



Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority

Minutes of the Board of Directors' Meeting

March 10, 2016

CALL TO ORDER

The Board of Directors' Meeting of the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority was held on March 10, 2016 at Sarah Reed Children's Center; 2445 West 34th Street; Erie, PA. Legal Notice of the meeting was given through an advertisement appearing in the Erie Times-News. The meeting was called to order by the Vice-chair.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Bagnoni (arrives later), Mr. Barney, Mr. Paris, Mr. Peters (arrives later), Mr. Sample (via phone), and Mr. Yapple (via phone). Mr. Wood, Mr. Lee, and Mr. Wachter are also present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Barney makes a motion to accept the agenda. Mr. Sample seconds. Motion carries 4-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Barney makes a motion to approve the minutes of the February 2016 board meeting. Mr. Sample seconds. Motion carries 4-0.

COMMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN

No comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comment.

PRESENTATIONS

Mary Bula, Erie Together. I'm the facilitator for Erie Together. I'm going to give you a very quick presentation about Erie Together this morning. I have ten minutes with you. So I'm going to scratch the surface on the kinds of things we are doing, and I think we'll have a couple minutes afterwards for questions.

What I'd like to accomplish with you today, is I'd like you to walk away with an understanding of what Erie Together is and how it works. And I'd like you to have an appreciation of the strength of the power of the collaborative foundation through Erie Together

and continues to grow through that movement. I'll give you some examples of the kind of work that we're doing, but, again, I'm just scratching the surface. If you'd like more information, I would always welcome the opportunity to talk with you more. And I would also always be willing to come back and present to the group.

Let me talk to you a little bit about our mission. As I was preparing for this meeting I was struck by looking at your website and your mission, and how closely aligned your mission is to ours. When you think about your mission, which is, "Elevating Erie County by galvanizing nonprofits and small business toward community and economic development", that is so much in line with what we're doing. Our aspiration statement is, "Working together to make the Erie region a community of opportunity where everyone can learn, work, and thrive". Those four key words are extremely important, "everyone", "learn", "work", and "thrive".

We have hundreds of individuals and organizations and schools and businesses and a faith-based community and interested citizens working together very differently than they ever have in the past to make sure that we are doing the kinds of things to make this a community where everyone can learn, work, and thrive. This is a collective impact movement. I don't know if you know what a collective impact movement is, but this picture really depicts that beautifully.

If you think about that bulls-eye target as the kinds of things that we need to do to make a place where everyone can learn, work, and thrive, and then you look at all of the boxes above and below, when you consider those as organizations and school districts and individuals and businesses who are doing very good work but are often doing things in their own silos. What Erie Together does, is it aligns all those efforts and resources and the expertise to hit the targets that our community has said are important to make this a place where everyone can learn, work, and thrive.

This work is very strategic. It's not simply a planning group. It does do strategic planning, but it acts on those plans, and it implements those plans, so that we can make real change in this community.

This is the way that Erie Together is structured. We have three founding partners, including Mercyhurst, GECAC, and United Way of Erie County. We've been up and running for about seven years now. There is a steward team that consists of 25 people. They represent governments, nonprofits, education, businesses, and the faith-based community. That steward team provides advice and strategic direction to the movement. We have four county-wide action teams related to those learn, work, and thrive areas. Those action teams consist of people from all different personal and professional backgrounds. And they are all taking time away from their work life and their personal life to work on these bigger community objectives.

Within those county-wide action teams we have 15 different smaller task teams that are actually carrying the water and doing the work. We have a very lean staff. We have three people – one person employed by United Way, one by Mercyhurst, and one by GECAC.

When I talked about the bulls-eye and told you that we needed to think about that as the kinds of objectives that our community is trying to hit, these are the very over-arching objectives. In the "learn" area, we want more kids to become successful adults. With respect to "work", we want more Erie residents to have family-sustaining employment. And with respect to "thrive", we want more Erie County families to meet their basic needs. So, all of the work that we do relates to one of those three big bucket areas.

I told you this work is strategic. This is an example of one page of one of the strategic plans from one of the four county-wide action teams. You can see it has objectives, strategies, action steps, a timeline, what our outputs are, what our expected outcomes are, and how we intend to measure the impact of the work we are doing. Very strategic.

So let me talk to you just a little bit about each of those three buckets, just highlighting a couple of things that we've done in this arena, simply to show you the power and the strength in this kind of collaborative foundation that is what Erie Together uses to advance this work.

The “learn” effort can be broken out into two subsets – one is early childhood readiness and success, and we have a county-wide action team in place to address that; the second is aligning K-12 education to careers to make sure kids are best prepared for life after high school.

In the early childhood readiness and success piece, we have a challenge in this community, and that’s that right now 51% of Erie County kids aren’t ready for kindergarten when they get there. That’s a problem. Kids who start behind when they start school will most likely stay behind the whole way through. Through the Erie Together network, we have developed this whole suite of offerings, for lack of a better term, by bringing together early childhood educators with school district professionals with businesses to think about what are the kinds of things we can do to effectively address that challenge (that 51% of kids aren’t ready for kindergarten when they get there).

So we started with the development of a definition of what it means to be kindergarten-ready. That definition didn’t exist. So they developed that definition. That definition was ultimately endorsed by every Erie County school district, and that was the first time that those school districts had unanimously ever agreed on anything. That was really important, because not only did they produce a really tremendous product, but it gave them a history of working together that hadn’t happened in the past. Now, if you talk with the school districts and people at all different levels within the school districts, they’ll tell you that through Erie Together they’ve increased collaboration, information sharing, and have been able to do things together that they couldn’t do alone.

They then created a kindergarten-readiness checklist so families would understand what skills their children need, and then we moved into the development of a kit for families to be able to work with their children. Again, a very collaborative approach. Those kits are going into the hands of 1,000 families every year for each of the next three years.

That last piece that I want to show you here is, the Kindergarten Ready, Set, Go. Another challenge we have in the community is that kids are not registering for kindergarten on time, schools aren’t prepared, and kids get off to a rocky start. Because we had educators in the room talking about the problem along with business who could help do something about it, we created a registration and checklist that listed all the contact information and the dates of registration. One of the local businesses who owns a string of pizza shops is putting that registration form in all of their pizza boxes in the high-poverty areas. The reason I tell you this is because it’s an interesting collaboration that would not have been made possible if those conversations weren’t happening in that room.

Perry: Which school districts are you working in?

Mary: All of them.

Perry: All 13?

Mary: In different ways, yes. The parochial schools are pulled in _____? _____. I’m going to tell you about that. Different school districts engage in Erie Together in different ways and take advantage of Erie Together’s products in different ways.

The early childhood readiness and success piece, 3rd grade reading. Thirty percent of our kids aren’t hitting 3rd grade reading benchmarks. Again, that’s a challenge. Up to 3rd grade you’re learning to read. After that you’re reading to learn. If you can’t read in 3rd grade, you’re going to have problems. We’ve gone out into the community with our partners who are sitting around the table understanding those challenges, reaching into the communities where there are high levels of poverty, high numbers of children, low levels of Imagination Library penetration rates, and we’re bringing the resources right into the communities. We did six this year. We were able to secure the resources. We are intending to do eight this coming year. Reaching families, bringing them resources, getting them registered for different kinds of resources in the community, and making the community aware of how important 3rd grade reading is.

With respect to preparing kids for life after high school. Students need career-exploration experiences to be able to think about their future. We know that not many kids are having the level of experiences they need. Businesses are complaining about it because they are not getting people prepared for the jobs they have. School districts are complaining about it because they don't know how to engage businesses. Those conversations happened at the Erie Together table, and as a result of that, our community created and launched Career Street. Career Street has been up and running since February, 2014, and you can see the impact that it's made on the community to this point. Again, the value of the network. The value of the process. The importance of those conversations that are being convened through Erie Together.

Let's talk about work for a second. We know we have a lot of unemployed people in this community. We have a number of available jobs. People aren't connecting with the jobs we have. So Erie Together has been able to do something pretty innovative. We've started to bring employers together with community organizations who are serving the kinds of people that could be potential employees for these companies. By bringing those two groups together in ways they hadn't been brought together before, companies are able to start filling their open positions because of that network – another unique thing Erie Together is able to do and does focus on, because we're trying to strengthen local businesses, and we're trying to get people who live here employed in the jobs we have here.

Another piece. One of the barriers that people in the community face, many of them, is some sort of criminal background. Because of the Erie Together network, we've been convening people from the criminal justice system, former offenders, educators, and social service providers, to develop an ex-offender re-entry strategy. This is about to launch once we identify the funding necessary to support it. This has been a tremendously collaborative approach the next three years. Very strategic. And this is how we will help people who are coming back to the community re-enter successfully.

Finally, the last piece of Erie Together work is focused directly on families. We know that 25% of the able-bodied work-age adults in this community are not self-sufficient, meaning they can't meet their basic needs without outside public or private assistance. That's about 17,000 families. As a result of that, we're working in the community to reach families who are willing to take a good hard look at their situation, set personal goals, and work to achieve those goals with the assistance of mentors in the community who want to provide them with moral support and guidance. As of the latest data I have from the 3rd quarter of last year, we had 219 with the program, and you can see that these are the kinds of results that have come out of it. These are all self-sufficiency related. A number of them are financially related. You can see 66 gained employment, a number paid off their debt, people learned money management, 25 continued their education. All important things to make people more self-sufficient, and, again, to contribute to the fact that we are working very hard to make Erie County a place where everyone can learn, work, and thrive.

Perry: In the "learn" section. It's clearly important that we get more kids into pre-K. Does Erie Together have a formal policy position on universal pre-K versus more of a nuanced approach?

Mary: Erie Together does not take formal positions on things in the community. But, we recognize the need to get more kids engaged in quality pre-K. So we're doing the kinds of things to help make that happen. That block-by-block going out into the communities piece. One of the big pushes there was to help people understand that the Erie's Future Fund exists, how to apply for Erie's Future Fund, and the importance of getting your kid involved in a quality pre-K program. We're also looking for ways for Erie's Future Fund to fund itself. How can we raise more money so we can support more kids?

Perry: Any idea how many kids are not going to pre-school?

Mary: I don't know the universe of the number, but what I can tell you is the number of kids that are enrolled in publically funded quality pre-K programs. Right now that is the only number we were able to get. Our goal is that there will be an increase of 3% of children participating in publically funded quality early education by the end of 2017. The baseline was 7,245, which was 43.2% of the whole.

Perry: 43% are engaged that are eligible?

Mary: Yes. 43% are, and we want to increase that by 2% each year through 2017. But again, that is publically funded. That is not public and private.

Perry: Is that all through Future Fund, or a mixture of sources?

Mary: I'm sure that is a mixture. That's the statewide data collection piece. What else?

Tim: This is an anecdotal piece for you. You mentioned the 3rd grade reading scores in Erie. Dr. Badams was telling me the other day that he went to Pfeiffer Burleigh where he had a meeting. They have a 4th grade class of 27 students there that are all English-language learners. They speak 18 different languages. So, those numbers, while they look horrible, there are some realities associated with that. Eighteen different languages out of 27 kids all in the 4th grade in one school, and none of them speak English as a first language.

Mary: Right. So think about that challenge. That number does look horrible, but by the same token, even though it's hard, we still have to address it.

Tim: Absolutely. You still have to address it, but it's not your typical suburban school issue.

Perry: Is someone looking at the proportionality of ELL or ESL learners with the availability of pre-K?

Mary: Yes. Actually, we have a meeting about that on Monday.

Amanda: In the past, when we've partnered with the Erie Zoo, we partnered with them on a pre-K program very similar to what they're doing with the block-by-block program. On Sunday nights in the summer, they are open for free from 4-6 through June, July, and August, and they are seeing, primarily, ESL population, and it's huge. So we tried to pull off an event like the block-by-block. It wasn't a huge success, because we're not you. Taking that event to the Erie Zoo and tapping into a Lead Asset in that capacity, that just blows my mind on the possibilities there.

Mary: One of the things that we are doing at this very moment is identifying the right partners for this summer.

Tim: And if you do continue to get involved in that, nowadays it's no longer "ESL", it's now "ELL" – English Language Learners.

Gary: Thanks, Mary, for coming in. I'm familiar with the organization work, and we commend you for what you're doing in the region. The question I have is about unemployment. We know that unemployment is high in the region overall. It's coming down, but it's still a high number. In the African-American community in particular, it's typically double, and in some cases even higher than double. Can you share with us some of the initiatives, some of the partnering that you're doing to assist in reducing that particular work?

Mary: One of the efforts that we do that you heard me mention is bring together employers with local organizations to help the local organizations understand what the employers' specific needs are and make connections for those particular positions. When I do that, I reach out to the entire network of people in Erie Together who are focused on self-sufficiency and focused on workforce and economic development. I usually get between a dozen and 20 people in a room to meet with these employers. We've only done it a handful of times, and we need to take that to scale. That's one of the ways that we're doing it, and we did it specifically because there's a strategy within Erie Together to connect low-income and minority workers to local jobs. So we do that with that mindset. So that's one.

Dale: A couple questions. Under FACT Programmatic Accomplishments, it says 17 new facilitators, 5 new organizations. What are a few of them?

Mary: Organizations that are running family action team programs include Erie City Mission, Mercy Center for Women, SafeNet – those kinds of organizations. So you understand the way we are pushing this out into the community is we are doing a train the trainer. So, our Erie Together staff trains facilitators to run these groups within these organizations so that we can reach more and more families. That way we're not dependent upon the capacity of one person to be able to run all these groups.

Dale: Okay, so when you say 17 new facilitators, that means they are within various organizations, and they completed your training?

Mary: Right. And then the participants are the ones that have benefited from the training.

Dale: And then the other thing is, it looks nice, but theoretically under "More Self-Sufficient Families Participant Accomplishments, Saved Money". That could vary from \$5 to what? Is there a certain amount you were shooting for as far as the 26 individuals you helped? And, really, under all those categories like, "Became Involved in the Community". What does that entail? They went to a neighborhood watch meeting?

Mary: These goals that are reflected on that sheet are personal goals that were set by the individuals who have gone through the programs. So everybody who is struggling with self-sufficiency comes from a different background, has different struggles, has different reasons for why they are not able to make it on their own without outside public or private assistance. They set 3 personal goals, and then they worked toward those goals. They are all individual.

Dale: Okay. So where it says 5 purchased homes, that has substance because I know what you got, you purchased a home. But the other things I was a little bit vague on. Gained employment – that's super.

Perry: I think we've heard a lot in the media about re-entry, the re-entry program. That's been a hot topic. Could you talk a little bit about that? How far along is that? Is that something that you would be interested in us assisting with?

Mary: I think that would be fantastic if you would take a look at that. That is ready to launch. This re-entry process, the Erie County Reentry Services and Support Alliance planning group has been meeting for nearly 3 years. It developed a strategic approach to working with reentering clients to connect them to the services that we have in the community in a much more seamless way, so that they can become productive, avoid recidivism, etc. You saw the chart, let me step it back for a minute here. That shows really the flow of how a client would interact with the ECRSSA once it's launched. Where we are right now is we've got the position descriptions to be the case managers to manage the positions coming in developed. We've got the strategy developed. We've got this flowchart which shows you how the whole thing works. And we are now seeking funding to get it launched. We've also identified a partner organization to host the positions, and we've got the space, so we are ready to go once we secure the funding.

Tim: Are you able to say who the partnering organization is?

Mary: It's GECAC. And they are all-in provided we identify the funding to support the positions.

Tim: Do you know where the housing is going to be located?

Mary: It will be in their main facility. They have space that has a separate entrance. They have office space there.

Tim: So downtown?

Mary: Yes.

Dale: Pertaining to the incarceration side, I understand that. I used to work in that area. But on the call-in side, how do you identify your call-in and things of that nature?

Mary: The people who would enter this ECRSSA through that call-in piece are people that are identified through the crime data that exists in the community and the networks that exist in the community. People in the community are not calling in and say, "Hey, you need to know about this person, and you need to get them involved." The group is looking at data

related to network and violent criminal activity and the potential for violent criminal activity, and they are inviting people in to learn about the help that will be provided to them if they agree to not go with a lifestyle of crime. In the media you've heard "snitch". It is in no way a "snitch" program – nothing like that at all – it's all data-based.

Tim: Are you far along enough in this program that it's too late to change the location of the housing piece?

Mary: I don't know what you have in mind.

Tim: We can talk after the meeting.

Mary: Okay.

Chuck: The plan is currently at the existing GECAC?

Mary: Right. There's dedicated space that's not being used and with a separate entrance.

Chuck: Right downtown?

Mary: Yes. Any other questions or comments?

Gary: Mary, I'd be very interested in your deliverables as it relates to the pre-K and how the children are tied in with a family member, because everything we deal with here, the chance of success is much better if there is a parent engaged with a child. There are many parents who have terrible parenting skills, and they can't parent. I just am curious about that, because that's really important. I had a meeting with a community leader yesterday. And that was one of the big areas. He had mentioned that there is a group in the Erie community that was forgotten, and that's why you're starting to see and you have been seeing a lot of the crime you've been seeing. Nobody was there.

Mary: Parent engagement is a tremendous issue that we've been focused on, and you hear it everywhere, right? So, one of the things that we did to help parents better engage in productive activity is that kit. That's one thing. The second thing just in the middle or toward the end of April, we are hosting a training for local agencies on new and innovative ways to increase parent engagement in their children's lives. That will be taking place at the Scottish Rite, and I don't have a date, but I can send it to you, Gary. The third thing is that recognizing that you can't always get parents engaged, we've also launched a 3-part strategy to connect more caring adults to local kids. It's called More Caps and Gowns. We're bringing mentors into the schools, etc. So, when you can't get the parents, let's get another positive adult influence in their lives.

Perry: This has been very helpful. We're definitely going to follow up with you and talk about ways we can better emigrate what we're doing here at ECGRA with your mission.

Mary: Thank you very much, everyone. I appreciate it.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. **Treasurer's Report:**

Chuck: I don't think there is anything out of the ordinary. I would rather spend more time on the draft budget.

Perry: Can I point out one thing in the financials? We had talked about relabeling some stuff on the Balance Sheet so that it was more convenient for the board. You will notice the note receivable with Bridgeway Capital is labeled "Note Receivable: BWC", instead of "Ignite Erie Impact Investment". That was more of a generic labeling which was confusing to people, so we made that correction.

Chuck: Other than that there is so little that has changed from last month in terms of where we stand in relationship to the budget – the items we were over on, we are still over on; the items we were under on, we are still under on. So, in general, though, I think the financials are what we expect to see. If there are any specific questions, I am glad to answer them – Mike's got them up. And, of course, we've also got the check register in there as well.

Mike: Are there any questions for Chuck? If not, do I have a motion to approve the reports?

Mr. Barney makes a motion to approve the financial reports. Mr. Bagnoni seconds. Motion carries 6-0.

Chuck: The other thing we are up against, of course, is the end of our fiscal year, and we will need to take action next month on approving our 16-17 budget. You all have on SharePoint a copy of that budget, which is really, I think, to a large extent a no-brainer. There's one significant change, and we'll talk about that in a moment, but we're holding the line on accounting fees and professional services. As we go down through the line items, you'll see that we are really holding the line on just about everything. What we do think, though, is that the Pilot Project concept, which we started last year – Dale, you were here, but David missed this part – and indulge me just a moment on why I think this is important. In the past, prior to the 15-16 budget, someone would come to us with an idea, and it would sound like a great idea and would loosely fit into one of the buckets that we had as part of our strategic plan – whether human services, or economic development, or lead assets – those kinds of things. But what we found was that they weren't necessarily things that we would want to fund long-term. In addition to that, there was a ruling a number of years ago that said that for our large pools of funding, we need to allow competition, in essence; we need to have process by which people can come in and apply and that we evaluate as to how to give out money. Did I characterize that right?

Tim: We need to avoid the appearance and the actuality that you are handing money out on a discretionary basis.

Chuck: Thank you. But at the same time, I think everybody at that time and now, believed that we are here to be transformational, and sometimes before you can really do something transformational, you ought to test it a bit. And so we came up with this concept of a pilot program. We did two the first year – Corry, and Summer Jobs; and this year we have done Brookings, and we have something on the agenda today that we will talk about. And I think we've had good success with those. We've learned something. We haven't necessarily decided that they have to be built into our long-term funding plans, but it's of value. To give an additional \$50,000 to that category, I think, allows us to continue with being innovators in impact investing. And that's really, I think, what we're more and more becoming known for and good at. I would like to encourage us to consider that when we take action on this budget. Short of that, there's really very little going on in the budget. The payroll is a very minimal increase.

Perry: It's just based on last year's. We didn't calculate based on the CPI, because the CPI recommends a 0% increase.

Chuck: That's right. We have leeway in Perry's contract.

Perry: The number does not reflect an increase for the executive director, if that's what you're asking.

Chuck: I guess topic one is are there any general questions on the budget? Topic two is does anyone have a concern over this increase of \$50,000 in the Special Projects line item?

Dave S: I agree with you on the Special Projects because I know that in Corry, for instance, it gave them the ability last year and this year to get dilapidated properties off of the tax rolls. We're spending more money to get rid of these properties than we're able to recoup, but it's extremely important. Corry is looking at getting 7 or 8 houses this year, and the fact that we were able to help them, encouraged the Corry Community Foundation and some others to give them additional help. I think that can be seen county-wide. I agree with you that we do

need to put some more money into these special projects, because they do, in fact, end up being transformational.

Dave B: So this \$50,000 goes into a pot, and how are we going to decide who gets it?

Chuck: This board always looks at each one of those items. The project that Dave was just talking about in Corry, Perry would do what we just saw – he would bring the group in, and they would explain what they were looking at. We all talk about it. We often don't vote on these issues the first time we hear about them. The board has full control over that money.

Tim: The concept behind the pilot project is that the Gaming Authority over the last few years doesn't think it has hit the low-hanging fruit. You've got really good at the special events, you've complied with the settlement, all those things are done. Because you are the tip of the spear here in gaming funding to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, what we need to do is allow for unique concepts to rise to the top. If somebody has a good idea and they're ready to go, the pilot funding is available. It's funded on a limited-time basis to determine if it's a program that can be replicated throughout the county. Then, at such point that it's proven, so that we're not wasting money, and we can replicate it throughout the county, then it should be opened up to the rest of the county to start that deliberate process of application, if the board decides that it's ready to go.

Dave B: Are we talking about private enterprise?

Perry: No.

Dave B: These are public projects?

Tim: Yes. Like the Corry Neighborhood Initiative. In funding that the question is, is that, in fact, a program that is going to be able to help address blight that could be replicated in Union City, Wattsburg, Erie, Albion? And, if so, it lets them work out the bugs, create a model, and then we offer that model up as the guidelines and have other organizations come to us and compete for the opportunity to implement that model with funding.

Dale: So that would take our Special Projects funding up to \$200,000?

Chuck: Correct. Incidentally, we were at the Tom Ridge Center last year at this meeting, and I seem to remember advocating for more money then too. I wanted it to be \$200,000. The smallest ones of these that we're doing are \$50,000. So, that gives us room to do maybe 4, or maybe we want to do one bigger one. We haven't done huge ones. Today's the first time we're going to talk about a little more.

Dave B: So do we have a limit on this account we're putting in, or are we just saying that for the time being it's going to be \$200,000?

Chuck: From a budget perspective, this organization has always operated on sticking within the budget. If we were to look at our financials and go through Printing, for instance, which is a small number, but we're 230% over budget. There is never any substantive budget line item that we're over on. I seem to think that Printing was one of them and maybe Website, because we adopted a new grant system. If you look at these numbers, the other one was Data Processing – remind me what Data Processing is?

Perry: That is internet, phone, SharePoint, etc.

Chuck: So it's not like we allocate \$200,000 and Perry goes and spends \$250,000.

Dave B: I'm not saying that. I'm just saying it goes into an account of \$200,000, and that's the limit of it for the time being?

Chuck: That would be the limit for 16-17.

Dave B: How long is it going to stay there before we take action on it?

Chuck: Well, we're at the end of the year and we are, hopefully, taking action on it today.

Tim: The new fiscal year begins April 1.

Dave B: So we have to expend those funds by April 1?

Tim: No, this is for April 1, 2016 – March 31, 2017.

Chuck: So today, we hope to take action on a pilot project out of that pool of funds from the 15-16 year, which we're in right now.

Dave B: Okay. Understood.

Mike: Any other questions for Chuck?

Chuck: I'm not done yet. A couple of things procedurally. I formally request that we have this budget on the agenda for next month so that we can take action. I would like to call an executive session for personnel matters.

Tim: We return from executive session at 9:32. Executive session began at 9:26.

- b. Regional Assets Committee: Perry: I'll just give a brief update. Obviously we had our first regional assets grant go out for 2016, and that, of course, is Special Events. We had Tom employed for the first time on this method. Tom did a grants workshop. He also worked one-on-one with several folks that needed technical assistance. We received a record number of applications. We have a recommendation in the form of Resolution No. 4, 2016 in front of you today to fund all Special Events applications that have been deemed eligible to the extent seen in Exhibit A to Resolution No. 4. So, if there are any questions about Special Events, I'd be more than happy to answer them.
- c. Strategic Planning Committee: We have not met, but Perry and I have talked about setting up another meeting. We'll get that scheduled and let you know.
- d. Youth & Education Committee: No report.
- e. Update from County Council: No update.
- f. Update from County Executive's Office:

Gary: At 11:00 the county executive has a press conference to announce the administrator for the Summer Jobs Program. The review committee consisted of Perry, George Espy, Mike Batchelor, Chuck Crane, Director of Procurement for the county, and me. We had two proposals submitted. They were Venango Training Development Center, who has done it the last two years; and we had GECAC submit a proposal. We went through an extremely thorough process, and we're very, very happy with who was selected. I can't name that right now due to the press conference. We're excited and are looking for a great, successful year with the Summer Jobs Program and appreciate Perry working with us and representing ECGRA as we reviewed the proposals. Thank you.

Perry: I'll just say that Mr. Lee did an outstanding job of running the RFP. I'm happy with it on behalf of ECGRA. His negotiation with the entities went extremely well and favorably. As soon as it's announced and we know what type of dollar figure that group is going to need, we'll bring it back to the board for a full vote.

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

You have an electronic copy of the report catching you up on what's been going on in the last month or so. If you have any questions about that, I'd be more than happy to answer them. I want to highlight a couple of things. The first is the fact that the Shaping Tomorrow process, which, in talking with all of you individually, went extremely well last year. If you remember, we joined forces with The Erie Community Foundation to invest \$500,000, matching ECF's \$500,000, for a total of \$1,000,000, into projects that we believe will be transformational. Those 4 projects are Tech After Hours, All About Character, Go College, and Community-Based

Health Centers. By the way, that Community-Based Health Center is Sarah Reed for their inner-city location. That collaboration went extremely well. I do need to start having conversations with the board again about doing that again in the 2016 calendar year. So if you have any issues you'd like to talk about there – we've got a proposed timeline in front of us. The Erie Community Foundation has received 29 concept papers at this point for those funds. If you think about the process that they went through last year, they reduced the 29 concept papers down to a more manageable number – 15 or so – and that, by the way, would be at their June board meeting in which I'm recommending that our board of directors participates so that we can hear more information about those 29 and be part of the process to reduce the number from 29 to a more manageable number. That would be an issue-briefing – informational only at that point in time. Then it would move on to September. If you remember, last September we met at the Manufacturers and Business Association and once again heard informational briefings when it was reduced to 5 candidates. We then partnered with ECF on funding 4 of those 5. I'll be soliciting feedback from you as we move forward on how you would like to proceed in 2016 as far as getting more involved and consistent with that Shaping Tomorrow process.

The next thing I want to talk about is Resolution No. 5, 2016 – the Ignite Erie Initiative Maker Equipment Pilot Project. That is funding for an extension of a project we've already approved. When we accepted the Ignite Erie Grant proposal from Penn State Behrend and Mercyhurst University, it included a pilot concept which would purchase maker equipment for the high schools of Erie County. One thing it failed to take into account – it budgeted \$45,000 for that equipment – is that the city school district has 4 high schools, and there are parochial high schools that are also very interested in participating, namely Cathedral Prep, Mercyhurst Prep, and Villa Maria. How did that come about? The STEM community talked, and so we agreed to come back to you guys with that extension number of \$25,000 to the extent outlined in Resolution No. 5, 2016, Exhibit A. That would come out of the Special Projects fund from this year, which is currently \$75,000. This would be the final pilot project of the 2015-16 fiscal year. If you have any questions about that, I'd be more than happy to answer them. It's been prepared for us by Mat Pundt, who is the director of operations at Central Tech.

Dale: You said an additional \$25,000?

Perry: Yes. The original amount was \$45,000.

Dale: And you want an additional \$25,000. To be utilized how?

Perry: The current \$45,000 was based upon purchase of maker equipment for 1 high school in each of the 13 school districts. So it failed to take into account the fact that the city has 4 high schools, and that the parochial schools would have an interest in it. So they are coming back and asking for an extension of those funds. I will say I've researched this and I can't find any other county in the United States in which they have provided maker equipment for every school district. This would be a pretty unique concept. It fits with the Ignite Erie mission. It fits with our focus on science, technology, engineering, and math.

Dale: Are you saying one for the city schools? Oh, one for each school? Because that was what I was thinking – one for the city and then one for the parochial wouldn't be okay. So, as long as it's fair across the board, I don't mind increasing it so everyone can benefit. No problem.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Tim: You will see Resolution No. 6, which is a restatement of the professional development portion of the employee handbook. In the last few months you have discussed a desire for the executive director and staff to engage the professional development line item. We have taken a look at that and wanted to align the provisions with Section 127 of the IRS Code. So what you see now is new language that is associated with professional development that is in compliance with the IRS Code, and essentially all it does is provide for certain tax benefits for

the people who receive the educational benefits. So if you go out and you take part in professional development, it's not going to be seen as a fringe benefit on which you would be taxed, up to \$5,250. You are required to have a written plan in place. I will note that this amendment to the plan is going to be effective as of December 2014, which is the date of the employee handbook, and that it's my understanding and belief that it was always the intention of the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority to be compliant with Section 127 of the IRS Code. It's just that now we are going to begin utilizing that line item, it's time to put those procedures we were always intent upon following into writing.

Dave S: We should have taken care of that when we agreed to do it. It was just overlooked.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Resolution No. 4, 2016 – Resolution to enter into agreements with 34 Erie County Special Events Grant applicants. Mr. Bagnoni makes a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Sample seconds the motion. Motion carries 5-0.
- b. Resolution No. 5, 2016 – Resolution to adopt funding for the Ignite Erie Initiative Maker Equipment pilot project. Mr. Peters makes a motion to adopt the resolution. Mr. Bagnoni seconds the motion. Motion carries 5-0.
- c. Resolution No. 6, 2016 – Resolution to amend the employee handbook to include language on educational assistance plans in the professional development section. Mr. Sample makes a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Bagnoni seconds the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Peters makes a motion to adjourn.