to the Monroe Township Fire Station.

3. Introduction of Guests - Chair Robertson

Board Chair Robertson welcomed the following members of the public to the meeting:

- **Ashley Campbell** - Licking Regional Water
- **Kent Mallett** - Newark Advocate
- **Scott Ryan** - Ohio Department of Development

4. Approval of Minutes - Chair Robertson

Tim Bub moved to approve the minutes of the 3/10/2025 regular board meeting, Robert Montagnese seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

5. Chair Report - Chair Robertson

Chair Robertson expressed his enthusiasm for meeting in Monroe Township and gave a brief history of the space the meeting was conducted in.

6. Committee Reports

6.1 - Finance & Fundraising Comm. - Executive Director Fitzsimmons

Executive Director Fitzsimmons provided the committee update in place of Treasurer Grigsby, providing financials to the board for the months of January, February, March, and April 2025. She expressed that total equity is at \$490,000 and liabilities at \$12,000, with total liabilities and equity totaling \$503,000, above where the organization was previously. She explained there were no outstanding invoices more than 30 days old, and \$168,000 year to date expenditures which was in line with prior years. She noted budgeting for an overage this year, attributed to marketing. Rob O'Neill moved to approve the financial reports as presented, Cory Alton seconded. The financial reports were approved unanimously.

Executive Director Fitzsimmons further shared the Opus Group joined recently as a new investor, and updated the board that the Auditor of State's Office recently revised its position to a management letter re. GROW's most recent audit.

6.2 - Marketing Committee - Jennifer McDonald

Committee Chair McDonald stated the first standalone Marketing Committee meeting was held in April with several new members, primarily marketing professionals from the area to develop marketing goals and review the draft website.. The next meeting is slated for June 18.

6.3 - Licking County Works Committee - Jennifer Ellis-Brunn

Committee Chair Ellis-Brunn stated the first standalone LC Works Committee Meeting was held in April, with representatives from various educational and workforce related organizations, including LC Transit. She further updated that the subcommittee, Licking County Childcare Taskforce, convened on April 24, with attendance from Kathleen Young-Riley from the Governor's Office, and was a meeting with "much enthusiasm in the room."

Both groups will meet again in June (dates tbd). She finally shared that a meeting with Robert O'Neill and Brittany Misner to discuss childcare with Hebron has been scheduled, and that she and Gabriel Kelvin had toured the Buckeye Valley Family YMCA for childcare best practices.

6.4 - Infrastructure Committee - Executive Director Fitzsimmons

Executive Director Fitzsimmons shared the committee report for Jim Roberts. She shared the most recent Infrastructure Committee meeting had discussed topics such as the Water Improvement District, and GROW has recently provided letters of support for several projects in the region. The next meeting is slated for June 17.

7. Staff Reports

7.1 - Executive Director Report - Alexis Fitzsimmons

Executive Director Fitzsimmons gave an informative ED101 session on GROW's workforce development efforts, stating that its work is not done in a vacuum but in close partnership with regional partners.

She further updated about attending the Site Selector's Guild, where infrastructure and workforce were brought up as major concerns in relocation.

She finally updated that the TIRC meeting was conducted and went well, with only five outstanding reports.

7.2 - Marketing and Communications Manager - Reaghan Willison

Marketing and Communications Manager Willison expressed LinkedIn continues to be the Corporation's best performing platform, and our Google and Meta ads continue to perform above average, with 30,000 impressions and a 0.6% click through rate.

She additionally shared the Infrastructure Luncheon is sold out and that the website was in its second round of edits. Finally, she shared there will be an opportunity to get new headshots for interested board members at a future meeting.

7.3 - Economic Development Manager - Gabriel Kelvin

Economic Development Manager Kelvin shared that he helped Jennifer Ellis-Brunn convene the LC Works Committee and Childcare Taskforce, and continues to gather data re. the Skills Gap Analysis. He further shared some insights from a pilot study done in partnership with the Foundation and OMJ as part of 2025 Career Xpress, and additionally that he is launching, in

partnership with the ESC and OMJ, Licking County Leads the Way, a soft skills initiative for secondary education in the region.

Kelvin summarized that BRE invitation acceptance rate has been lower than anticipated since January 2025.

Kelvin also stated that a MORPC summer intern, Travis Allen, would be starting this month, focused on Housing/Economic Development.

8. Comments From the Public - Chair Robertson

Scott Ryan from the Ohio Department of Development shared several legislative updates in the state; Mark Johns spoke on behalf of Kent Mallet's work over the past 16 years (Mallet is retiring and this was his final GROW meeting); Tim Bubb thanked Jennifer Ellis-Brunn for her team's work on the passing of the Children's Services levy, and shared other county updates and the Erie Canal Bicentennial on June 28; and Amy Dell announced \$1.7 million in Licking County Foundation scholarship offers with a Career and Technical Education Scholarship opportunity coming soon.

9. Items of Action - Chair Robertson

Revisions were needed to the Corporation's financial policies (page five) to be in alignment with state policy, requiring the simple alteration of "no excessive purchases of alcohol" to "no purchases of alcohol" and moving it into the "prohibited expenses" section. Tim Bubb moved to approve the changes, Chair Robertson seconded. The changes were approved unanimously.

10. Executive Session - Chair Robertson

Under ORC 121.22 under Section G-(1), Tim Bubb made a motion to enter Executive Session to review the appointment, employment, dismissal, discipline, promotion, demotion or compensation of a public employee or official, or the investigation of charges or complaints against a public employee, official, licensee, or regulated individual associated with GROW Licking County. Robert O'Neill seconded. Unanimously approved to enter Executive Session at 1:17 PM.

11. Adjournment - Chair Robertson

At 2:05 PM, Mark Johns made a motion to exit Executive Session and adjourn, and Tim Bubb seconded. Unanimously approved. Chair Robertson adjourned the meeting at 2:06 PM as there was no additional business.

The next regularly scheduled Board Meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 14, 2025, at Licking Memorial Hospital.