

Mission: The mission of the Lewis County Development Corporation is to drive economic prosperity in Lewis County through innovative property development, strategic funding initiatives for business development and transparent community collaboration.

Board Members Present: Eric Virkler, Tyler McDonald (via Zoom), Larry Dolhof, Mick Lehman, Terry Thisse, Tim Petersen

Board Members Absent: Michele LeDoux

Others in Attendance: Megan Marolf, Jenna Lauraine, Amy Hawthorne, Tim Hunt

- I. Call to Order
 - a. Meeting called to order at 10:11 am by Tim Petersen
- II. Privilege of the Floor
- III. Minutes
 - a. **A motion to approve the January 8, 2026 Board Meeting Minutes** was made by Eric Virkler and seconded by Larry Dolhof. All present voted in favor and the motion carried.
- IV. Financial Reports – 2025 Year-end Recap & December 2025 Financials
 - a. The year-end balance sheet was presented by Megan Marolf. Larry Dolhof asked if we could shift some funds into a Money Market Account. With recent checks being cashed, the balance on the year-end report has decreased slightly. Black River Valley 50 K loan from LCDC has been addressed as a 6-month deferral. Tim Petersen asked how much discretionary cash the LCDC has available. Minus the VPR and CEDP funds, there is roughly 160K in liquid assets uncommitted to loans and grants. Updates: VPR Money Market is at 393K, the Loan Fund is 30K. Tug Hill Artisan Roasters loan is almost paid off. Red Barn Meats and Open Sky met their loan requirements.
 - i. **A motion to approve the Year-End and December 2025 Financial Reports** was made by Mick Lehman and seconded by Terry Thisse. All present voted in favor and the motion carried.
- V. Items for Approval
 - a. Reallocation of Business Retention Funds: LCDC Report Q4
 - i. Review of the VPR fund commitment, minus approx. 80K. Propose moving funding from BRF to VPR to be better used for programming. Reallocate 100K to meet VPR Funding applications and opportunities in 2026.

1. **A motion to reallocate 100K from BRF to VPR funding** was made by Tim Petersen and seconded by Eric Virkler. All present voted in favor and the motion carried.

b. Launch Lewis County Application

- i. The Committee met earlier this week. Request funding for 20K, leaving 15K remaining. CDBG Funds meet low to moderate income individuals and fulfill specific requirements. Applied for 300K from NY State, which is the maximum allowable. Applications open bi-annually.

1. South Cottage Industries request printed circuit board machine equipment loan and STEM enrichment program for Youth in the area. This business is expected to create jobs and they have presented a detailed business plan and are motivated entrepreneurs. South Cottage Industries is in Lowville, NY. Matching funds program. Committee recommends Board approval of funding for equipment and inventory.

- a. **A motion to approve LLC funding for South Cottage Industries** was made by Larry Dolhof and seconded by Terry Thisse. All present voted in favor and the motion carried.

VI. LCDC Report

a. Staff Updates

- i. **Naturally Lewis has hired a DOD and EDS**, they will begin 2/17 and 2/19. EDS is Keely Marriott and DOD is Roxanne Turck.

b. Commerce Park

- i. **Tim Petersen provided an overview of the Site and Property Development Board Committee** objectives and composition: The Committee is a mix of Board representation and County Legislators who are reviewing site identification methods, using known metrics and past reporting. The goal is to identify 2 to 3 strong available sites for consideration by summer 2026. The desire is for 1 shovel ready site and 2 others for business expansion or new development. This Committee will meet monthly to move the process forward. Future tasks are securing an engineering study and avenues of Grants/financing for the projects.

VII. Correspondence

a. Black River Valley Naturals Loan

- i. Tyler McDonald asked about this loan at the last LCDC Board meeting, prompting Megan Marolf to follow up with James Munn, the owner. The owner is looking to defer the loan an additional 12 months, bringing the deferral to 18 months in total. The owner was not being invoiced due to staff turnover at NL, contributing to the account falling into arrears. The owner has commitments to the LCIDA and the LCDC, and is asking for support during transition. Jenna Lauraine has worked with owner for sell sheets and connecting the owner with a buyer. Bulk of the business is co-manufacturing contracts. There is 1 remaining employee; owner needs equipment and certifications to secure contracts. Will secure 725K between the 3 desired contracts. Kosher and organic certification is needed, along with equipment upgrades. If the Board supports deferral, with another buyer in place, the buyer will allow business to repay debts. Deferral keeps building inhabited and prevents him from bankruptcy. Larry states he is close to losing access to sewer system; requires a pre-treatment sewage system. Town has requested that he cease and desist. Owner also purchased another area from LCDC- if he transfers and sells, does this include the back lot. LCDC may have first right of refusal, Jenna and Megan will follow up. LCDC is second lien holder, outstanding 50K loan. Buyer is bringing cash to the table- buyer is a successful businessman and has multiple businesses across the state. Recommend supporting the continuation of this business as a co-manufacturing entity. Board recommends continuing to support the business through the sale of the building. Full 6-month loan deferral is recommended for 50K LCDC loan, including interest. Jenna Lauraine will revisit the sewage issue and report back to the Board.

1. **A motion to approve a 6-month deferment on the Black River Valley Naturals loan** was made by Eric Virkler and seconded by Tim Petersen. All present voted in favor and the motion carried.

VIII. New Business

a. Lyons Falls Mill Site Update

- i. **Launched marketing, currently accepting expressions of interest through February 2026.** Will present any interest in the March Board meeting. Depending on future site use plans, NL will identify available funding opportunities.
- ii. Sam Grant: Mill Site demolition. Megan Marolf and Donna Dolhof will follow up with signed contract to secure funding that is due. Continued discussion based on interest.
- iii. Megan Marolf asked for historical information on the site and suggested the board consider developing a small commerce area with a building shell that could be customized per business needs. All utilities are in place and there is a possibility for reduced energy costs from Kruger. A mixed-use space may be the best opportunity for the lot and with the ongoing renovations at the Lyons Falls elementary school by TopView Apartments, there would be additional housing to support an influx of a new business(es).

b. West Leyden Elementary - Water Study

- i. Tim Flanders is interested in securing this property; requesting results from water study. Community Connections application is expected to seek additional funding to acquire the building. Capacity and use of the building are factors in water study. School would be applicant for the study, delaying the approval process likely until May. Potential for PILOT and economic development, Jenna is awaiting figures and multiple cost comparisons. Private well and there is no documentation regarding water source capacity and function. Needs commercial funding following draw down water study. Consideration for future funding, awaiting details and study results.

IX. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Larry Dolhof at 11:29 am and seconded by Eric Virkler. Meeting adjourned.



Lewis County Development Corporation
Off-Month Board Meeting Minutes
February 5, 2026 | 10am – 12pm
Lewis County JCC
Education Center | Lowville, NY

Next Meeting:

LCDC Regular Board Meeting – March 5, 2026 – 10am – LC JCC Education Center (Conference Room)