

- I. **Call to Order:** The RDA Board of Director's meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. CDT on Thursday, December 11, 2025 with Chairman Donald P. Fesko presiding.
- II. **Roll Call:** Present: Donald P. Fesko, Milton Reed, Chris Campbell, Alesia Pritchett, Todd Elliott, Dewey Pearman, and Jason Gilliana. Seven members were present constituting a quorum.
- III. **General Public Comment:** None
- IV. **Consent Agenda:** Chris Campbell motioned to approve the consent agenda with a second by Milton Reed. All were in favor and the motion was approved.
- V.
 1. **Minutes:** Board Meeting of September 11th, 2025 **Approved**
 2. **Reports:** MWBE Quarterly Expenditure Compliance (3rd QRT 2025) **Approved**
 3. **Reports:** Buy Indiana Quarterly Report (3rd QRT 2025) **Approved**
 4. **Reports:** Employment Quarterly Report by County (3rd QRT 2025) **Approved**
 5. **Reports:** Employment Quarterly Report by Zip Code (3rd QRT 2025) **Approved**
 6. **Reports:** Contractor Utilization Report (3rd QRT 2025) **Approved**

VI. **Action Items:**

1. **Budget: Proposed 2026 Administrative Budget:** Bill Sheldrake reported notable changes to the budget that included increased public awareness/communication budget and a decrease in single audit requirements, and that there was a salary overage in 2025 due to a 27th pay period.

Chris Campbell motioned to approve the 2026 Administrative budget, as presented, with a second by Alesia Pritchett. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

2. **Budget: Proposed 2026 Project Planning and Due Diligence Budget:** Bill Sheldrake noted the following for the 2026 Project Planning and Due Diligence budget:

1. Decreased expenditures for rail projects (Double Track completed, West Lake near completion).
2. Increased legal costs (Ice Miller) due to Lake County Convention Center negotiations involving multiple parties (Lake County, Gary, Hard Rock, RDA, IFA). RDA expects reimbursement for these legal costs, as per statute.
3. MKSK (TDD planning consultant) expenditures flat for 2026 as NCSP work is complete.
4. \$250,000 placeholder for assistance grants to communities for TDD development planning.

Chris Campbell motioned to approve the 2026 Project Planning and Due Diligence budget, as presented, with a second by Milton Reed. All were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

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. The Munster/Dyer station is largely complete and final punch list items are being addressed.
3. Installation of new ties and rail fasteners to meet the electrical isolation requirements for the rails in the project specifications is complete south of the Hammond Gateway station. Work at grade crossings near the Hammond Gateway station will take place in the spring when asphalt is available to pave them.
4. Two of the electric transformers used to power the electric trains were found to be damaged and NICTD is evaluating the other two for any possible damage. NICTD is working with the supplier and contractor to investigate the cause of the damage to two of the electric transformers and what actions can be taken to replace them.
5. Catenary system installation is near completion and work on system (e.g. communications and power) installation is continuing.
6. An extended period of testing and commissioning is required between construction completion and Revenue Service.
7. The NICTD team is focused on getting the trains running as soon as possible. NICTD conveyed to their Board on November 24, 2025 that Revenue Service may be delayed until March 2026 due to the transformer issue. 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. With the opening of the parking garage at the 11th Street Station in June, the project is complete.
2. NICTD is now operating in full double track mode.
3. NICTD continues to work on its scheduling and is coordinating with Metra to improve operations.

b. **Transit Development Districts:** AJ Bytnar reported that interest in Transit Oriented Development continues to increase across multiple communities, with

steady development activity underway throughout the region. He noted that the Franklin project in Michigan City was partially completed in the spring, representing continued progress on planned TOD initiatives. AJ also shared that a new bank has opened in Hammond, contributing to economic growth in a transit adjacent area. In addition, several communities are currently considering district expansions and are working toward adopting the necessary zoning and development codes to support future TOD development.

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

NCSP – RDA Board members have been provided a copy of the RDA NCSP. The entire document, more than 200 pages, will be made available to the public on the RDA's website, immediately after the Board meeting. The plan covers the 6 major initiatives that were briefed to the RDA Board at the June 2025 meeting:

- 1) Create an LDE to Assist with Transformative Redevelopment
- 2) Reposition Regional Airports into Key Cargo and Passenger Aviation Hubs
- 3) Leverage Indiana Dunes National and State Parks for Regional/National Tourism
- 4) Remove Barriers to Growing and Strengthening Lakefront Communities
- 5) Expand Commuter Rail Transit to Serve More NWI Communities
- 6) Reduce the Negative Impacts of Congestion on Regional Highway Corridors

The document summarizes the engineering research that led up to these priorities and the economic impact estimates for the initiatives. At future board meetings during CY 2026, I will schedule discussions on the steps the RDA will be taking as we move to implement these initiatives.

Gary Blight— Demolition is complete on both of the initial buildings contracted through C Lee. Both demolitions had minor change orders less than \$10,000, one for an undetected storage tank and the other for regulated material disposal that was not apparent from initial review. Coordination has proceeded with finalization of the next bid package with an anticipated release in early 2026. RDA staff anticipate the next buildings demolished will represent a significant portion of the remaining funds and contribute the city's redevelopment efforts.

Lake County Convention Center— The RDA team has been working with Lake County, the City of Gary, and Hard Rock Casino to deliver the very transformative Convention Center project. A working group of all the parties, both legal and finance, have been meeting to prepare the legal documents and to develop the financing package. The working group prepared draft legislation for the Indiana General Assembly to consider which would strengthen the credit worthiness of the project to ensure the highest possible credit rating and bond proceeds. Currently, the County, the city, of Gary and Hard Rock are finalizing the development

agreement which will guide the construction of the convention center to ensure that the proposed project, accepted by the County Commissioners, is indeed the final, constructed project.

VIII. Unfinished Business: None

IX. New Business: None

X. 2026 Board Planning Calendar: The quarterly Board meeting structure is reflected in the planning calendar.

XI. 2026 Future Meeting Dates: The Board discussed the upcoming January Board Meeting, which will need to be rescheduled from January 8, 2026. The election of officers and other required statutory business will be conducted at the rescheduled meeting. Amy Jakubin will coordinate with Board members to identify and confirm alternative meeting dates.

XII. General Public Comment: None

XIII. Adjournment

Respectfully submitted by Amy Jakubin