

**Ovid Local Development Corporation  
Meeting Minutes – Approved 1/7/2026 (Xavier & Murray)**

**Date:** December 17, 2025

**Location:** Three Bears – Papa Bear

**Time:** 5:30 – 7:00pm

**Chairperson:** Bruce Murray

## **1. Call to Order**

Bruce Murray called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

## **2. Roll Call**

**Present:**

- Bruce Murray
- Gary Xavier
- David Hughes
- Larry Nikula
- Erik Holmberg
- Ave Bauder
- Ellen Smith
- Dave Eastman

**Present (by invitation, non-voting):**

- Jill Henry, Director of Seneca County Planning Department
- Joe McGrath, Seneca County Planning Department / President, Finger Lakes Regional Land Bank Corporation

**Absent:**

- John Keeler, Chair
- Jodie Vanselow, Secretary

**Remote Participants:** None

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Vice Chairperson Bruce Murray. Erik Holmberg confirmed recording was in progress and noted that Zoom participants could join remotely.

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## **3. Agenda Items**

## **A. Approval of board meeting minutes – December 3, 2025**

**Action:** Tabled pending arrival of Secretary. The Chairperson noted the secretary had not yet arrived and indicated the minutes approval would need to be revisited.

**Status:** Deferred to next meeting

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## **B. Seneca County planning board discussion**

### **Grant Updates and Planning Initiatives**

**Presented by:** Jill Henry, Director of Seneca County Planning Department, and Joe McGrath

#### **Items Discussed:**

#### **1. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant (\$1.5 Million)**

- County has received grant
- Planning Department is preparing RFP for consultant selection
- Will enable Phase I and Phase II assessments of various properties
- Initially focused on canal corridor properties
- May include assessment of Willard and other Ovid properties upon request

#### **2. Genesee Transportation Council Grant (\$85,000)**

- Related to active transportation planning and healthy schools/community initiative
- Local match provided through in-kind staff time
- GTC will issue RFP for consultant
- Planning Department will serve as local administrator
- Focus on transportation planning and community mobility

#### **3. Infrastructure Grant (\$500,000)**

- Supplemental to existing village project
- Will coordinate with other grant initiatives

#### **4. Strategic Planning and Feasibility Study Grant (\$100,000 total)**

- \$50,000 from Empire State Development
- \$50,000 match from County
- **Timeline:** RFP to be issued late January/February; responses expected by March; contractor selection anticipated April

**Feasibility Study Scope:**

The consultant will conduct a comprehensive analysis covering:

- Downtown area from North Street to South Street (four corners of downtown)
- Analysis of remaining structures and existing built environment
- Strategies to stabilize and promote resilience of existing buildings
- Development of mixed-use redevelopment options for fire-damaged sites
- Organization and coordination framework among County, Town, Village, OLDC, County LDC, Land Bank, Planning Department, and IDA
- Coordination with Genesee Transportation Council on "reimagined downtown" concept
- Development of cost estimates, drawings, and renderings
- Consultant selection committee will include OLDC members

**Housing Development Projects:**

Mr. McGrath reported parallel construction projects:

- 4 rental units at 2125 West Seneca Street, Ovid (construction start April 2026)
- 3 units in Willard
- Developer: Seneca Housing Incorporated (nonprofit)
- Total funding: Approximately \$3.5 million
- All public/state funding; prevailing wage not required for HCR-funded projects
- Income restrictions: 50%-65% of Area Median Income
- Estimated rents: approximately \$800-\$900/month for two-bedroom units

**Discussion of Strategic Direction and Funding Approaches****Key Points Raised:****Private vs. Public Financing:**

Chairperson Murray noted two concurrent paths:

1. **Public Grant Path** (funded through Empire State Development, HCR, and other state programs)
2. **Private Development Path** (unfunded at present)

The funded path offers immediate checkbook capacity but requires longer timelines and comprehensive planning. Murray advised coordination with consultant work to maximize efficiency and avoid redundant community outreach to the approximately 600 residents of Ovid.

**New York Forward/Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Grants:**

- Murray provided information gathered from Judy Cherry (Schuyler County Economic Development) and Rick Hauser (Mayor of Perry, NY)
- Both jurisdictions successfully obtained DRI grants (\$10 million to Perry, \$10 million to Seneca Falls)
- Key success factors:

- Broad-based community and stakeholder support
- Multiple commitments from private sector (banks, etc.)
- Seneca Falls leveraged \$10 million grant into \$22 million total project through commitments
- Application must be comprehensive (full village, not just one block)

### **Potential OLDC Role:**

- Serve as review committee for consultant RFP responses
- Function as stakeholder/advisory committee throughout project timeline
- Facilitate coordination among multiple boards and entities

### **Coordination Challenge:**

Member Gary raised concern regarding coordination among eight different entities (County, Town, Village, OLDC, County LDC, Land Bank, Planning Department, IDA). Discussion confirmed need for:

- Lead agency designation
- Clear organizational structures
- Regular communication protocols

### **Consultant RFP Requirements:**

Joe McGrath explained that no single consulting firm would possess all required expertise. RFP will encourage lead consultant to partner with specialists in:

- Commercial development
- Housing finance and development
- Public funding coordination
- Mixed-use project development

Firms such as LaBella, Bergman, and MRB may not have all requisite skill sets. Feasibility study may identify case studies, including similar post-fire redevelopment in Falconer, NY.

### **Historic Tax Credits and Historic District Designation:**

- Historic District designation recommended for downtown
- Will enable eligibility for state and federal historic tax credits
- Does not require zoning overlay; purely designates eligibility
- Application process: Village should contact State Office of Historic Preservation
- Timeline: One to two years for nomination completion
- Tax credits provide top 20%-30% of capital stack with dollar-for-dollar return

### **Historic Preservation Examples:**

- Firehouse (mid-century modern, eligible for national registry)
- Other downtown structures

**Housing Strategy Development:**

County is developing housing strategy with multiple components:

- Local funding source for market-rate apartments (to attract middle-income residents)
- Multiple funding mechanisms under consideration
- Dependent on Board of Supervisors adoption
- Would provide supplemental resource to reconstruction projects

**Property Ownership and Assembly:**

- Land Bank already owns parcel behind former partner/site
- Discussion of acquiring additional parcels for larger comprehensive project
- Land Bank has funding available for potential acquisition discussions (timeline: summer 2026)

**Cost Estimates for Reconstruction:**

Joe McGrath provided preliminary cost estimates:

- Initial estimate: \$12 million for mixed-use project (10-11 units, 2 stories)
- Revised upward to \$15+ million if three-story configuration adopted
- Costs contingent on commercial space size and finish level
- Commercial space economics: Operating revenues from commercial/residential likely insufficient to cover full debt service; residential units primary revenue source

**Funding Stack and Capital Structure:**

Member discussion addressed:

- Grant funding positioned as top-tier equity in bank lending perspective
- Low-income housing tax credits provide additional capital stack component
- Market-rate components financed through traditional lending
- IDA tax abatements for private property owners (15-year PILOT potential)
- Local housing trust fund (if established) provides market-rate subsidy

**Private Sector Participation:**

Murray emphasized potential to attract private developers familiar with public funding programs and willing to layer multiple funding sources. Model requires:

- Economic growth narrative (regional demographics shifting northward from Ithaca/Trumansburg area)
- Medium-term improvement trajectory
- Private capital requires positive return on investment

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**C. Discussion and approval of video remote/remote meeting policy**

**Status:** Deferred. No substantive discussion during meeting due to time constraints. Item postponed to future agenda.

## **D. Budget preparation – finance committee presentation**

**Presented by:** David [Finance Committee member]

### **Key Points:**

David reported inability to project specific expenditures due to lack of organizational direction. Current status:

- **Known expenses:** Attorney fees (amount and purpose yet to be determined); D&O insurance (\$2,000-\$3,000)
- **Known revenue:** \$10,000 from Town (timing uncertain)
- **Unknowns:** Employee requirements, bookkeeper needs, scope of operations

### **Finance Committee Assessment:**

David stated that creating a detailed budget at this stage would be "a fool's errand" without clarity on:

- Organizational direction and mission focus
- Staffing requirements
- Consultant and professional service needs
- Project involvement scope

### **Recommendation:**

Focus on compliance requirements rather than detailed budgeting. Budget preparation deferred until organizational priorities and activities are determined.

### **Compliance Requirements:**

- MRV recommended as compliance consultant (by Seneca County Land Bank)
- MRV has experience with small LDCs
- Quote has been obtained from MRV

**Motion:** No formal motion offered on budget. Item deferred pending organizational direction.

**Status:** Tabled pending establishment of organizational priorities

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## **G. Insurance update**

**Presented by:** David [Finance Committee member]

### **Status of Insurance Applications:**

David reported obtaining quotes for Directors and Officers (D&O) Insurance:

### **Quotes Obtained:**

1. **Travelers Insurance (through commercial broker)**
  - Estimated cost: \$2,000-\$3,000
  - Full New York coverage available
2. **Travelers Insurance (through local broker recommended by John Keeler)**
  - Estimated cost: \$2,000-\$3,000
  - Local provider, full New York coverage available
3. **Local provider (Dave Dempsey, town insurance agent)**
  - Status: Pending callback from agent
  - Expected to quote Travelers insurance as well

### **Recommendation:**

Preference for local provider if pricing is comparable. All policies provide identical coverage through Travelers as underwriter.

### **Next Steps:**

- Await callback from Dave Dempsey
- Obtain third quote
- Select insurance provider based on pricing and local preference

**Policy Type:** Standard D&O coverage for municipal non-profit entities

**Status:** Pending final quote; decision anticipated at next meeting

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## **J. Discussion of overriding goals & timelines**

**Presented by:** David [designated coordinator]

### **Current Status:**

David reported no work completed on goals and timelines document. Requested input from Board members.

### **Identified Priorities:**

- Property acquisition (described as "single focus" beyond basic compliance)
- 501(c)(3) filing
- Bank account establishment and check processing
- Outreach and community communications

- Media relations

**Proposed Approach:**

- Create draft laundry list of potential priorities
- Utilize color-coded table (green/yellow/red) for prioritization
- Coordinate input from multiple Board members via email

**Board Member Input:**

- Bruce Murray offered suggestions via email
- Additional priorities requested from all members
- Ellen offered to assist with presentation
- David to provide empty table template

**Presentation Format:**

- David unavailable to attend next meeting in person
- Will present via Zoom video call
- Will share screen with priority table and presentation materials
- Erik Holmberg offered technical Zoom assistance

**Motion:**

No formal motion required. Board agreed that:

- David will continue coordinating goals and timelines document
- Board members will submit priority suggestions to David and Ellen via email
- Presentation scheduled for next meeting via video call
- Prioritization discussion to occur at next meeting

**Status:** In progress; presentation scheduled for next meeting

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**H. New by-laws adoption**

**Status:** Item listed on agenda but not substantively discussed during meeting. Document review deferred.

**Status:** Deferred to future agenda

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**I. New organization resolution adoption**

**Status:** Item listed on agenda but not substantively discussed during meeting.



**Status:** Deferred to future agenda

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## **E. Public presentation discussion**

**Status:** Brief mention made that this item would be addressed in Executive Session due to time constraints. No substantive discussion occurred in open session.

**Status:** Deferred to Executive Session

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## **F. Finger lakes times story**

**Status:** Item listed on agenda but not substantively discussed during open session due to time constraints.

**Status:** Deferred to Executive Session or future meeting

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## **4. Executive session**

**Motion to Enter Executive Session by Bruce Murray, 1<sup>st</sup> – David Hughes / 2<sup>nd</sup> Larry Nikula**  
Moved by David; Seconded by [member name not clearly stated in transcript]

**Vote:** Unanimous approval

## **5. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion to Adjourn: Bruce Murray / 1<sup>st</sup> – David Hughes / 2<sup>nd</sup> – Larry Nikula**

**Vote:** Unanimous approval

**Meeting Adjourned:** Approximately 7:39 PM

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## **Action Assignments**

Action Item	Assigned To	Due Date	Status
Submit priority suggestions for Goals & Timelines document	All Board members	Before next meeting	In Progress
Coordinate Goals & Timelines presentation	David (with Ellen assistance)	Next meeting	Assigned

Action Item	Assigned To	Due Date	Status
Prepare and share Goals & Timelines table template	David	Before next meeting	Assigned
Present Goals & Timelines via Zoom	David	Next meeting	Scheduled
Obtain third insurance quote	David	Before next meeting	In Progress
Final insurance provider selection	Board vote	Next meeting	Pending
Obtain MRV compliance consultant quote	[Not clearly assigned]	Before next meeting	Assigned
Board minute approval	Secretary + Board	Next meeting	Deferred
Review By-Laws for adoption	[Not assigned]	Future meeting	Pending
Review Organization Resolution for adoption	[Not assigned]	Future meeting	Pending
Property acquisition strategy development	[Deferred to Executive Session]	Future meeting	In Progress

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## Unfinished Business for Next Meeting

1. **Approval of December 3, 2025 Meeting Minutes** – Pending Secretary attendance
  2. **Video Remote/Remote Meeting Policy Discussion and Approval** – No discussion occurred
  3. **New By-Laws Adoption** – Document not reviewed
  4. **New Organization Resolution Adoption** – Document not reviewed
  5. **Public Presentation Discussion** – Deferred to future meeting
  6. **Finger Lakes Times Story** – Deferred to future meeting
  7. **Budget Preparation** – Deferred pending organizational direction clarification
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