

Minutes
Portland Development Corporation
Special Remote Zoom Meeting
Held on June 25, 2025

A special remote meeting, via Zoom, of the Portland Development Corporation (PDC) Board of Directors was held at 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 25, 2025. Present from the Board of Directors were Directors Jonathan Berg, Matthew Buonopane, Sam Dargan, Eamonn Dundon, Councilor Ben Grant, Assistant City Manager Dena Libner (arriving shortly after Item #2 was taken up), and Beverly Werber. Board President Kierston Van Soest and Directors Nathan Henry, Scott Kleiman, and Nikki Yanok could not be present. Present from City staff were Associate Corporation Counsel Avery Dandreta, Program Coordinator Kaela Gonzalez, Business Programs Manager Nancy Martin, Principal Administrative Officer Lori Paulette, and Housing and Economic Development Director Greg Watson.

Item #1: President's comments.

Director Dundon opened the meeting at approximately 12:04 p.m. and said he would be chairing in President Van Soest's absence.

Item #2: Review and vote to accept Meeting Minutes.

a. March 5, 2025 Meeting Minutes

This item was not discussed..

b. May 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes

On a motion made by Ms. Werber and seconded by Mr. Berg, the Board voted 6-0 to approve the May 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes.

Item #3: Review and vote on approval and recommendation to the City Council regarding the proposed Business Assistance (BAP) for Job Creation Guidelines.

Ms. Martin provided a history of the Job Creation Grant Program, which first received funding in 2012 and was recently recapitalized with \$205,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding in May of 2025. Key changes from the 2024 program include clarification on full-time and part-time hours, employers must maintain the job for six months, grantees will receive grant funding incrementally to accompany quarterly reporting, and eligible uses have been limited to just commercial rent to streamline the process and promote commercial occupancy in Portland.

On a motion made by Ms. Werber and seconded by Mr. Berg, the Board voted 7-0 to recommend to the City Council the proposed Business Assistance (BAP) for Job Creation Guidelines with an amendment to add the word “each” to the second bullet point under Grant Terms to read “Business will create one (1) full-time job at least 40 hours/week or two (2) part-time jobs at least 20 hours/week each for every \$10,000 of approved grant funding.”

Item #4: Review and vote on a recommendation for a loan application by Cognitive Community Care LLC, 415 Congress Street, Suite 418.

Ms. Martin introduced a loan request from Cognitive Care LLC, a community-based behavioral health agency owned by Leah Killinger, who is seeking \$100,000 to provide permanent working capital. The company, in operation since May, currently has three employees and plans to hire an additional fifteen. The primary revenue source is Medicaid reimbursements, which can take up to 30 to 60 days to process.

Ms. Martin introduced Ms. Killinger, who provided details on the services provided, referral sources, marketing efforts, and strategy for attracting and training new personnel.

On a motion made by Mr. Dargan and seconded by Mr. Berg the Board voted 7-0 to enter into executive session at approximately 12:30 p.m.

At approximately 1:05 p.m. the Board returned to the public session.

On a motion made by Mr. Dargan and seconded by Ms. Werber, the Board voted 6-0 (Ms. Libner left the meeting at approximately 1:00 p.m.) to table the loan request from Cognitive Community Care LLC.

Item #5: Review and vote on ARPA Microenterprise Grant Application from Babb's Ceramics, 62 Mellen Street.

Ms. Martin introduced a grant application by Babb's Ceramics, an art business selling handmade, one-of-a-kind ceramics. Funds would be used to assist with business expenses.

On a motion made by Mr. Buonopane and seconded by Mr. Berg, the Board voted 6-0 to approve a \$5,000 ARPA Microenterprise Grant to Babb's Ceramics.

Item #6: Treasurer's Report.

Mr. Dundon inquired about the beautification program's reserve, which Mr. Watson clarified as funds designated for visual and placemaking contributions, with further discussion planned for next year's budget.

Item #7: Staff verbal update.

Ms. Martin updated the Board on inquiries she had received regarding the interest-free loan product, which had been approved by both the Board and the City Council. Additionally, Ms. Martin noted that the vacancy ordinance, recommended by the Housing and Economic Development Committee, is scheduled for the Planning Board on July 8, 2025.

Item #8: Other Items to be discussed/brought up by Board Directors.

Ms. Werber inquired about revisiting the previously held discussion regarding interest rates.

Item #9: Next regular meeting date: July 17, 2025.

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There being no further business, on a motion made by Ms. Werber and seconded by Mr. Berg the Board voted 6-0 to adjourn at approximately 1:11 p.m.

Respectfully, Kaela Gonzalez