

**Jefferson County Local Development Corporation  
Board Meeting Minutes  
May 7, 2026**

The Jefferson County Local Development Corporation held its board meeting on Thursday, May 7, 2026, in the board room at 800 Starbuck Avenue, Watertown, NY.

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

**Excused:** None

**Absent:** Rob Aiken

**Also Present:** Mark Wladis and Leann West (Strategic Development Specialists), Craig Fox (Watertown Daily Times), Mark Mason Jr. (7 News)  
Zoom: Justin Miller, Esq. (Harris Beach)

**Staff Present:** Marshall Weir, Jay Matteson, Dorena Kimball, Peggy Sampson

- 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 April 2, 2026 were presented. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Dr. Robinson. All in favor. Carried.
- V. Treasurer’s Report:** Mr. Warneck reviewed the Dashboard prepared by Ms. Kimball for the period ending April 30, 2026. The Dashboard includes Key Performance Indicators, Capital Resources, Operating Statement and Budget. 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.
- VII. Council Reports:**
  - a. Ag** – Mr. Matteson indicated that he sent out his report before the board meeting. There were no questions for Mr. Matteson.
  - b. Manufacturing** – Mr. Weir spoke about a new opportunity in Jefferson County that is on Fort Drum. He said he attended industry day recently and learned there is an RFP out for mining companies for a vein of graphite that was found on Fort Drum property. He said he had an opportunity to spend time with the new Garrison Commander Adler; they toured the site and it is approximately a \$200M graphite processing facility that could go there and will be fenced off from the rest of the base.
  - c. Marketing** – Mr. Weir ceded his time for the Strategic Development update.

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**Board Resignation (Dr. Gregory A. Gardner)** – Chairman Aliasso acknowledged and recognized Dr. Gardner for all of his years of service to the economic development agencies. His resignation is effective as of 5/31/26. Dr. Gardner said he is still deeply committed to the mission and is grateful to have been part of economic development through this organization and indicated that it was great to work with board members and staff on and off for the past 25 years.

**Staff Change** – Mr. Weir reported that Robin Stephenson has left the corporation. He said that we are so thankful for all of the work that she did for us the past three years.

**VIII. Unfinished Business:**

**1. Strategic Development Specialists, LLC Update –**

**Micron**

Mark Wladis provided an update to the board of directors. He said that he, along with Mr. Weir, Mr. Johnson and Ryan Piche, have a meeting scheduled for Monday in Syracuse with the head of building trades. He said that they have been engaged with the building trades on behalf of Jefferson County; they will have boots on the ground, they are talking to Micron, there is going to be 4,500-5,000 construction workers for the project. He said they know what we are looking for – to locate a supplier in Jefferson County and also housing. He said the second meeting is with Ryan McMahon, Onondaga County Executive.

Mr. Wladis said that he has had preliminary conversations with Empire State Development representatives to inform them of what Jefferson County is doing and to collaborate.

Mr. Wladis said there is not enough land in Onondaga County, so they really want to bring suppliers up to Jefferson County. They will share site information with them as provided by Mr. Weir.

Mr. Wladis said they are talking directly to Micron, so they are aware of what Jefferson County has to offer. He suggested that Mr. Weir and others attend any upcoming site selector conferences which would raise the profile of Jefferson County. Mr. Weir agreed that we are going to do that. Mr. Wladis said we have made a tremendous amount of ground in the last twelve months.

Mr. Wladis pointed out that Jefferson County has great natural resources (fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, skiing, etc.). He said those are a real draw for companies.

Mr. Walldroff asked Mr. Wladis if he is seeing major developers in the housing sector showing up working on plans. Mr. Wladis said there are plans for new apartments and indicated that Onondaga County has grant programs to help them. Mr. Warneck asked if IDA's are getting involved with the apartments. Mr. Wladis said they were, but his IDA just changed so he does not know the direction they will take. Mr. Warneck said the board will be talking about housing soon because we have a preliminary application. Mr. Wladis said he would like to be a part of the discussion. He said most IDA's avoid housing. Mr. Weir said housing comes up often in the NYSEDC meetings and they are pushing IDA's to do housing.

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He said the number of housing PILOTs is steadily increasing but they have to be a commercial enterprise and are not meant to be built and then sold.

Mr. Matteson said we prepared a report for the board several months ago on IDA's and housing and can share it again for review and discussion.

Mr. Wladis said another way they have helped the County is by writing grants. He said they wrote the grant and Jefferson Community College was awarded \$750,000.

**Nuclear**

Leann West said the NYS Power Authority put out a request for information several months ago statewide asking communities and counties to submit information about potential interest in hosting nuclear facilities in the future. She said it is a preliminary/generic first step in the process and she believes there was significant interest statewide. She said they received an email from the Power Authority last week asking Jefferson County to set up a meeting to talk about potential sites and interests.

Mark Mason Jr. (7 News) joined the meeting at 8:27 a.m.

Mr. Wladis suggested that working with Assemblyman Scott Gray will be helpful for the nuclear interest.

Mr. Wladis and Ms. West left the meeting at 8:29 a.m.

2. **ARPA Food Resiliency Grant Contract Amendment for North Branch Farms** – Mr. Matteson said North Branch Farms was previously approved for a Food Resiliency grant to construct a loading dock which would enhance their ability to move their value-added product to market. He said a variety of things happened that prevented them from doing the project. Jay Canzonier requested a modification to purchase a strawberry harvest aid to help grow his strawberry operation. The total cost of the unit delivered is \$6,045, the grant award recommendation is \$5,440.50 (90%), and the project needs to be completed by the end of this year. Mr. Matteson said he recommends it for approval and noted that we will issue a new contract. A motion was made by Mr. Warneck to approve the amendment, seconded by Mr. Walldroff. All in favor. Carried.
3. **ARPA Fund Reports (Round One and Two)** – Chairman Aliasso reviewed the updated spreadsheets showing the grant fund activities that were provided in the board packet.

**IX. Counsel:** None.

**X. New Business:** None.

**XI. Adjournment:** With no further business before the board, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Walldroff, seconded by Mr. Warneck. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Peggy Sampson*