

GROW Licking County Community Improvement Corporation

Regular Board Meeting Minutes - 12:00 PM 3/10/2025

City of Heath Municipal Offices

1287 Hebron Road, Heath, OH 43056

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, 3/10/2025

Board members:

Board Chair: Joseph Roberston - P

Board Vice Chair: Corey Alton - P

Board Treasurer: Erin Grigsby - P

Board Secretary: Amy Dell - P

Dr. John Berry - E

Jennifer McDonald - P

Robert O'Neill - P

Mike Compton - P

Jennifer Ellis-Brunn - P

Brandon Hess - P

Jim Roberts - P

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

Chair Robertston moved to excuse the absent member, and was seconded by Vice Chair Alton. The absent board member was excused unanimously.

2. Welcome - Mark Johns, Mayor of Heath

Mayor Johns welcomed the Board to the City of Heath and informed them of the renovations to the municipal offices. He reaffirmed Heath as the “city of progress, citizens of pride” and is excited for the growth in the region. Chair Robertson extended his thanks to Mayor Johns for hosting the meeting.

3. Introduction of Guests - Chair Robertson

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

- **Rep. Thad Claggett** - Ohio State Assembly
- **David Edelblute** - Licking County
- **Atrina Good** - Licking County Chamber of Commerce
- **Brittany Misner** - Village of Hebron
- **Scott Ryan** - Ohio Department of Development
- **Sen. Tim Schaffer** - Ohio State Senate

4. Approval of Minutes - Chair Robertson

Mark Mauter moved to approve the minutes of the 1/13/2025 regular board meeting, Robert Montagnese seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

5. Chair Report - Chair Robertson

Chair Robertson expressed his enthusiasm for the organization and the growth in the region, covering remarks given in his Chair letter for Grow's 2024 Annual Report.

6. Committee Reports

6.1 - Finance & Fundraising Comm. - Treasurer Grigsby & Robert O'Neill

Committee Co-Chair O'Neill expressed his interest in the model of fundraising used by Union County and the City of Marysville, centering fundraising on attraction and development. He expressed his intent to meet with Executive Director Fitzsimmons to examine possibilities for replication within GROW. Executive Director Fitzsimmons informed the Board on the drafting of a one-pager for investors and the creation of tiers for investors (which will also be visible on the GROW website). Jennifer McDonald expressed her support of replicating Marysville's economic development investor programming.

Executive Director Fitzsimmons provided an update of financial position for the Board. Total liabilities and equity were at \$610,000 as of 2/28/25, with cash on hand at \$403,397.31. Total liabilities were at \$45,667. She noted that the financial documents were received the morning of the meeting. The January and February 2025 financial reports will be approved at the next Board meeting to allow time for review.

Executive Director Fitzsimmons noted that there was a small reporting discrepancy due to a spreadsheet error on the budget leading to a \$300 correction. Robert O'Neill motioned to re-approve the budget with the stated correction, Treasurer Grigsby seconded. The revised budget was approved unanimously.

Executive Director Fitzsimmons provided updates on investors since the last meeting. Intel donated \$10,000 and American Structurepoint donated \$1,000. Power Connect increased their yearly donation from \$1,000 to \$2,000.

Committee Co-Chair and Board Treasurer Grigsby noted that the Ohio State Auditor's Office flagged an expenditure in fiscal years 22-23 and 23-24 related to a health insurance stipend for employees. This is an amount equal to \$6,200 across two employees, one former and one current. Despite being referred to as a stipend in the employee offer letter, with the unused portion being paid out as taxable income at the end of the fiscal year, the State Auditor's Office flagged the payout as having inadequate approval documentation.

Treasurer Grigsby educated the board that the State Audit process is different from an independent audit process, that the situation is ongoing, and legal council is advising GROW staff and the Executive Committee about options.

Executive Director Fitzsimmons noted that GROW would immediately be clarifying how the health benefit stipend is paid and worded in the employee handbook.

6.2 - Marketing and LC Works Committee - Jennifer McDonald

Committee Chair McDonald expressed that this committee had its final combined meeting on 2/18/25, at which it previewed the final career pathways video for Business Services. The Committee has reviewed print ads and is in the process of updating the GROW website to include data visualization plug-ins to show economic indicators for the county. She also presented the draft of the 2024 annual report. Chair McDonald further noted the launch of a Childcare Taskforce to advance the results of last year's Childcare Study, set to meet on Thursday, 4/24/2025 at 1:00 PM at Ohio Means Jobs.

She noted that the Marketing and Licking County Works Committees will resume separate meetings as of April 2025, and the meeting cadence for each is currently being considered. She remarked the Marketing Committee is growing in scope and membership, and Jennifer Ellis-Brunn will be leading the Licking County Works Committee.

Jennifer Ellis-Brunn noted that she is convening Central Ohio Technical College and C-TEC to convene on 3/26 for Licking County Works to discuss the scope and vision of the Committee. The first meeting of the stand-alone committee will be held on Thursday, 4/17/2025 at 2:00 PM at the GROW Office.

6.3 - Infrastructure Committee - Jim Roberts

Committee Chair Jim Roberts expressed the committee has met twice since the most recent general board meeting. The 1/21 meeting held the Transport Improvement District and Licking

County Area Transit Study, and 2/14 had updates from the municipal utility coalition. He further provided updates on the Infrastructure Luncheon, scheduled for Tuesday 6/3.

7. Staff Reports

7.1 - Executive Director Report - Alexis Fitzsimmons

Executive Director Fitzsimmons continued her Economic Development 101 educational program, informing the board about the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) programming at GROW. Its primary focus is to engage and dialogue with businesses to connect to resources and address issues to help foster business expansion. Partners include JobsOhio, One Columbus and OMJ. The outreach list is put together by prioritization input from communities partners, with a goal of 24 companies met with per year.

Executive Director Fitzsimmons provided a list of outreach events conducted by GROW year to date, and further noted staff would be presenting at OMJ's Career XPress event that week, speaking to high school juniors from the county to inform them of job opportunities in the county.

Executive Director Fitzsimmons further updated about the news of the delay on the timeline of the Intel project, with the completion date moved back to 2030. She noted that Intel's Public Affairs Team commented this timeline could possibly speed up if a customer for the building was located. She further provided context that the project has already spent \$8 billion in construction and has 2000 workers on-site daily, and the delays allow for infrastructure building and planning.

Executive Director Fitzsimmons provided an update on the Anduril Arsenal 1 project, located in Pickaway County, an inside the fence operation for drone manufacturing. She noted it will provide 4000 jobs at completion, the largest single project in Ohio's history for job creation, and will be ramping up quickly, with 1000 new jobs in the first 12 months and partially within our labor shed. She reiterated that this continues to underscore the need for proactive housing discussions.

Executive Director Fitzsimmons commented briefly on tariffs announced by the US President's Office, 25% for goods from Canada and Mexico, 10% extra for goods from China (20% total) and 25% for steel and aluminium. She noted these will have an effect on the supply chain, and is a topic in BRE engagement.

Executive Director Fitzsimmons finally noted that the Infrastructure Luncheon keynote speaker, PJM Senior Vice President Asim Haque, will speak on power transmission infrastructure and will likely be a strong draw to the event.

7.2 - Marketing and Communications Manager - Reagan Willison

Marketing and Communications Manager Willison expressed LinkedIn continues being the Corporation's best performing platform, and there was 110% percent increase to website traffic (likely due to an ad in Trade and Industry. Further, there was a 56% jump in traffic to the LC Works website (likely due to the new video). The Trade and Industry ad had 101,000 impressions, with an average on the platform of 30,000, putting the Corporation's impression rate well above average. She also noted the click through was above average.

Marketing and Communications Manager Willison further showed the Board the new website front page and a preview of the Localintel data visualization dashboards, showing indicators for quality of life, logistics advantages, market assets and workforce advantages and talent pipeline.

7.3 - Economic Development Manager - Gabriel Kelvin

Due to time constraints, Chair Robertson chose to forgo Economic Development Manager Kelvin's staff update.

8. Comments From the Public - Chair Robertson

No comments

9. Items of Action - Chair Robertson

The singular agenda item (*2025 Budget Update*) was addressed during the Finance & Fundraising Committee Report (see section 6.1).

10. Executive Session - Chair Robertson

Under ORC 121.22 under Section G-(1), Chair Robertson 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. Brandon Hess seconded. Unanimously approved to enter Executive Session.

11. Adjournment - Chair Robertson

At 1:31 PM, Mark Johns made a motion to exit Executive Session and adjourn, and Tim Bubb seconded. Unanimously approved. Chair Robertson adjourned the meeting at 1:31 PM as there was no additional business.

The next regularly scheduled Board Meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 12, 2025, at the Monroe Township Administration Building.