

Here are the notes for **Ontario CIC 10.20.25**.

Present: Adam Gongwer, Amy Hiner, Beth Delaney, Josh Bradley, Kris Knapp, Jennifer Meisse, Nick Turnbaugh, Paul Boggs

Jessica Gribben

Andy Medwid

Absent: Rick Pauley, Casey Bly

Action Items

Jessica Obtain additional insurance quotes for the CIC

Get insurance quotes from Rube Foster and Aaron Burger (in addition to the existing quote from Rinehart Walter Bander Thompson) for board member coverage and property coverage, and bring to the board for comparison.

Paul Boggs Report back on wayfinding sign design finalization

Provide an update at the next meeting on the finalized design for the wayfinding signs, including work with Adena's design team and coordination with the brick department.

Andy Medwid File 501(c)(3) application with the IRS

Submit the Form 1023-EZ online to the IRS in mid-November (approximately 30-45 days after receiving the EIN) to obtain tax-exempt status for the CIC.

Jessica Distribute board term information to the group

Send out the list showing which board members have one-year, two-year, and three-year terms to all CIC members.

Jessica Distribute Vibrant Communities Grant information

Compile information from the OEDA conference about the Vibrant Communities Grant, including details about the planning piece (\$20,000 matching grant) and the subsequent grant piece, and distribute to the CIC group.

All: Review board member applications and prepare for November vote

Review the three board member applications that were submitted by the October 16th deadline and prepare pros and cons or discussion points for the November 17th meeting vote.

Overview

- City Council approved a \$25,000 economic development grant for the CIC, now deposited in the bank account
- CIC completed new EIN filing and plans to file for 501(c)3 status in mid-November after the 30-45 day IRS filtering period
- Board approved mission statement: **"The Ontario Community Improvement Corporation exists to create a vibrant, inclusive community where people and businesses flourish. Through revitalization, investment and partnerships, we enhance quality of life, celebrate our local identity and create lasting connections among residents, businesses and visitors."**
- Board received 3 applications for the private citizen vacancy and will vote at the November 17th meeting, with the new member starting in January
- Wayfinding sign committee is finalizing designs with Adena's design team and brick department
- Board needs to obtain multiple insurance quotes and will bring recommendations to next meeting

Minutes approval

- Board approved minutes from last month with no corrections

Wayfinding sign committee update

- Committee met with Destination Mansfield to discuss Richland County branding
- Paul confirmed Adena has tubing available for metal signs

- Adena's design team and brick department are open to working on the project once final design is ready
- Committee will report progress at next meeting

Budget request to city council

- Officers and Jessica met with Mayor Knapp to request funding through economic development budget
- Requested money for signage, insurance, accounting, auditing, and email address (@ontarioohio.org)
- Mayor Knapp will present request to city council budget committee
- Josh confirmed council already approved having CIC funding in next year's temporary budget
- Council wants to continue supporting CIC until it becomes self-sustaining and can fund itself
- Funding will help retain Jessica and provide access to the team

Grant opportunities

- Jessica attended OEDA conference discussed Vibrant Communities Grant with planning funding of \$20,000 matching grant for preliminary planning, architectural drawings, and renderings
- Board explored ODNR grants for bike paths and walking paths, noting Richland County has received few awards historically
- Shelby received \$350,000 from capital budget for downtown plaza through DNR
- Ontario Local Schools is applying for a grant offering \$1 million annually for 5 years to create walking paths connecting neighborhoods
- Nick, Josh, and Beth will meet with Mr. Strickler this week to coordinate efforts and avoid duplication
- Capital budget requests happen every 2 years, with capital requests possibly every 4 years
- Ontario hasn't requested funding from capital budget process, representing an opportunity

- Board needs to consider hiring a grant writer, though Ontario schools' Mr. Ream may be willing to assist

New EIN filing and 501(c)3 status

- Andy completed new EIN filing in the last 2 weeks instead of amending old paperwork to avoid confusion when setting up bank account
- Board sent required filings to Attorney General last week with no response yet (good sign)
- Board has 27 months from October 1st to file 501(c)3 application while maintaining tax-exempt status retroactively
- If filed within 27 months, donations are tax-deductible from the date given; if outside this window, must wait for IRS approval letter
- Must wait 30-45 days from EIN date before filing Form 1023-EZ online due to IRS system delays
- Andy collected all director addresses for IRS form and plans to file in mid-November
- Some IRS departments are currently shut down pending Congressional action, which may delay processing

Bank account setup

- Account established at Park National Bank with Beth, Nick, and Paul as signers
- Requires 2 signers for any transactions
- City Council's \$25,000 economic development grant is deposited and available

Insurance and accounting quotes

- City's insurance company provided initial quote through Rinehart Walter
- Board decided to obtain multiple quotes before making decision
- Port Authority previously obtained insurance through the county, but city confirmed CIC needs separate policy
- Insurance must cover board member liability and any property the CIC owns
- Board will collect quotes from Rube Foster and Aaron Berger

- Jessica will compile additional suggestions from board members
- Quotes will be presented at November meeting for decision

Board member vacancy applications

- Board received 3 applications by the October 16th deadline
- Application deadline was October 16th (not extended for additional applicants)
- Kris will abstain from voting as he is one of the applicants
- Board will vote at November 17th meeting
- New member will start first meeting in January
- Members will review applications and prepare pros/cons lists before next meeting
- Beth and Amy's terms expire in 2026 but can serve additional terms
- Members can serve up to 9 years (three 3-year terms)

Mission statement development

- Board reviewed and refined mission statement options, preferring shorter version
- Adam suggested changing "communities" to "community" since Ontario is one community
- Board changed "connects" to "create" for better grammar
- Final approved statement: "The Ontario Community Improvement Corporation exists to create a vibrant, inclusive community where people and businesses flourish. Through revitalization, investment and partnerships, we enhance quality of life, celebrate our local identity and create lasting connections among residents, businesses and visitors."
- Jennifer emphasized importance of maintaining Ontario's distinct identity rather than being absorbed into Richland County or Mansfield branding

City-owned properties for development

- Craig asked about 70 city-owned properties mentioned at caucuses and council meetings

- Adam clarified 60 properties have city buildings, water plants, or parks that won't be sold
- Approximately 10 properties are available (excluding small right-of-way strips in West Springfield)
- City could donate available properties to CIC to bring in investment
- Craig suggested developing property across from the void, noting opportunity was missed to use dirt from GM site (100-200-300 loads) to level the area
- Some dirt was used around a house before process stopped, area is now grown up and green
- Additional dirt is available behind the tank

Board motioned to enter executive session to discuss property acquisition/disposition for public purposes. ORC 121.22