

**Jefferson County Local Development Corporation
Board Meeting Minutes
April 3, 2025**

The Jefferson County Local Development Corporation held its board meeting on Thursday, April 3, 2025 in the board room at 800 Starbuck Avenue, Watertown, NY.

Present: Robert E. Aliasso, Jr., W. Edward Walldroff, David Converse, Paul Warneck, John Condino, William Johnson, Rob Aiken, Dr. Gregory A. Gardner, Lisa L'Huillier
Zoom: Dawn Robinson

Excused: Charles Capone

Absent: None

Also Present: Ryan Piche (Jefferson County Administrator), Mitch McCormick (Cornell Cooperative Extension)
Zoom: Stephen Maier, Esq. (Harris Beach)

Staff Present: Marshall Weir, Jay Matteson, Lyle Eaton, Peggy Sampson, Robin Stephenson

- I. Call to Order:** Chairman Aliasso called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. Privilege of the Floor:** No one spoke.
- IV. Minutes:** Minutes of the meeting held on March 6, 2025 were presented. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Mr. Converse, seconded by Mr. Condino. Minutes of the special meeting held on March 20, 2025 were presented. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Mr. Condino, seconded by Mr. Converse. All in favor. Carried.
- V. Treasurer's Report:** Mr. Warneck reviewed the financials for the period ending March 31, 2025. He said everything looks in line with expectations and the major changes to the balance sheet are due to the grants. Mr. Converse asked if the budget should be amended to include a line item for Strategic Development Specialists, LLC for consulting. Mr. Eaton said that we can explain the variance therefore he doesn't see any need to amend the budget. Mr. Walldroff said the money came from the County and wondered if it has to track back to the federal funds through the County. Mr. Piche said no.

Mr. Warneck said at the last meeting the auditors suggested that another person review and approve the journal entries. Mr. Weir said that he is doing that monthly and the audit/finance committee will review them quarterly.

A motion was made by Mr. Warneck to accept the financial report as presented, seconded by Mr. Converse. All in favor. Carried.
- VI. Committee Reports:** None.

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VII. Council Reports:

- a. **Ag** – Mr. Matteson provided the brochure that will be used at the Ag Development Conference tomorrow at JCC. The speakers for the conference will be Daniel Munch, an International Economist, Daniel Freund from the Manufacturers Association of Central NY, and Mike Spaulding from Nationwide Insurance. He said they will be talking about the future of insurance, the workforce, what is happening in the economy, and where it is going. He is expecting around 70 people.

Mr. Matteson mentioned that he will be one of several speakers at the upcoming Chamber Economic Forum on April 10th. He will talk about the growth in dairy and the opportunities.

- b. **Manufacturing** – Ms. Stephenson said they have a great agenda planned for the upcoming manufacturers' roundtable on April 17th that will include several local officials. She said they will hear directly from the manufacturers about what problems they are seeing in the areas of government, workforce, and regulations. Mr. Walldroff asked how many people usually attend this session. Ms. Stephenson said there are around 30 to 40 manufacturers.
- c. **Marketing** – Mr. Weir said officials from Strategic Development Specialists, LLC that are working on the MICRON program will attend our next board meeting to provide an update on the consulting services. He said that we will be having a VIP join us in a couple of weeks to tour our main development site at the Business Complex at the airport as well as give them the opportunity to talk with some of our local leaders.

VIII. Unfinished Business:

1. **ABO Board Training** – Chairman Aliasso said that Ms. Sampson sent out training reminders a while ago and thanked those who have completed it and reminded those who need it to sign up for it. Mr. Weir said that he plans to take it and will send out the information if board members want to join him.
2. **ARPA Fund Reports (Round One and Two)** – Updated spreadsheets showing the grant fund activities were provided in the board packet. Ms. Stephenson said it has been slowly progressing with a few new requests today.

IX. Counsel: None.

X. New Business:

1. **Fixed Asset Policy Amendment** – Chairman Aliasso said this was a recommendation from the recent audit. Staff recommended changing the value to capitalize fixed asset purchases from \$1,000 to \$5,000. A motion was made by Ms. L'Huillier to approve the recommendation, seconded by Mr. Warneck. All in favor. Carried.

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- 2. Resolution No. 04.03.2025.01 for Approval of Application to North Country Regional Economic Development Council for Shared Use Food Processing Facility Feasibility Study** – Mr. Matteson introduced Mitch McCormick from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County (CCE). He said that Mitch approached us about working together to apply for a \$28,980 grant from the North Country Regional Economic Development Council to fund a feasibility study for a 20C shared use kitchen facility to be located at 925 W. Main Street in Watertown. JCLDC will be the applicant and will serve as the funding conduit if the application is successful and CCE will administer the project.

Mr. McCormick said that he appreciates the collaboration since CCE did not qualify as an applicant. He said the grant will allow us to move forward with planning, architecture review and the feasibility study for the facility.

Mr. Matteson said that an MOU will be put in place between JCLDC and CCE if the grant is approved.

Chairman Aliasso read the resolution. A motion was made by Mr. Warneck to approve the resolution, seconded by Dr. Gardner. Discussion ensued. Chairman Aliasso asked if funds would be spent before the grant is approved. Mr. Matteson said it is a reimbursable grant but noted that the grant would have to be approved first.

Dr. Gardner said that in all the research that he has seen and a lot of it that he has participated in they always identify an economic opportunity as the production of local branded food products and the export of those to other markets. He said one of the things that gets in the way of that is a facility like this that can support more than what we have. He thinks this is a highly leveraged investment.

Mr. Walldroff asked if the grant is just for the study. Mr. Matteson said yes. Mr. Walldroff said the challenge will be finding some funding sources to build it. Mr. McCormick said there are a few potential funding sources that may be available this fall for infrastructure.

All in favor, except for Mr. Converse who abstained because he could be involved in the study. Carried.

Mr. McCormick left the meeting at 8:23 a.m.

3. ARPA Small Business Incumbent Worker Training Grant Recommendation –

MetalCraft Marine USA, Inc. \$20,000

Mr. Weir said that we previously had a \$2,000 training grant in place, but they did not use it. He said that he recommended disregarding the previous award and move forward with a new award that encompasses the things they are looking to do. He noted that they will be growing in our community by moving to a larger facility. Ms. Stephenson said they are bringing in at least 20 more welders to the new facility who will need training to be certified. Recommendation to approve a \$20,000 grant to MetalCraft Marine USA, Inc. for worker training. A motion was made by Mr. Warneck to approve the recommendation, seconded by Mr. Condino. All in favor. Carried.

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4. ARPA Small Business Productivity Improvement Grant Recommendation –

Frontline NA, Inc.	\$9,861
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Mr. Weir said the company is located in Dexter, NY, and is a trade show booth manufacturer which resulted from our Canadian outreach program. He said we helped with business assistance when they moved here in 2019. Recommendation to approve a \$9,861 grant to Frontline NA, Inc. to increase their warehouse efficiencies and tidiness. A motion was made by Mr. Condino to approve the recommendation, seconded by Ms. Robinson. All in favor. Carried.

5. ARPA Jefferson County Local Food Resiliency Grant Recommendation –

Windswept Honey and Apiary	\$10,000
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Recommendation to approve a \$10,000 grant to Windswept Honey and Apiary to expand their processing capacity. A motion was made by Mr. Warneck to approve the recommendation, seconded by Mr. Walldroff. All in favor. Carried.

XI. Adjournment: With no further business before the board, a motion to adjourn was made by Ms. L'Huillier, seconded by Mr. Converse. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Sampson

JEFFERSON COUNTY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Resolution Number 04.03.2025.01

For Approval of Application to North Country Regional Economic Development Council for Shared Use Food Processing Facility Feasibility Study

WHEREAS, Jefferson County's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) identifies developing and marketing local value – added food products as a high priority, and identifies entrepreneurship as one of the top three development strategies for growing the local economy; and

WHEREAS, The Jefferson County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan recognizes the opportunity to grow food processing capacity and the economic impact of local food production and agritourism; and

WHEREAS, Jefferson County Local Development Corporation recognizes the need in Jefferson County to determine the feasibility of a facility available to the public to increase process local foods and value added goods; and

WHEREAS, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County and Jefferson County Local Development Corporation recognize the need to enter into partnership to examine the need and feasibility of such a shared use kitchen, to now be it

RESOLVED, that this Corporation apply to the North Country Regional Economic Development Council for an amount not to exceed \$28,980, and that these funds be used to conduct an architectural review, preliminary feasibility study, hazardous materials survey, budget estimate, and preparation of preliminary facility business plans, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors approves this application and directs the Chief Executive Officer or designee take all necessary action on behalf of the Corporation as deemed necessary to pursue funding.

This resolution shall take effect immediately.



F. Marshall Weir
Chief Executive Officer