



East Palestine Community Improvement Corporation

August 25, 2026

Minutes

1. **Call to Order:** Ms. Herriott, Mr. Brittain, Ms. Smith, Mr. Clark and Mr. Blythe (arrived at 10:18).
Others Present: Village Manager Antonio Diaz-Guy, Courtney Stewart, Dave Powers, Misti Martin and Ben Ratner.
2. **Minutes:** The minutes of the 7/28/26 regular meeting were approved on a motion by Mr. Clark seconded by Ms. Smith.
3. **Financial Report:** Operating income as of the end of July totaled \$28,250.00, total operating expenses were \$28,814.00 for a net loss of \$32,952.00. Total liabilities/equities were at \$2,474,536.61. Mr. Brittain motioned to approve the July Financial Reports seconded by Mr. Clark. Passed unanimously
4. **Old Business***
 - a. **Project Updates**
 - i. **Depot:** The rough in plumbing/electrical is completed, inspected & approved. Black Diamond has posted updated pictures of the project. It was noted that because the exhaust air risers by the kitchen are low that a barrier would be needed across the bottom of the stairs for safety and also that per the lease NS must maintain means of unimpeded ingress to the tracks for emergency maintenance so a portion of the parking lot will not be curbed. The water connection has been made; the sanitary connection was brought to the needed point however there is terra cotta pipe that may need repaired. There is also a manhole with an unknown destination, the WS Dept. is still looking into it.
 - ii. **Plaza:** Strollo & Dynamic have given a list of **potential** edits to the project which could help bring costs down, those items include eliminating the

drive thru, changing the siding, changing the color of the roof from custom to normal, removing the pergola but leaving the footers to put it up later, changing the flooring, making the windows shorter, switching to a tankless water heater, off brand hvac instead of name brand, using aluminum instead of copper and using non-BAA light fixtures. The original bid from Dynamic was a little over a million dollars, these changes could save approximately \$ 108,500.00. At this time Lessee Ben Ratner stated if the drive thru/pick up land was eliminated he would have to drastically re-evaluate his projections for revenue. Additionally, it was noted that an Ansul (fire suppression system) would in fact be needed. Ms. Smith motioned to accept Dynamic Structures bid with the caveat that there will be value engineering deducts and the drive thru should stay in the design. The motion was seconded by Mr. Blythe. Passed unanimously. Ms. Herriott noted this project has become much more expensive than anticipated and they are trying to make this work for everyone involved including the community and Village Council. A date for the pitch deck for this project for the Jobs Ohio grant is forthcoming; this County has also reached out to encourage the CIC to also apply for the Downtown Renovation grant as well. At this time Mr. Brittain motioned to apply for the façade grant for 94 N. Market St, and the building renovation grant for the Plaza project as well as the old Chinese restaurant. The motion was seconded by Mr. Clark, passed unanimously.

- iii. **Former Jasar Property:** The EPA has awarded a zero-match grant to the CIC to fund a vap compliant phase 1 assessment as well as the completion of a limited phase 2 based on phase 1; these assessments will also application for federal/state clean up grants if there are serious issues. The federal EPA has suggested we apply for the \$500,000.00 clean up grant for the entire property; however, if awarded these funds could only be used for CIC owned property. Perspective buyers have sent contractors to the property to get quotes for needed repairs and have met with Jobs Ohio/Lake to River for potential funding options. Additionally, it was discovered NS was still paying for electricity for these buildings and had requested they be transferred to CIC asap.
- iv. **94 N. Market Street:** The lintel at the front of the building needs repaired, Dynamic Structures in working on a proposal to take down the lintel and brick work and re-establish a new front façade.
- v. **Village/Port Authority Economic Development:** The economic development between the Village and the P.A. is with attorneys for

review. The assignment/assumption agreement for the business park property is also with attorneys for review; the cost of the property (\$100,000.00) will be repaid upon assignment. Also in the agreement is that the P.A. agrees to set aside 10 acres for the YSU Training Center, YSU would like 20 acres, how the additional acreage would be paid is negotiable.

- vi. **Fundraising/Pavers:** The library worked with Town & Nursery and OT Beight for their paver fundraising project; they are available to purchase year-round. The memorial bricks were 12 x 6 is \$50.00, 12x12 is \$60.00, and 12x19 is \$75.00. Strollo & Howells and Baird are working on ideas on how this idea could potentially be incorporated into the Plaza area. Ms. Herriott would contact the library to see how much they have made so far.

5. New Business*

- a. **Res 9-2026.** Res. 9 was introduced and read by title only. **A resolution authorizing EPCIC President Barbara Herriott and Secretary Melissa Smith to be designated as authorized signers for the corporation.** Mr. Clark motioned to pass Res. 9-2026 seconded by Mr. Brittain. Passed unanimously.
- b. **The 2026 audit has been completed;** The recommendations were made by the auditors: 1. That the CIC should have a Records Custodian. (Mr. Brittain motioned to appoint the CIC Secretary as Public Records Custodian, seconded by Mr. Blythe. Passed unanimously). 2. It was noted that current Secretary Melissa Smith would need to sign the previous passed Public Records Policy Res. 4-2024. 3. The Public Records Policy should be posted on the CIC website at epohio.org.
- c. **90 N. Market St.** Bids from HSH Contracting and Brock Builders have been received to renovate into a suitable restaurant space (approximately \$250,000 and \$350,000). It was noted that in the long term this probably did not need to be a restaurant space and that a retail location would be more affordable/marketable and be completed in approximately 75 days. From the original \$500,000.00 loan from the Village there is \$359,357.00 left; this information was shared with Council to show good stewardship of the funds. \$522,000.00 is what is needed to complete the Plaza/Coffee Shop project. A quote from HSH Contracting was \$229,000.00 to return the space to a commercial restaurant; cost to make it into a retail space would depend on it being a single space or two separate spaces due to restroom placement. It was suggested to remove the range, hood and auxiliary kitchen equipment, keep the three bay sink and walk in freezer. This would save on plumbing/electrical cost. This information was presented to Council with the consensus being for the CIC

to get all three (Depot, Coffee Shop, and 90/94 N. Market) completed by Spring 2027 and they were on board with helping financially. Town Center & Associates out of Beaver has done an analysis of our downtown, from the railroad tracks to Main Street which they consider a “walkable downtown”. This is the maximum distance based on our geography that people will walk before they go home. They suggest specific levels of services in various communities including professional services, dining space, retail, and office space; ideally for a vibrant downtown the entire first floor should be dedicated to restaurants, personal services and retail. All upstairs should be professional offices and residential buildings with zero vacancies, parking should be on the back streets, when possible, zero first floor residences and no government buildings in the downtown district. A suggestion was made that tables/umbrellas in the Veterans Memorial area would be a good gathering place and that the upcoming Pocket Park project will also add to the downtown area. At this time Ms. Smith motioned to accept the current (\$229,000.00) quote from HSH Contracting for 90/94 N. Market Street with reductions to be made after contingent on Village Council releasing the needed funds, the motion was seconded by Mr. Clark. Passed unanimously.

6. **The next meeting will be on Tuesday September 29, 2026.**
7. **Adjourn:** Mr. Brittain motioned to adjourn seconded by Mr. Blythe. All in favor, meeting adjourned.

Melissa Smith-Secretary