



JOINT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE AUTHORITY (LDFA) / LANSING REGIONAL SMARTZONE (LRSZ) BOARD MEETING

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 21, 2026 | 8:30 a.m.

Suite 300 – Technology Innovation Center
325 E. Grand River Ave., East Lansing, MI 48823

Attendees: Ben Bakken, Irene Cahill, Mark Dobson, Charles Hasemann, Jon Laing, Shay Manawar, Nicole Millsap, Christian Palasty, Traci Riehl, Abigail Tykocki, Dave Washburn

Staff: Tony Klisch, Ying Li, Casey Paskus, Laura Sumpter, Tony Willis, Jillian Winn

Recorded by: Laura Sumpter, LEAP

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Tykocki called the meeting of the Lansing Regional SmartZone Joint Local Development Finance Authority (LDFA) to order at 8:33 a.m. The meeting was conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

Director Winn conducted roll call.

For the record, roll call reflected currently seated Board members. Two seats were vacant at the time of roll call and were scheduled to be filled later in the meeting following Board action. Mark Dobson (East Lansing Public Schools appointee) and Shay Manawar (City of Lansing appointee) were present as appointees but not yet formally seated at the time of roll call.

Members Present:

1. Abigail Tykocki (C - EL)
2. Traci Riehl (VC - L)
3. Ben Bakken (LCC)
4. Irene Cahill (I) (arrived at 8:38 a.m.)
5. Charles Hasemann (EL)
6. Jon Laing (LSD)
7. Nicole Millsap (LSD)
8. Christian Palasty (ELPS)
9. Dave Washburn (L)

Members Absent:

1. Mark Meadows (EL)
2. Jill Rhode (EL)

Representation Key:

EL = City of East Lansing
ELPS = East Lansing Public Schools
I = Ingham County
L = City of Lansing
LCC = Lansing Community College
LSD = Lansing School District

LDFA Executive Committee:

C = Chair
VC = Vice Chair
T = Treasurer

A QUORUM WAS PRESENT

2. Adoption of Agenda

Motion: Charles Hasemann moved to adopt the agenda as presented.

Second: David Washburn

Vote: Motion Carried (8-0)

Result: Approved

Note: Irene Cahill arrived after this vote and was not present for the motion.

3. New Appointments (Action)

Chair Tykocki announced that the Board had four appointments to consider and invited Director Winn to introduce each appointment.

Winn presented the following:

- Laura Sumpter was introduced as the new Executive Secretary at LEAP and recommended to serve as Recording Secretary. Winn noted that, pursuant to the bylaws, the Recording Secretary is

an officer role, not a Board member role, and may serve as long as authorized by the Board, with no term limit.

- Mark Meadows was presented as having been reappointed by the City of East Lansing to the LDFA Board, with a term expiring June 30, 2029. The reappointment was made at the City of East Lansing City Council meeting held on December 9, 2025.
- Shay Manawar was presented as having been appointed by the City of Lansing to fill the City of Lansing's vacant seat on the LDFA Board, with a term expiring June 30, 2028. The appointment and oath were administered as part of Resolution #2025-306 at the City of Lansing City Council meeting held on December 15, 2025.
- Mark Dobson was presented as having been appointed by East Lansing Public Schools to fill the vacant seat on the LDFA Board, with a term expiring June 30, 2027. Director Winn noted that the Board had received the appointment letter from East Lansing Public Schools Superintendent Dori Leyko.

Tykocki requested a single motion to approve all four appointments as presented.

Motion: Traci Riehl moved to approve the four appointments as presented.

Second: Jon Laing

Vote: Motion Carried (9-0)

Result: Approved

4. Program Updates / Presentations (Information Only)

4.1 517 E&I Week

Mikeyy Austin from OurSpace Creative provided an update on 517 E&I Week. The SmartZone is a sponsor of this event and helping run it. 517 E&I Week is a weeklong celebration of Entrepreneurship and Innovation in the Lansing region and will include many events. It will be April 6-10, 2026. There is still a call for sponsors to support this regional effort and an invitation for people/organizations to host events across the week. Find more information at <https://www.517ei.com/>

4.2 Apple Community Education Initiative (MSU Extension)

December Day and Paty Monterrosa provided an update on the Apple Community Education Initiative. You can find a recent written update on the SmartZone website at: [SmartZone Funded Apple Community Education Initiative Expanding Youth Pathways in Coding, Creativity, and Technology - Lansing Regional SmartZone](#)

Day talked about partnering with the East Lansing Public Library for Robotics Day and offering AI programming on AI Foundations and Ethics. They are launching Intro to Coding at Whitehills Elementary in East Lansing. Registration filled in 1 hour, demonstrating a strong need for this type of programming. They started a Code Coaches program at East Lansing High School to train students to design educational curriculum and teach coding. They are participating in MSU Extension's 4H Day at the Breslin and 4H Exploration Days.

4.3 Capital Area Startup Studio

Jeff McWherter and Blake Grewal provided an update on the Capital Area Startup Studio. They reported that eight companies joined the Studio Cohort program and that a monthly public speaker and workshop series has begun. The schedule of public events can be found at the [SmartZone's Capital Area Startup Studio page](#) and recap articles of each session can be found on the [SmartZone's News page](#).

5. Consent Agenda (Action)

The Consent Agenda included:

- Approval of the LDFA October meeting minutes
- Approval of the financials

Motion: Ben Bakken moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Second: Irene Cahill

Vote: Motion Carried (11-0)

Result: Approved

Note: This was the first vote to include newly seated members Shay Manawar and Mark Dobson.

6. Action Items

6.1 Acceptance of the FYE 2025 Independent Audit

Will Love from Rehmann presented the Fiscal Year End 2025 independent audit findings.

Motion: Ben Bakken moved to accept the Fiscal Year End 2025 independent audit as presented.

Second: Traci Riehl

Vote: Motion Carried (11-0)

Result: Approved

6.2 TIC Updated Agreement, FYE 2026 Budget Amendment, and Incubator Direction

6.2.1 Real Estate Advisory Committee Report (Information)

Ben Bakken presented the Real Estate Advisory Committee report, including:

- Review of TIC agreement amendment through June 30, 2026 with additional sponsorship costs up to \$31,710; clarification that the DDA does not provide financial support for the TIC.
- Identification of MSUFCU Coworkerie as best fit for future downtown incubator space (affordability, flexibility, capacity), noting fewer locking-door offices but strong co-working capacity; emphasis on the City of East Lansing's request to maintain incubator space downtown; and the importance of overlap to ensure continuity as TIC term winds down.
- FYE 2027 planning considerations for July–December 2026 TIC sponsorship up to \$48,000 (base \$10,000 plus up to \$38,000 additional), and potential total calendar-year 2026 sponsorship up to \$89,710. MSU Research Foundation indicated the amounts are maximums and hoped final costs would be lower.
- Recommendation to include TIC sponsorship in the draft FYE 2027 budget pending additional cost clarity and further board discussion.

6.2.2 TIC/Alliance Financial Summary & Tenant Report (Information)

Jeff Smith and Gabbi Strom (MSU Research Foundation) presented the TIC Alliance financial summary and tenant report.

6.2.3 Action: Approve TIC Sponsorship Agreement Amendment (Through June 30, 2026)

Chair Tykocki stated the amendment extends TIC sponsorship through June 30, 2026, with additional sponsorship cost up to \$31,710.

Note: David Washburn was not present for the following action items.

Motion: Ben Bakken moved to approve the TIC Sponsorship Agreement Amendment through June 30, 2026, for a maximum amount of \$31,710.

Second: Charles Hasemann

Vote: Motion Carried (10-0)

Result: Approved

6.2.4 Action: Amend FYE 2026 LDFA Budget (TIC Additional Sponsorship)

Chair Tykocki noted the committee recommended increasing TIC additional sponsorship from \$10,000 to \$31,710 to support continued occupancy through June 30, 2026.

Motion: Ben Bakken moved to amend the Fiscal Year End 2026 budget to increase the TIC additional sponsorship to \$31,710 to support continued occupancy through June 30, 2026.

Second: Traci Riehl

Vote: Motion Carried (10-0)

Result: Approved

6.2.5 Action: Approve Next-Step Direction on Incubator Space (MSUFCU Coworkerie)

Chair Tykocki stated the committee recommended staff pursue sponsorship at the MSUFCU Coworkerie starting as soon as July 1, 2026 for annual sponsorship cost of \$20,000.

Motion: Ben Bakken moved that the Board direct staff to pursue sponsorship at the MSUFCU Coworkerie as the preferred downtown East Lansing incubator location starting as soon as July 1, 2026, and to include a proposed allocation of \$20,000 in the draft Fiscal Year End 2027 budget for this purpose.

Second: Traci Riehl

Vote: Motion Carried 10-0

Result: Approved

7. Discussion Items (No Action)

7.1 FYE 2027 LDFA Budget

Director Winn provided an overview of the FYE 2027 budget process.

Ben Bakken presented Real Estate Advisory Committee recommendations for FYE 2027:

- Include \$20,000 for MSUFCU Coworkerie sponsorship beginning as soon as July 1, 2026.

- Include TIC sponsorship in the draft FYE 2027 budget for July 1–December 31, 2026 (base \$10,000 plus up to \$38,000 additional), with further Board discussion before approving any agreement.

Chair Tykocki presented the Program Committee report and recommendations and noted the need to better understand any proposed restrictions or guidance related to the use of TIF capture funds as part of the planning process.

Winn introduced the draft FYE 2027 budget.

7.2 TIF Plan Update and Planning Process Kickoff

Director Winn provided updates on the TIF extension.

Jeff Guilfoyle (Public Sector Consultants) presented the TIF plan process and timeline.

Board Discussion/Feedback: Board members discussed the importance of engaging municipal partners, including the City of East Lansing and the City of Lansing, and considering potential regional expansion, including Meridian Township, as part of the TIF plan visioning process. The Board emphasized the need to better understand shared priorities, the future vision for the region, and how partners can work together under the new plan framework. The Board also noted the need to better understand any proposed restrictions or guidance related to the use of TIF capture funds as part of the planning process.

8. Reports / Information

8.1 MEDC Gateway Program Updates

Grants Manager Casey Paskus provided updates on the MEDC Gateway Program.

Note: David Washburn returned to the meeting prior to the consideration of Agenda Item 9.

9. Election of Officers (Action)

Chair Tykocki provided context that, pursuant to the bylaws, officer elections typically occur at the annual meeting in October and that there is a customary rotation of officers (Vice Chair to Chair and Treasurer to Vice Chair). Due to recent Board transitions, elections were delayed to this meeting, and open nominations were taken from the floor for the positions of Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer, followed by election by ballot. Officer terms are one year.

Nominations:

- Chair: Abigail Tykocki
- Vice Chair: Ben Bakken
- Treasurer: Traci Riehl

Ballots were distributed, collected, and tallied.

Board Election Results:

Chair: Abigail Tykocki

Vice Chair: Ben Bakken

Treasurer: Traci Riehl

Terms begin at the close of the meeting.

Committee Note:

The Board noted the Program Committee membership as Irene Cahill, Abigail Tykocki, and Dave Washburn, with Traci Riehl joining the Program Committee.

The Real Estate Advisory Committee was noted as ad hoc and has completed its purpose.

10. Look Ahead: April 2026 Board Meeting

Director Winn outlined key topics anticipated for the April 2026 board meeting.

11. Public Comment

Chair Tykocki invited public comment.

No public comment was offered.

12. Adjournment

Chair Tykocki adjourned the meeting at 10:23 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for April 22, 2026.

SUBMITTED BY: Laura Sumpter, Recording Secretary

STATUS: APPROVED BY THE BOARD ON APRIL 22, 2026