



Choose Columbia

Columbia Economic Development Corporation

**MINUTES DRAFT
COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Annual Members Meeting
Tuesday, April 29, 2025**

Columbia –Greene Community College 4400 NY-23, Hudson, NY 12534

Please take notice that the Columbia Economic Development Corporation will hold its annual meeting on April 29, 2025 with registration beginning at 7:30am at Columbia Greene Community College, 4400 NY-23, Hudson, NY 12534, for the purpose of discussing any matters that may be presented to the Corporation for consideration.

List of attendees is attached.

The meeting was called to order at 8:03 a.m. by James Calvin, Board Chair. He welcomed the attendees. He thanked Dr. Drummer, President of the college, for hosting and COARC for providing the food. He recognized the meeting sponsors. Mr. Calvin introduced Dr. Drummer as the first speaker. She thanked the attendees, noting she would be retiring at the end of June. She introduced several members of the Workforce Development Board noting their contributions. She outlined several of the current courses available at the college, including the Building and Construction program. Dr. Drummer announced there would be tour guides available for those who would like a tour of the campus after the meeting. Mr. Calvin presented Dr. Drummer with flowers as a token of thanks and appreciation for her work on the CEDC board.

Mr. Calvin introduced Columbia County Chair of the Board of Supervisors, Matt Murell. He welcomed the attendees and presented an overview of the past collaborations between CEDC and the County. He thanked CEDC and the Chamber of Commerce for their work on the Microenterprise program (Columbia Forward) which was currently in its second year.

Mr. Calvin presented Mayor Kamal Johnson as the next speaker. Mayor Johnson stated in the past year he had worked with CEDC through the Columbia County IDA, on projects for women and minority owned businesses and bringing old buildings back to life, citing the Crescent Building and the Pocketbook Factory projects. He thanked CEDC for its assistance through the past several years.

Mr. Calvin thanked the program sponsors for their contributions. He introduced Bernard McConaghy who was representing Hudson Valley Creamery. He explained the facility produced 70 branded products to major retailers, and have begun to offer their own brand of products to major retailers. He stated the company currently employed 34 people and had sales of \$2 million last year and were on track to have \$2.6 million this year.

Mr. Calvin introduced the current Board members and the attending past board members followed by the introduction of the attending dignitaries: US Congressman Riley's representative Georgina Oram; former US Representative John Faso; Jasmin Vasquez from the NYS Office of the Comptroller; Jacqueline Salvatore, Columbia County Undersheriff; Chris Liberati-Conant Columbia County DA; Jim Breig Columbia County Controller; Supervisors Ron Knott of Stuyvesant, Brenda Adams of Canaan, Kathy Eldridge of Greenport, Donal Collins of Chatham and Linda Mussmann of Hudson. He also introduced Carmine Pierro, chairman of the Columbia County IDA, Mark Taylor and William Gerlach of the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce;

Christine Jones, Chair of the Hudson Development Corporation; and Mike Yevoli and Joe Landy of Empire State Development.

Vice- Chair Tarah Gay introduced the keynote speaker, Michael Yevoli the Regional Director of Empire State Development. He reviewed the Empire State Development and its vision, highlighting the regional strategies and the goal of growing the state and local economies. He referenced the recent area projects including the Art Omi Pavilions, Klocke Estate, The Crandell Theatre, Olana and the Shaker Museum. He discussed the Power Up program targeting electric vehicles and the NY Forward grant which had been awarded to the Village of Kinderhook. He gave a brief overview of the \$400 million dollar Albany Plan which would address the NYS Museum as well as other upcoming projects and programs.

Mr. Calvin asked Mr. Tucker to deliver the Annual Report. He reviewed 2024 for the attendees. He stated the Board had updated their strategic plan, noting a copy of which was on the tables. He stated CEDC had provided grants and loans as a support to new businesses in multiple business sectors. He reviewed the Columbia Forward Program, which consisted of a NYS Office of Community Renewal Grant which provided training and grant money to 13 small business owners in 2024. He noted the program would be duplicated in 2025 as the County was awarded a second grant to be used for the same purpose.

Mr. Tucker stated significant progress had been made on broadband, reducing unserved addresses from 10,000 to nearly 600. He added that a \$120,000 Connect All grant had been received aiding the process. Mr. Tucker stated CEDC had partnered with the County on climate action and various other organizations on local events. Mr. Tucker stated since 2011 150 Columbia County projects had been approved by NYS for Economic Development Initiative funding, thanking Mr. Yevoli for his support. Mr. Tucker thanked Dr. Drummer for her support and assistance throughout her tenure with the College, and wished her well in her retirement.

Mr. Tucker thanked Mr. Calvin for his leadership of CEDC, the CEDC board members for their time and support, and Chairman Murell and the Board of Supervisors for their partnership and their funding. He thanked the Federal and State partners for their support and assistance. He thanked the sponsors and members present for their contributions, and the staff for their work.

Mr. Tucker asked Martha Lane to give an overview of CEDC's Microbusiness programs. She noted in 2024, the current value of the portfolio is \$4.5 million, which includes money on the street and funds available to lend. She stated over the last 2 years the Columbia Forward program had secured \$600,000 in funds as stated by Chairman Murell. She noted 13 grants from the funds had been distributed last year and anticipated distributing an additional 13 grants in the current year.

Ms. Lane stated a loan request for one million dollars had been submitted to and approved by the SBA, for the Microloan program. She stated the loan was expected to close in May and should be available by June for distribution. Over the past 10 years CEDC has loaned \$5.8 million to businesses throughout the County. In the past year 40 microloans were closed totaling just under \$800,000. Technical assistance had been provided to 150 entrepreneurs in 2025.

Chris Brown gave an overview of the Housing Program. He noted in 2023 he focused on outreach with the community and potential partners. In 2024 the focus was on a plus one accessory dwelling unit program for Columbia County, with access to grant monies. He stated Columbia County was the first county to have all towns, and villages submit applications for the program. He stated CEDC had submitted a successful application for NYS Homes and Community Renewal's Accessory Dwelling Unit with 4 applications received to date.

Mr. Calvin opened the CEDC business meeting at 8:55am and declared a quorum present. He called for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 30, 2024 annual meeting. *Rachel Puckett made a motion, seconded by Rachel Levine. Carried.*

CEDC Treasurer Bryan Mahoney presented the annual financial report.



Choose Columbia

Columbia Economic Development Corporation

Ms. Levine presented the slate of Directors for re-election as follows: James Calvin, Michael Johnston, Kenneth Leggett, Rachel Levine, Christine Hinz, for a term ending May 1, 2028. Gary Graziano was nominated to complete an unfinished term ending May 1, 2027. *Derek Grout made a motion, seconded by Sarah Sterling. Carried.*

With no other business to come before the members, the meeting was closed upon a motion by Carmine Pierro and seconded by Sarah Sterling, to approve the slate of nominees. Carried. The meeting ended at 8:59am.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Drahushuk