LANSING REGIONAL SmartZone

1000 S Washington Ave, Ste 201 | Lansing, MI 48910
lansingregionalsmartzone.com

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

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 21, 2026 | 8:30 a.m.
L7 – 7th Floor
311 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823

Attendees: Teri Bernero, Lee Gardner, Charles Hasemann, Jon Laing, Shay Manawar, Mark Meadows, Heather Pope, Traci Riehl, Abigail Tykocki

Staff: Jazmin Anderson, Genesis Lodise, Harrison Leffel-Jones, Laura Sumpter, Jillian Winn

Guests: Colleen Gaffney, Public Sector Consultants; William Wright, Rehmann; Gabbi Strom and Jeff Smith, MSU Research Foundation

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 8:32 a.m. The meeting was conducted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

Director Winn conducted roll call.

> **Present:** Teri Bernero, Lee Gardner, Charles Hasemann, Jon Laing, Mark Meadows, Heather Pope, Traci Riehl, Abigail Tykocki
> **Absent:** Irene Cahill, Mark Dobson, Jacob Hampton, Dave Washburn
> **Late Arrival:** Shay Manawar (arrived at 9:20 a.m.)
> **Result:** Quorum present

2. Adoption of Agenda

Chair Tykocki called for a motion to adopt the agenda as presented.

> **Motion:** Charles Hasemann moved to adopt the agenda as presented.
> **Second:** Traci Riehl
> **Vote:** Motion Carried 8-0
> **Result:** Approved

3. Acknowledgment of LDFA Board Appointments

Chair Tykocki announced the following board appointments, each for a term ending June 30, 2030:

- Lee Gardner, appointed by Lansing Community College
- Jon Laing, reappointed by the Lansing School District
- Teri Bernero, appointed by the Lansing School District
- Jacob Hampton, appointed by East Lansing Public Schools

Chair Tykocki noted that the members were appointed by their appointing organizations and are seated as voting members; no board approval is required, and the motion acknowledges the appointments for the record.

> **Motion:** Traci Riehl moved to acknowledge, for the record, the appointments of Lee Gardner, Jon Laing, Teri Bernero and Jacob Hampton to the LDFA Board.
> **Second:** Heather Pope
> **Vote:** Motion Carried 8-0
> **Result:** Approved

4. Consent Agenda

The consent agenda included two sets of meeting minutes for approval:

- 4.1 — June 17, 2026 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- 4.2 — August 25, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes (Vision Session 4)

> **Motion:** Jon Laing moved to approve the consent agenda as presented.
> **Second:** Heather Pope
> **Vote:** Motion Carried 8-0
> **Result:** Approved

5. Acceptance of the FY2026 Independent Audit

William Wright of Rehmann presented the FY2026 independent audit.

- Rehmann reported no material misstatements, no disagreements with management, no delays in receiving information and no internal control issues. GASB Statement No. 103 changed the financial

statement presentation from a proprietary (full accrual) fund to a governmental fund presented for one year only, with comparative information in the MD&A and a new budget-to-actual schedule. The board had no questions.

> **Motion:** Traci Riehl moved to accept the FY2026 Independent Audit as presented.
> **Second:** Charles Hasemann
> **Vote:** Motion Carried 8-0
> **Result:** Approved

6. Approval of the Financials

Treasurer Riehl presented the financials prepared by the LDFA's third-party accountant, Clark Schaefer Hackett, including a comparison of budget to actuals:

- 6.1 — FY2026 Fourth Quarter and Year-End Financials (fiscal year ended June 30, 2026)
- 6.2 — FY2027 First Quarter Financials (July 1 – September 30, 2026)

Treasurer Riehl noted one correction to the FY2027 Q1 financials. All totals on the report are accurate, but a $15,000 charge for the MSUFCU Coworkerie sponsorship was recorded to GL 63500, TIC Sponsorship, and should be moved to GL 63550, LDFA MSUFCU Coworkerie Sponsor.

> **Motion:** Traci Riehl moved to approve the FY2026 fourth quarter and year-end financials as presented, and to approve the FY2027 first quarter financials with one correction: move the $15,000 charge from GL 63500, TIC Sponsorship, to GL 63550, LDFA MSUFCU Coworkerie Sponsor.
> **Second:** Jon Laing
> **Vote:** Motion Carried 8-0
> **Result:** Approved

7. TIF Plan Materials and Vision Session Update

Director Winn and Colleen Gaffney presented the following updates.

7.1 TIF Extension Update

- HB 5031 extends SmartZone state tax capture, allowing the SmartZone's 15-year TIF renewal (2027–2041). The bill was introduced in September 2025 by Rep. Ron Robinson with 21 bipartisan cosponsors.
- The bill passed the House Economic Competitiveness Committee in February 2026 and is waiting on the Speaker to bring it to the House floor.

- Director Winn asked board members whose organizations work with a lobbyist to ask them to advocate for HB 5031 after the election.

7.2 Vision Sessions Summary and TIF Plan Overview

- Four vision sessions were held April–August 2026: Developing a Vision (April 13), Operationalizing the Vision (May 6), Governance Structure (June 2), and Funding Model & Sustainability (August 25).
- Vision: The SmartZone is the unified regional innovation ecosystem for Michigan's capital region, bridging community entrepreneurship and MSU research to empower founders to build, grow, and scale their tech-based businesses. Guiding principles: strengthen regional partnerships, leverage existing assets, and support all stages of business.
- Proposed board structure: 12 seats (from 13):
    - 1 Ingham County
    - 3 City of Lansing
    - 3 City of East Lansing
    - 1 Michigan State University (previously appointed through City of East Lansing)
    - 1 MSU Research Foundation (previously appointed through City of Lansing)
    - 1 Lansing Community College
    - 1 Lansing School District
    - 1 East Lansing Public Schools
    - A new Program Advisory Committee would include public school districts, ISDs and local entrepreneurs. Takes effect July 1, 2027 and requires City Council approval of the amended operating agreement.
- TIF Plan Overview: Part 1 (past performance) shows TIF capture growing from $75,000 (FY2010) to $582,000 (FY2025); Part 2 (future performance) includes a 15-year operating budget growing from $1.0 million (FY2027) to $1.9 million (FY2041); Part 3 (tax increment and financing) covers a new 15-year term from January 1, 2027 through December 31, 2041, with no bonded debt.

> Board Member Shay Manawar arrived at 9:20 a.m.

7.3 Draft Documents: Review & Next Steps

Director Winn reviewed the approval process for the draft TIF Plan, amended Operating Agreement and amended Bylaws, which are included in the board packet. Board feedback on all three drafts is due to Director Winn by November 20, 2026. The TIF Plan and Operating Agreement are scheduled for action at a December 9, 2026 special meeting, followed by public notice, City Council hearings and approvals, MEDC approval and State Treasurer approval. The final Bylaws will be submitted in writing at the January

20, 2027 meeting, with a board vote on April 21, 2027. The new Operating Agreement and Bylaws would take effect July 1, 2027.

> **Motion:** Traci Riehl moved to (1) receive the draft TIF Plan, amended Operating Agreement and amended Bylaws for review; (2) direct staff to collect board feedback on all three drafts through November 20, 2026; (3) authorize staff and board members to share the drafts with city staff and MEDC for preliminary review; and (4) call a special meeting on December 9, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. to consider approval of the TIF Plan.
> **Second:** Charles Hasemann
> **Vote:** Motion Carried 9-0
> **Result:** Approved

7.4 SmartZone Name

Director Winn and Colleen Gaffney reviewed why the board is discussing the SmartZone name and three options: (A) keep the name, optionally adding a descriptor; (B) pick from the shortlist; or (C) explore with a marketing firm after the TIF Plan. Results from the board survey (8 responses) were shared, and board members gave feedback through Mentimeter.

- Mentimeter results: most board members supported or strongly supported the current name, and 60% said adding a descriptor would make them more supportive.
- Among new names, Capital Area SmartZone received the most support, followed by Build 517, Forge 517, Elevate and Grand River Works/Labs/Catalyst.
- Board members noted that “Capital Area” better reflects the three-county region served, rather than either city. Heather Pope noted the SmartZone is often referred to as the “Lansing SmartZone.”
- Abigail Tykocki and Charles Hasemann noted that resources are better spent supporting founders than hiring a marketing firm.
- On the final question, the majority preferred to pick from the shortlist rather than keep the current name or explore a marketing firm.

No action taken. The board reached consensus on Capital Area SmartZone; staff will incorporate the name into the draft documents, and the name decision will return at the December 9 special meeting.

8. Reports / Information

8.1 New LEAP Team Roles

Chair Tykocki shared updates to the LEAP team supporting the SmartZone: Harrison Leffel-Jones is transitioning to a contract role for grants and reporting; Jazmin Anderson is LEAP’s new Vice President of Small Business & Innovation; and Jillian Winn is now Executive Director of the SmartZone. The board thanked Casey Paskus for her work as Tech Grants Manager.

8.2 PA 57

Director Winn explained that PA 57 of 2018, the Recodified Tax Increment Financing Act, governs how the SmartZone captures and uses tax increment financing. Each year, the LDFA submits a PA 57 annual report on its TIF revenue, spending and activity to the Michigan Department of Treasury. The FY2026 report will be submitted by the deadline at the end of the year.

8.3 FY2026 Annual Impact Report

Director Winn presented the FY2026 Annual Impact Report, Leveraging Smart Momentum, and shared the report's social media video. Highlights:

- 139 companies supported (63% diverse); 22 new companies created; 47 new jobs created
- $17.5 million in private and public funds raised, about 20 times the $857,347 in tax capture (up from about 10 times in 2022)
- 2,700+ attendees at SmartZone hosted and sponsored events; 1,376 students in youth STEM programs
- $597,208 in grants through 65 awards to 47 companies; for every $1 in TIF-funded LAF grants, SmartZone companies accessed about $4.50 more in state and LEAP grants (BAF and TREK)

Director Winn asked board members to share the impact report with their appointing bodies and legislators as evidence for HB 5031.

8.4 Summary of Program Updates

- Capital Area Startup Studio launched its third cohort with 10 companies, including a strong group of tech companies. At the kickoff, one participant shared that the intake assessment alone had already changed how they think about their business and how to monetize it.
- The Conquer Accelerator wrapped up its summer East Lansing cohort with 5 companies, including 2 from the Lansing area: AbleVu (AI-powered mapping and location insights) and Infratico (sensors and software that predict when roads, bridges and other infrastructure need maintenance).
- The Hatching Pitch Competition, hosted by LEAP on October 8, brought together SmartZone tech founders and non-tech entrepreneurs competing for top prizes of $10,000 (adult), $5,000 (college), and $1,000 (high school). Thank you to LDFA board members Mark Dobson and Shay Manawar, and Rod Holmes of LCC, who joined at Lee Gardner's recommendation. Thank you also to Chair Tykocki for attending and supporting entrepreneurs.
- MSU Extension and Ingham County 4-H reached 187 students this summer at the Southside Community Coalition, East Lansing Public Library, REACH Art Studio, MSU's campus, and Ingham County Fair. This fall, they have lined up Intro to Coding with the Lansing School District, Citizen Science at Southside Community Coalition, Code Coaches with East Lansing High School, and Intro to Coding at two new sites, Edgewood Village and The Church of Many Hands.

8.5 Gateway Program Updates

Harrison Leffel-Jones presented an update on the MEDC Gateway Representative Program, funded by the Michigan Strategic Fund and managed by the MEDC Entrepreneurship and Innovation Division, and reviewed current grant programs, including the Local Accelerator Fund (LAF) and Business Accelerator Fund (BAF). He shared BAFs in review and BAFs approved since the last meeting.

- State Entrepreneurship and Innovation funding was reduced by 33% in this year's state budget, which will reduce statewide funding for high-tech, high-growth companies.
- The LAF is a $100,000 locally controlled fund that is stacked with statewide BAF funds.
- BAFs in review include Agridynamics Robotics (automated apple-picking robot; MSU Innovation Center company of the year), IOPRO, Troubleshot (Capital Area Startup Studio company now partnering with Fraunhofer), AbleVu (participated in Conquer Accelerator), Lifeline Firehose (participating in Venture Creation), and Albuderm.
- BAFs approved since the last meeting were secured by Casey Paskus before her departure: Iaso Therapeutics, BRCE, 936 Technologies (participating in Venture Creation), and Voysly.
- The SmartZone consistently ranks first or second statewide in BAF awards.

8.6 TIC & Alliance Updates: Tenant Report & Financial Report

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

- FY2026: $3,884 operational gain, mainly from a Google sponsorship and reduced expenses.
- FY2027: $29,260 budgeted loss through December 2026, due in part to the MSU vacancy on the TIC's third floor and no MSU rent overage coverage; assumes a $10,000 LDFA base sponsorship.
- Tenancy: 34 companies, with 28 at the TIC (21 virtual and 7 physical) and 6 at the Alliance Building. Five new companies joined this quarter, many in AI.
- Great Lakes Crystal Technologies is relocating to about 3,000 square feet in the Alliance Building, bringing 15–20 staff.
- The board discussed industry categories, including defense and dual-use companies; the MSU Research Foundation and SmartZone staff will align reporting categories.
- Renovation and a mass timber addition at the Rosenberg Center are underway; the MSU Research Foundation will move its headquarters there in December.

8.7 MSUFCU Coworkerie

Director Winn provided an update on the MSUFCU Coworkerie.

- Today marked the official launch of the SmartZone's presence in the MSUFCU Coworkerie.
- Board members were invited to a celebration following the meeting marking the official launch of the MSUFCU Coworkerie and SCALE programming.
- Information about the Coworkerie: https://lansingregionalsmartzone.com/coworkerie/

- The promotional video can be viewed at https://vimeo.com/1235947330

8.8 SCALE Programming

Jazmin Anderson presented an update on SCALE programming.

- SCALE is a new framework and on-demand platform; each letter represents a stage of the entrepreneur's journey.
- A 15-question intake form identifies a business's stage and provides access to more than 130 short videos (2–10 minutes) from local and regional experts, plus worksheets and templates.
- Entrepreneurs have an intake call with Jazmin Anderson or Director Winn and must complete milestones at each stage, including revenue, to unlock additional support.
- The curriculum will continue to be updated based on entrepreneur feedback.
- The new intake form for entrepreneurs to gain SCALE access is at: https://intake.purelansing.com/

9. Election & Adoption of Executive Committee Officers

Chair Tykocki noted that officers are elected at the annual meeting for a one-year term and take office at the close of the meeting. Chair Tykocki's two-year term as Chair concluded at this meeting. She will continue to serve as a board member. Ben Bakken, who served as Vice Chair, has concluded his service on the board. Traci Riehl shared that she is willing to rotate up from Treasurer to Chair, and Shay Manawar and Heather Pope shared their willingness to serve as Vice Chair and Treasurer, respectively.

Nominations were taken for each office, and officers were elected by ballot.

> **Executive Committee Officers Elected:**
> **Chair:** Traci Riehl
> **Vice Chair:** Shay Manawar
> **Treasurer:** Heather Pope
>
> **Motion:** Charles Hasemann moved to ratify the election of Traci Riehl as Chair, Shay Manawar as Vice Chair and Heather Pope as Treasurer of the Executive Committee.
> **Second:** Jon Laing
> **Vote:** Motion Carried 9-0
> **Result:** Approved

Program Committee

Chair Tykocki noted that committees are evaluated at the annual meeting. The Program Committee currently includes Irene Cahill, Traci Riehl, Abigail Tykocki and Dave Washburn.

> **Motion:** Charles Hasemann moved to appoint the following members to the Program Committee for the coming year: Irene Cahill, Lee Gardner, Shay Manawar, Heather Pope, Abigail Tykocki and Dave Washburn.
> **Second:** Traci Riehl
> **Vote:** Motion Carried 9-0
> **Result:** Approved

10. Look Ahead

10.1 Meeting Schedule & New 9:00 a.m. Start Time

Director Winn reviewed a new 9:00 a.m. start time for board meetings and the upcoming meeting schedule:

- Friday, November 20, 2026: Feedback due on the TIF Plan, Operating Agreement and Bylaws
- Wednesday, December 9, 2026: Special Meeting
- FY2027: January 20, 2027; April 21, 2027; June 16, 2027
- FY2028: October 20, 2027; January 19, 2028; April 19, 2028; June 21, 2028

> **Motion:** Mark Meadows moved to approve a 9:00 a.m. start time for board meetings and the meeting schedule as presented.
> **Second:** Teri Bernero
> **Vote:** Motion Carried 9-0
> **Result:** Approved

10.2 Upcoming Meetings

Director Winn noted the next meeting is a special meeting on Wednesday, December 9, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. to approve the TIF Plan and recommend the Operating Agreement to the City Councils. The next regular meeting is Wednesday, January 20, 2027 at 9:00 a.m.

11. Public Comment

Chair Tykocki invited board member updates and public comment.

Names / Organizations that gave public comment:

- None.

12. Adjournment

> **Motion:** Traci Riehl moved to adjourn.
> **Second:** Jon Laing
> **Vote:** Motion Carried 9-0
> **Result:** Approved

Chair Tykocki adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

The next meeting will be a special meeting on Wednesday, December 9, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

Following the meeting, board members were invited to a celebration in the MSUFCU Coworkerie at 10:30 a.m.

SUBMITTED BY: Laura Sumpter, Recording Secretary
STATUS: DRAFT – PENDING BOARD APPROVAL