

**Jefferson County Local Development Corporation  
Board Meeting Minutes  
June 5, 2025**

The Jefferson County Local Development Corporation held its board meeting on Thursday, June 5, 2025, in the board room at 800 Starbuck Avenue, Watertown, NY.

**Present:** Robert E. Aliasso, Jr., W. Edward Walldroff, Paul Warneck, William Johnson, Dr. Gregory A. Gardner, Lisa L'Huillier, Charles Capone, John Condino, David Converse

**Excused:** Rob Aiken, Dr. Dawn M. Robinson

**Absent:** None

**Also Present:** Justin Miller, 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 May 1, 2025 were presented. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Ms. L'Huillier, seconded by Mr. Converse. All in favor. Carried.
- V. Treasurer's Report:** Mr. Warneck reviewed the financials for the period ending May 31, 2025. He noted the change in the office rent because the renovation loan was paid off. A motion was made by Mr. Warneck to accept the financial report as presented, seconded by Mr. Johnson. All in favor. Carried.
- VI. Committee Reports:**
  - a. Loan Review Committee**
    - i. Proposed Lending/Collection Policy and Procedures** – Mr. Converse said the committee reviewed and recommended the proposed policy. Chairman Aliasso said there is a whole new section to analyze the risk which came as a recommendation from the auditors. Mr. Eaton said it will be our procedure to assess bad debt. He said that it is subjective, but it helps us identify our best guess as to what we think the bad debt will be.

Mr. Converse pointed out that the environmental section was changed to reflect that we 'may' require an assessment. He said there is not a lot of reason to spend an extra \$3,000 - \$5,000 to do an environmental site assessment for smaller loans.

Mr. Weir said the collection section was amended so that guarantor(s) will also be sent any delinquency correspondence as recommended by Mr. Capone. Mr. Capone said the guarantor should have the same notice as the borrower because they are a secondary source of repayment.

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**Proposed Lending/Collection Policy and Procedures – continued**

A motion was made by Mr. Warneck to approve the policy as presented, seconded by Mr. Converse. All in favor. Carried.

- ii. **Internal Loan Review Risk Rating as of 12/31/24** – The rating was included in the packet for review. A motion was made by Dr. Gardner to approve the rating, seconded by Mr. Converse. All in favor.

Mr. Eaton said he doesn't think we need to adjust the budget for this year. He said we will apply the methodology for next year's budget.

**VII. Council Reports:**

- a. **Ag** – Mr. Matteson updated the board on the following items:
- **Chobani** – Mr. Matteson said the expansion decision for their yogurt production has been made and may create an opportunity for the dairy industry in the north country. He said he will be working on how to develop and prepare the ag workforce by putting together a small taskforce to look at what tools are out there that we are not utilizing.
  - **Met with Brittany Davis from Naturally Lewis** – Mr. Matteson said that they talked about the effort to involve Lewis County regarding the ag workforce. He said that he will be speaking at their economic development conference next week about the opportunities for growth.
  - **New York Farm Viability Institute** – Mr. Matteson said that he was asked to review 20+ grant applications. He said it was interesting because it was a lot of what we already accomplished through our food resiliency grant program.
  - **Food Resiliency Grants** – Mr. Matteson will be reaching out to the grant recipients to check on their progress.
  - **Prospects** – Mr. Matteson said he continues to work on the projects and indicated that there has been good progress made behind the scenes.
  - **Rotary presentations** - Mr. Matteson said Dr. Richard Stup from Cornell University made a presentation at Rotary yesterday to provide factual information on foreign workers. He said next week Alex Walsh, the Executive Director of the Northeast Dairy Processors Association, will talk about the boom in dairy processing across the state.

Mr. Converse said with the expansion it looks like there is going to be more need for dairy and asked if anyone is talking about the loss of farmland to solar projects and its impact. Mr. Matteson said it is a constant concern and indicated that the best way to prevent that from happening is to create an environment where it pays to keep your land in agricultural production. He said he is still concerned about losing land to solar in Jefferson County and indicated that developers are not picking marginal land yet; they are picking prime land.

Mr. Matteson said that he was listening to one of the local talkshows the other day and he heard that the Chinese are buying up land around the perimeter around Fort Drum. He said that he reviewed Jefferson County map viewer and didn't see anything, so he called the radio show host off the air to provide a little education and because he is not seeing anything that concerned him.

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**Ag report – contined**

He noted that we have rolled a lot of the farmland along the western parimeter into the army compatible use buffer program which means the development rights to that land have been extinguished forever.

Mr. Warneck mentioned the proposed legislation relating to not having more than 700 animals on a farm. Mr. Matteson said the organizations that do lobbying for agricutlutre in the state asked him to respond strongly to it. Mr. Matteson said that he doesn't believe there is traction on the bill and indicated that Governor Hochul has responded that she is not going to support it.

- b. Manufacturing** – Mr. Weir mentioned how the tariff situation was a real scary time for a number of businesses. He said people were upset and rightfully so. He said that he worked with some local representatives on the federal level and indicated that they were helpful as much as they could be. He said that with the tariffs he received inquiries about the Foreign Trade Zones as well (two local manufacturers are looking at those).

Mr. Weir said he wanted to touch base on tourism and traffic going over the 1000 Islands Bridge because it is not good, and he is concerned. He said like the tariffs, it is a complex issue and solving it is going to be difficult in the short term. He does feel that in the long term we will get the business back.

- c. Marketing** – Mr. Weir reported on the following items:

- **Micron outreach** – Mr. Weir said he attended a meeting a few weeks ago with the trades people which included Greg Lancet. He said everyone is looking forward to the fishing trip and thanked RBC Wealth Management because they will be the exclusive sponsor for the shore dinner for that trip.
- **20 under 40** – Mr. Weir said that he and Joy Nuffer nominated Kylee McGrath, CEO of WLDC and she was selected as one of the recipients.

Mr. Walldroff mentioned that Canadians are focused on buying Canadian right now. He said it is shocking to Clayton and Alexandria Bay businesses and noted the terrible weather and believes they will start to come back when the weather improves. Mr. Weir said it seems like the Canadian folks are a lot more reactive and seem more united than we are.

Mr. Matteson said Midway International Logistics told him that the poultry industry has bottomed out in Canada at the moment. He said that he hasn't been able to research it. Dr. Gardner said that he has been listening to the radio stations along the river and he gets the impression that a number of Canadian businesses see this as an opportunity, and they seem to be positioning themselves to have the relationships with canadian firms. Mr. Converse said we will weather it after surviving three years of COVID related issues. Chairman Aliasso feels it will self correct.

**VIII. Unfinished Business:**

- 1. ARPA Fund Reports (Round One and Two)** – Updated spreadsheets showing the grant fund activities were provided in the board packet. Ms. Stephenson said the month of May was quiet for the ARPA grants. She noted that she was busy working on the JCIDA Business Complex grant reimbursements.

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**IX. Counsel:** None.

**X. New Business:**

**1. Form 990 (2024)** – A motion was made by Mr. Warneck to approve the form as presented, seconded by Mr. Converse. All in favor. Carried.

**XI. Adjournment:** With no further business before the board, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Converse, seconded by Mr. Warneck. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Peggy Sampson*