MEETING MINUTES

Portage County Land Reutilization Corporation

Reed Memorial Library -- Jenkins Room

January 21, 2026 at 10:00 am

Meeting was called to order at 10:02 am by Chair Sabrina Christian-Bennett

Roll Call – Jessica Gartrell, confirmed all present signed in

Board Members Present: Sabrina Christian-Bennett, Mike Tinlin, Joe Bica, Sue Fields, Bridget Susel

Also Present: Olivia Pilon, Jessica Gartrell, Chad Murdock, Dan Morganti, Kaleena Gharky, Rachel Kerns

Annual Land Bank Meeting

Election of Officers

The Board proceeded with the annual election of officers.

A motion was made by Mike Tinlin to nominate Sabrina Christian-Bennett as Chair. It was seconded by Sue Fields. The motion carried with 5 yeas.

A motion was made by Sabrina Christian-Bennett to nominate Mike Tinlin as Vice Chair. It was seconded by Bridget Susel. The motion carried with 5 yeas.

Discussion was held regarding the Treasurer/Secretary position, with Bridget Susel noting she remains bonded under existing documentation, and changing the position would require new bond paperwork and signatures. A motion was made by Sabrina Christian-Bennett to appoint Bridget Susel as Treasurer/Secretary. It was seconded by Mike Tinlin. The motion carried with 5 yeas.

A motion was made by Sabrina Christian-Bennett to approve the complete slate of officers as presented. It was seconded by Joe Bica. The motion carried with 5 yeas.

Records Commission Report

Jessica Gartrell reported that staff continues to work through long-term record cleanup. Of the 19 boxes stored, 10 have been processed, along with one of the four filing cabinets. Staff is on track to complete the records disposition project before the anticipated office move at the end of April. The Board discussed retention requirements, clarifying that while the Land Bank maintains its own Records Commission, its retention schedule aligns with the County's framework.

2026 Meeting Calendar

The proposed 2026 meeting calendar was reviewed. Quarterly Board meetings and work sessions will continue on Tuesdays, following the established schedule from prior years. No objections were raised and no formal action was taken.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the Annual Meeting was made by Joe Bica and seconded on the record. The motion carried with 5 yeas, and Sabrina Christian-Bennett adjourned the Annual Meeting at 10:07 am

Quarterly Land Bank Meeting

Meeting was called to order for the Quarterly Land Bank Meeting at 10:07 am by Chair Sabrina Christian-Bennett.

Roll Call – Jessica Gartrell confirmed attendance.

Approval of the Minutes

The quarterly meeting minutes from October 21, 2025 were presented. A motion was made by Mike Tinlin to accept the minutes. It was seconded by Bridget Susel. The motion carried with 5 yeas.

Fiscal Report

Olivia Pilon reviewed the fiscal packet containing:

- The Income Statement
- Balance Sheet
- Cash Receipts Journal
- Cash Disbursements Journal
- Fixed Asset Register

She noted the following highlights:

- The Acquisition/Rehab/Resale program currently reflects a negative balance due to renovations scheduled for 2025–2026, with property sales expected to reverse the deficit.

- The Building Demolition & Site Revitalization (BDSR) reimbursement of approximately $400,000 is in its final approval stage.
- Brownfield Remediation Program (BRP) projects experienced delays due to escrow and document timing, shifting substantial work into 2026–2027.
- During 2025, the Land Bank acquired 26 parcels and disposed of 17 parcels, indicating continued inventory turnover.

The Board discussed line items exceeding budget projections, including salary/benefit timing and lease payments tied to January pre-payments under County policy.

A motion was made by Bridget Susel at the suggestion of Chad Murdock to approve the three budget line items that exceeded projections. It was seconded by Mike Tinlin. The motion carried with 5 yeas.

A motion was made by Sabrina Christian-Bennett to approve the fourth quarter financial report and property inventory. It was seconded by Joe Bica. The motion carried with 5 yeas.

2026 Budget Update

A preliminary draft of the 2026 Budget was reviewed. The Board requested a standardized GAAP-aligned version, consistent with prior years, before taking formal action. The completed version will be distributed electronically for approval.

2025 Basic Financial Statements & Audit

Julian & Grube will complete the 2025 Basic Financial Statements, marking the final year of the current contract. The Auditor of State will conduct the 2025 audit beginning in summer. No formal action was required.

Grants Report

Building Demolition & Site Revitalization (BDSR)

The final reimbursement for the last round remains outstanding. Approximately $230,000 in new funding remains available through May 1, with the ability to add substitute properties due to four original submissions dropping off.

Brownfield Remediation Program (BRP)

Four sites remain active. Three have secured extensions; the fourth (West Williams) will require an additional extension later this spring. The 2026 BRP application approaches the full allowable request, supporting remediation, assessment, and Phase II work across several high-priority sites.

Welcome Home Ohio

Six properties from the 2024 cycle remain in various stages (rehab, bid, construction). Staff learned of a new program restriction prohibiting profit-splitting with nonprofit partners such as NDS, requiring a shift toward developer-fee structures. Discussions are underway with NDS to identify allowable cost-sharing models.

A motion was made by Bridget Susel to affirm the five properties submitted in the 2026 Welcome Home Ohio application. It was seconded by Mike Tinlin. The motion carried with 5 yeas.

Other Business

Office Lease Proposal

The Board discussed relocating to 640 W. Main Street, Ravenna, noting substantial cost savings ($325/month, utilities included) and better street visibility. Requested edits include:

- Clarification on subletting language
- Removal of "certain office space" wording to describe the full premises
- Inclusion of a site plan showing layout and wall-removal details

A revised lease will be circulated for electronic approval.

Ohio Land Bank Association Conference

The 2026 conference will take place April 22–24, with early-registration savings available. Members were encouraged to confirm attendance.

Next Meeting

The next Work Session will be held on March 17, 2026 at 10:00 am at Reed Memorial Library – Jenkins Room. Budget and lease approvals will be completed electronically.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Sue Fields and seconded by Joe Bica. The motion carried with 5 yeas, and Sabrina Christian-Bennett adjourned the meeting at 10:50 am.

Sabrina Christian-Bennett

Chair, Sabrina Christian-Bennett

Olivia Pilon

Executive Director/Secretary, Olivia Pilon