



Agenda for Meeting, 3/4/2025 4:30-6:00 PM  
In-person meeting, Miami Township Conference Room

**Voting Members:** Lisa Abel, Will Foster, Trish Gustafson, Brian Housh, Joanne Lakomski, Kevin McGruder, Marilan Moir, Alison Moody, Rebecca Potter, Michael Slaughter, Corrie Van Ausdal

**Ex-Officio:** Johnnie Burns, Jeannamarie Cox, Jane Fernandes, Terri Holden, Phillip O'Rourke

**Staff:** Meg Leatherman, Aaron Arellano,

**Invited:** YS News Reporter

**1. Call Meeting to Order, Meeting Agenda Review/Approval, 4:31**

**a. Introductions**

- b. Marilan noted that Steve Wirrig will be the new Township representative. She explained that he is the owner of the Wirrig Pavilion, has an extensive business background in senior management positions, and is currently at a company in Bowling Green. She noted that she thought he would be good in speaking with businesses interested in moving to Yellow Springs.

**2. Director's Report (Meg Leatherman)**

**a. Introductions; YSDC Overview**

Meg introduced Aaron Arellano, the recently hired Planning & Economic Development Coordinator for the Village of Yellow Springs. She noted that he is coming from Centerville and has an MBA. Has been on board for four weeks.

Meg provided a brief review of the history of YSDC, noting that the biggest takeaway is that the organization is very new, adopted by Village Council in 2019, and in the context of the pandemic, is very young. She added that we've accomplished a lot in that time, and that the mission statement aligns very well with state law. She reported that YSDC, as a Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) is required to be established through a Village entity by state law. CICs and the development corporations are defined differently. Municipalities and counties have different things they can do.

Meg explained that the purpose of CICs is outlined in section 1724 of the Ohio Revised Code as: "advancing encouraging and promoting industrial, commercial, and civic development." She noted that the purpose of development corporations are outlined in Section 1726. Aaron reported that he had researched CICs in Greene County, and distributed a handout that outlined some of the things that the Greene County Community Improvement Corporation, Centerville CIC, New Bremen CIC, Silverton CIC are doing. He noted that several had Community Reinvestment Areas providing tax incentives for investments in the areas, as well as other tax incentives for business investment.

Brian noted that as a CIC, 40% of the Board members need to be elected officials. Meg,

*Our mission is to support, incentivize, and attract economic development in Yellow Springs & Miami Township.*  
[www.ysdc.org](http://www.ysdc.org)

noted that one of our goals is to develop a clear plan as to how the CIC will operate in the Village. She explained that we can use these Greene County examples as guides to tailor our plan to fit the needs of the Village.

*b. Review & Finalize 2025 YSDC Goals*

- The Board referred to a handout prepared by Meg with a summary of 2025 goals. Lisa noted that we need to make a distinction between goals and activities to achieve measurable goals, and suggested that we use the SMART [Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Time-Bound, and Relevant] goal framework. Aaron suggested including an understanding of who we are trying to target to understand how we engage with them to meet their needs.

Brian suggested that we define goal areas of Support, Incentivize, and Attract. Will volunteered to walk the Board through the process of getting an understanding of personas of prospective businesses. Aaron noted that it will be based on data gathered. Will noted that you can build half without data, but the data will complete it.

Aaron discussed a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) retention program, Business First, that Yellow Springs used in the past, and suggested that YSDC consider using it. Brian noted it could provide structure to our business activity. Brian suggested doing one more iteration of goals. Meg and Lisa agreed to refine them more and send them out before the next meeting.

**3. Continuation of Goals Discussion**

- a. Creation of Subcommittee on Downtown – Goal to keep our downtown vibrant, bring spending power downtown

Meg noted that Jeannamarie reached out to her regarding a listening session she had with downtown businesses related to concerns they had about their businesses, and that she and Jeannamarie thought a subcommittee would be a good way to address the concerns. Jeannamarie noted that she attended a meeting that Phillip had with the downtown business owners, and because of the concerns she heard suggested a followup. Phillip reported that he had provided a statement of awareness at the Council meeting to convey that the concerns are being heard by the Chamber. He added that he thinks we can come up with great solutions. He explained some of the concerns: a change in market trends, business is down; they are concerned that there may not be a way out; downtown doesn't seem to be a focus of officials beyond verbiage; businesses are closing and the in the current economic environment, who is speaking to that concern? Jeannamarie, added that the concern was across the board, regardless of whether the business had a tourist focus or a local resident focus. She thinks the general focus should be "how do we keep the downtown vibrant?"

Michael asked whether those concerns have changed from pre-COVID period? Jeannamarie observed that the business environment has changed quite a bit since COVID, noting that we have fewer tourists, less interest in the downtown area by newer residents in the community, and more online purchases has resulted in a changed business model.

Will asked whether financial literacy training has been provided. Phillip indicated that the businesses have different needs. The question was asked as to whether we are thinking about what business might be brought in to replace businesses that may be closing. We have to have proactive measures. Michael asked whether the building owners are working with Philip. Phillip stated that the discussions serve as a launching point for possibilities to look at what YSDC can do.

Aaron proposed that we do a business walk and come to the businesses with a survey. Meg suggested that the subcommittee would do that and she suggested that Aaron join the subcommittee. Will expressed interest in the committee. Corrie emphasized Phillip's suggestion that we prepare for what can follow some businesses that move out.

In a response to a question from Michael regarding how many businesses participated in the discussion, Phillip noted that approximately 20 participated.

Trish noted that it is important not to have similar type new businesses. She asked how receptive our building owners are to considering viable new options for new entrants. Phillip noted that there's a relationship-building aspect to the proposed initiative that would provide an opportunity get a better understanding of building owners' perspectives.

Alison noted that there are two people interested in opening a book store and that they asked a local building owner to see a space, but the owner said they wanted a high traffic business. She suggested that we need to have more analysis on what the market can bear.

The prospective members of the proposed subcommittee on downtown business: Philip, Lisa, Jeannamarie, Aaron, Will

Brian made a motion to form the committee, which was seconded by Trish. The motion was approved unanimously.

Marilan asked for the boundaries of the downtown area. Corrie suggested that the Chamber list could be used as beginning resource. Phillip noted that not all Chamber members are downtown, but that if downtown isn't focused on, everything else will crumble.

Johnnie noted that Village staff has been speaking internally of piloting a plan to block off Short Street after the June 2025 Street Fair to keep people downtown from June Street Fair through October. Will suggested that this plan should be communicated with downtown businesses and the new homeowner

#### **4. Annual Election of YSDC Officer's (Housh)**

##### **a. President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary**

Brian noted that per YSDC bylaws the Board needs to have three officers, and that any positions can be combined. He explained that we don't have anyone stepping up for the Treasurer position. He asked Corrie to discuss the Treasurer responsibilities. She noted that it's not time consuming, adding that in the third week of the month she contacts the finance person at the YSCF for the financial report, and if there are questions she emails that person. She then creates a Treasurer's report. She explained that the bookkeeping is all done by the YSCF, including the 990, and that the Treasurer does create the budget. She added that she follows up to remind members regarding dues payments, but doesn't receive money or pay any bills.

Lisa noted that she was the initial YSDC president and then the staff person. She observed that it is getting more difficult for people to serve on boards, adding that we need people for these positions. She noted that she was concerned about a Council member being president when our staff member works for the Village. She would like to see if anyone would be interested in the President role, and that they would have Brian and her to assist them with the transition process.

Secretary: Rebecca nominated Kevin as Secretary, seconded by Michael. There was a unanimous vote in favor.

Treasurer: Marilan nominated herself; Corrie seconded. There was a unanimous vote in favor.

President: Lisa nominated Will as Pres, seconded by Michael. There was a unanimous vote in favor.

Vice President: Corrie nominated Brian as Vice President; Joanne seconded. There was a unanimous vote in favor.

#### **5. Outgoing President's Report (Brian)**

##### **a. Review Draft 2024 Annual Report- distributed**

Brian noted the YSDC commitment of better communication with stakeholder groups, and reported the continuing commitment to drilling down on clarifying and publicizing YSDC's identity. He asked people to review and provide feedback on the report to finalize at the April meeting. Brian suggested we think quarterly about how we keep people updated.

- b. Discuss YSDC Roles & Responsibilities & Plan to formalize vis a vis Village Tract
  - Brian- noted that the way we are discussing YSDC goals is getting at that.

#### **6. Treasurer's Report (Corrie Van Ausdal)**

##### **c. Treasurer's Report**

Corrie noted that there was no unusual activity. Meg noted that she received a 990 and asked who she should return it to; Jeannamarie noted that it should be reviewed by the Board and then approved, noting that it is due in October but Yellow Springs Community Foundation prefers to get it completed as soon as possible.

#### **5. Consent Agenda (Housh)**

Brian made a motion, which was seconded by Lisa to adopt the following resolution, which was approved unanimously:

- a. To accept the Treasurer's report as presented at today's meeting
- b. To accept the minutes of YSDC February 2025 meeting

#### **6. New Business (all)**

##### **a. Opportunity for board members & ex-officio's to share relevant news**

Joanne noted that she felt time constraints with our 90-minute meeting, and that we seem to honor the end time rather than the quality of the work. She asked whether we are missing opportunities to take things further because we are time-bound. Jeannamarie suggested that one way to address this concern could be by it reducing the number of items on the agenda. Meg noted that that usually she speaks with the President before the meeting regarding the agenda.

Corrie noted that she has concerns in the broader economic picture of the Village for those who work for the federal government, as well as the impact on regional dollars which is creating uncertainty which will affect interest in starting new businesses.

#### **7. Community Feedback**

Reilly Dixon asked about how YSDC creates its public notices. It was explained that YSDC used combine the notices with those of the Village Council, and that Council Clerk Judy Kiitner asked that they be separated, but more recently the ad was combined. Meg noted that Village staff member Matt Goetner suggested that, but that it will return to the separate notice format structure.

#### **8. Agenda Planning**

- a. Solar Project Update
- b. Local Retention/Engagement
- c. Regional Retention/Engagement Meeting Planning
- d. Update from Downtown Subcommittee
- e. YSDC Website

#### **9. Meeting Adjournment 6:00pm**

Brian made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Joanne, and approved unanimously.