

- I. **Call to Order:** The RDA Board of Director's meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. CDT on Thursday, September 11, 2025 with Chairman Donald P. Fesko presiding.
- II. **Roll Call:** Present: Donald P. Fesko, Milton Reed, Randy Palmateer, Chris Campbell, Alesia Pritchett, Anne Taylor, Todd Elliott, John Carr, and Jason Gilliana. Nine members were present constituting a quorum.
- III. **General Public Comment:** Jim Nowacki criticized government actions at all levels for negatively impacting the City of Gary, leading to population decline and financial burdens.
- IV. **Consent Agenda:** Chris Campbell motioned to approve the consent agenda with a second by Randy Palmateer. All were in favor, and the motion was approved.
- V.

1. Minutes: Board Meeting of June 12 th , 2025	Approved
2. Reports: MWBE Quarterly Expenditure Compliance (2 nd QRT 2025)	Approved
3. Reports: Buy Indiana Quarterly Report (2 nd QRT 2025)	Approved
4. Reports: Employment Quarterly Report by County (2 nd QRT 2025)	Approved
5. Reports: Employment Quarterly Report by Zip Code (2 nd QRT 2025)	Approved
6. Reports: Contractor Utilization Report (2 nd QRT 2025)	Approved

VI. **Action Items:**

- 1. **Banking Services: Transit Development District Revenues:** Sherri Ziller reported that in response to the Banking Services RFP, RDA received 12 submissions. Following a thorough review process, staff have selected two institutions, Centier Bank and Horizon Bank, as the recommended finalists. Among other qualities, both institutions have offered a competitive interest rate and agreed to waive all banking service fees.

Sherri asked the board for approval to move forward with these selections, with the intent of allocating the TDD accounts between the two institutions in a balanced and equitable manner.

Randy Palmateer motioned to approve the banking services with a second by Milton Reed. Motion carried by majority vote; one abstention (Chris Campbell).

- 2. **Contract Amendment: Egis BLN Consulting (Gary Blight Elimination):** Sherri Ziller reported that the RDA issued an RFQ for an owner's rep in May of 2024 and Egis (BLN) was selected from a total of 6 respondents. Egis has extensive local expertise in overseeing demolition services and was the selected vendor by NICTD for the demolitions along the double track and Westlake rail projects. Egis' scope of work includes: 1) procurement of demolition services, 2) demolition contract administration, 3) property management and control, 4) demolition oversight, and 5) final site inspection and clearance. Egis' original contract was for \$881,203. The amendment increases the contract to \$1,172,553 to adjust the original contract for contract and

demolition oversight. With this amendment, the total Egis contract is less than 10% of the program devoted to project and budget management, contract and demolition oversight, and administration.

RDA Staff recommends board approval of an amendment to the existing professional services contract with Egis BLN Consulting USA, LLC. The amendment is necessary to address the expanded scope of work required for contract and demolition oversight of the Gary Blight Elimination Program. Under the initial contract, contract and demolition oversight was not included in the scope because the costs would be dependent upon the projects to be demolished. Now that the demolitions have been identified, the contract and demolition oversight costs can be added to the contract scope. Approval will allow the firm to continue providing the expertise needed to support the successful advancement of the project.

Randy Palmateer motioned to approve the recommendation of the contract amendment, as presented, with a second by Alesia Pritchett. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

3. **Resolution 25-03—Master Lease Agreement: West Lake Project:** Sherri Ziller reported that due to the delay in the completion of the West Lake project, the existing Master Lease Agreement for the West Lake project needs to be amended. Under the current Master Lease Agreement, the RDA's \$14.1 million annual lease payment was for the lease of the completed West Lake rail line. The amendment clarifies that the current year lease payment by the RDA is for the lease of the Hammond Gateway Station, Hammond Station rail lines (Main 1 and Main 2) and the Hammond Station parking lot. The amended leased properties have been completed and are available for use.

Milton Reed motioned to approve Resolution 25-03, as presented, with a second by Chris Campbell. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

4. **Resolution 25-04—Funding Agreement- Gary/Hard Rock Convention Center Project:** Sherri Ziller reported that to release the State's match for the funding of the Lake County Convention Center, the City of Gary needs to prove an equal local contribution. This funding agreement between Gary, Hard Rock, and the RDA secures that local funding. Further, the agreement sets forth other responsibilities of the parties; such as, timing of deposits and uses of funds.

Alesia Pritchett motioned to approve Resolution 25-04, as presented, with a second by Randy Palmateer. Motion carried by majority vote; one abstention (Anne Taylor).

VII. Project Status Review

- a. **Surface Transportation and Development:** Sherri Ziller updated the Board on both rail projects.

West Lake:

1. Design is 98% complete; train signals and operating systems remain in progress.
2. BR101 at the Munster Dyer station was successfully installed on May 28, 2025. Work on the Main Street underpass continues to advance and the pedestrian bridge (BR101A) over Main Street has been installed.
3. Catenary system installation is near completion and work on system (e.g. communications and power) installation is beginning.
4. Final paving of the Munster/Dyer station parking lot has begun now that BR101 is complete.
5. An extended period of testing and commissioning is required between construction completion and Revenue Service.
6. The NICTD team is focused on getting the trains running as soon as possible. NICTD conveyed to their Board on May 28, 2025 that Revenue Service will not be until the end of the year or later. NICTD is working with the contractor to find ways to minimize changes from the current schedule and prevent remaining items from creating any further delays. The FTA grant commitment is May 20, 2026.

Double Track:

1. Overall Construction is largely complete.
2. NICTD is now operating in full double track mode.
3. DT2 (MC 11th Street Station): The grand opening ceremony for the station and garage occurred on June 18, 2025.
4. Revenue Service began on May 14, 2024, earlier than the FTA grant commitment of 11/6/2024.
5. NICTD continues to work on its scheduling and is coordinating with Metra to improve operations.

b. Transit Development Districts: AJ Bytnar reported that he continues to work with communities on requests for proposals (RFPs) and development opportunities and is making good progress. The RDA is currently awaiting actions related to tools authorized through legislation. Updates will be provided to the Board as projects advance and become public.

c. President's Report: Sherri Ziller reported on the following:

1. **NCSP**—while the results, in terms of the RDA's strategic directions for the next 20 years, were presented and discussed with the Board in its June meeting, the completion of the full text with "return on investment" estimates and research appendices has taken longer. After its availability on the website, Board members will be able to interact with RDA staff and consultants on specific details of the plan. Because of the plans' breadth,

there will need to be additional analytical and planning steps undertaken to implement the various aspects of the plan and RDA Management will provide information on scheduling these implementation steps in future Board meetings.

2. **Gary Blight**— demolition nears completion at the former Lovell's barbershop and C. Lee will commence demo on 5th Ave. properties later this week. After review and coordination, it has been determined the next RFQ will allocate the share of remaining funds to create the best economies of scale. Meaning, the project management and demo oversight will be the most efficient with multiple demos commencing simultaneously and the contractor pool expands with the scale of proposed demo.
3. **Professional Sports Commission**— Commission members met via Zoom in September. The discussion focused on the progress of strategic partnerships and the planning of future meetings. Chairman Jay Wilkinson highlighted ongoing collaborations with Andrew Berlin and Scott Dolson, while Don Popravak recommended contacting John List for economic insights on sports development in Northwestern Indiana. The group considered scheduling upcoming meetings, with Amy Jakubin proposing two dates in October, emphasizing the need to accommodate key participants.
4. **Annual Report**— production of the annual report is underway. Dave Wellman will be sending out a copy of the board bio pages for review and any updates needed.

VIII. Unfinished Business: None

IX. New Business: None

X. Board Planning Calendar: The quarterly Board meeting structure is reflected in the planning calendar.

XI. General Public Comment: None

Recess—Enter into Public Hearing

XII. Action Items:

1. **Resolution 25-05: Establishment of Land Development Entity:** the RDA Board convened a public hearing regarding the establishment of a Land Development Entity [LDE].

AJ Bytnar presented and gave a high level overview to the RDA board and public that the LDE aims to facilitate the redevelopment of contaminated and challenging

properties by addressing market failures, augmenting local government control, and partnering with the private sector. Benefits of the LDE would be to:

- o Preserve federal eligibility protection.
- o Acquire underutilized land.
- o Help region and local communities.

Anne Taylor expressed support for the LDE, noting its potential to assist communities by identifying, acquiring, and remediating underutilized land.

Jim Nowacki argued that the LDE might not benefit property owners, referencing a case where homeowners collectively sold their properties for a higher value.

Gilbert King supported the entity's creation, emphasizing the difficulty of acquiring properties for development.

Kathy Luther noted the potential for the LDE to preserve federal eligibility protection for brownfield sites.

Phil Taillon shared support for the initiative, referencing a successful development project following government involvement.

Matt Wells expressed strong support for the creation of the LDE. He emphasizes the LDE's potential to address barriers to development like fragmented land ownership, and lack of site readiness.

Dan Rohaley also voiced strong support, citing the need for flexibility in development processes.

Chris Campbell motioned to approve Resolution 25-05, as presented, with a second by Anne Taylor. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

XIII. Adjournment

Respectfully submitted by Amy Jakubin