



NORTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

49 Ridgmont Drive, Ridgway, PA 15853

Phone: (814) 773-3162

Fax: (814) 772-7045

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY COMMITTEE (CEDS)

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 20, 2026 – 10:00 AM

A virtual meeting of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee was held on Wednesday, May 20, 2026. Chair Richard Fry opened the meeting welcoming everyone. As Rick had another meeting to attend, he recommended that Sherry oversee the meeting and process any actions. Tracy Gerber made a motion to approve this transition, seconded by Mike Handley. The motion unanimously passed.

Voting Committee Members

Anita Holman, McKean Co. Redev. & Housing Authority
Ann Robinson, McKean Co. Economic Development
Brian Reid, Cameron County
Cliff Clark, Cameron County Planning
Jessica Seary, Jefferson Co. Dept. of Development
Jill Martin-Rend, BC 3@Brockway
Jodi Brennan, Clearfield Co. Planning
Kal Logue, Potter Co. Planning
Kate Kennedy, Kane Area Development Center
Katie Donald, Punxsutawney Area Hospital
Matt Pfeufer, City of St. Marys
Mike Handley, Ridgway Borough
Paul McCloskey, Clearly Ahead Development
Richard Fry, McKean Co. Planning
Tina Johns-Solak, Cameron Co. Chamber of Commerce
Tom Jesberger, Abbott Furnace (Retired)
Tracy Gerber, Elk Co. Planning

Ex officio Members and Guests

Rep. Michael Armanini, 75th District
Rep. Brian Smith, 66th District
Christi Martone, DCED
Joy Fronzoli, DCED
Marty Wilder, McKean Co. Commissioner
Pam Streich, Workforce Solutions
Heidi Scivo, Bradford Chamber of Commerce
Carolyn Newhouse, Bradford Area Alliance
Michelle Bogacki, Ridgway CofC/RAID
Tina Gradizzi, St. Marys EDC

North Central Staff

Sherry Dumire
Amy Kessler
Jim Chorney
Connor Vecellio
Mikala Biondi
Aidan Bobik
Mary Lou Jessop

There was a quorum for the meeting.

Approval of the March 18, 2026 Meeting Minutes

With no corrections to the March 18, 2026 CEDS minutes, Sherry called for a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Ann Robinson moved to approve the March 18, 2026 CEDS minutes as presented, seconded by Paul McCloskey. The motion unanimously passed.

Member Resignation

We received the resignation of Brad Lashinsky, Clearfield County. Sherry has been in contact with the Commissioners of Clearfield County for a replacement. When that is received, it will be brought before the Committee for approval. Pam Streich moved to accept the resignation of Brad Lashinsky with regret, seconded by Jodi Brennen. The motion unanimously passed.

Newly Appointed Members

We are delighted to welcome LaKeshia Knarr from the PA Wilds Center and Will Hunt, Potter County Planning Director, to the CEDS. Kate Kennedy made the motion to approve Lakeshia and Will to the CEDS, seconded by Ann Robinson. The motion unanimously passed.

CEDS Update

Sherry presented updates to the CEDS plan based on public comments, including corrections, project additions, and document enhancements, and led the group through a review of the final draft before recommending it for board approval.

The public comment period ran from April 13 to May 13. Corrections included fixing a date typo in the public comment document and resending updated forms to all distribution locations.

Two projects were added to the CEDS plan: the 4th Street School Redevelopment Project in Cameron County and the KeyState Energy Project in Clearfield County. Additionally, a previously omitted county-submitted project was included.

Spelling corrections (e.g., 'Allegheny'), as well as clarification of abbreviations (e.g., 'AIDS' for Area Industrial Development), and inclusion of a detailed survey analysis by Aidan were made. The group agreed to summarize state game land acreage as 'over 200,000 acres.'

Paul highlighted the importance of the action plan section, and Amy and Ann suggested creating a tracking spreadsheet for committee and county use. The group agreed to develop a standard tracking tool and consider an annual update meeting.

After review and discussion, Pau McCloskey made a motion to recommend the CEDS plan be presented to the North Central Board of Directors for their approval, second by Pam Streich. The motion unanimously passed. The plan will be forwarded to the board and, upon approval, to the EDA.

Sub-Committee Updates

Housing

Aidan reported that the Housing Subcommittee met on May 5 to finalize data sources for the vacancy and distressed properties index, which will use six measures from various sources. The analysis is ongoing and will be presented publicly when completed.

Natural Resources & Tourism

Jessica noted that the subcommittee had not met recently but is planning to schedule a meeting. Katie Donald created a Google Doc for compiling information for a resource guide, which is in early development.

Workforce

Pam reported they haven't had recent meetings but committed to schedule one before the next CEDS meeting.

Amy mentioned that subcommittees will receive the draft tracking document for feedback and implementation alignment.

Infrastructure Subcommittee and TIP/RPO Activities

Connor updated that the public comment period for the draft TIP runs through May 31, with a public meeting scheduled and approval targeted for June 9. Amy added that the long-range plan update is kicking off with pop-up events in June, ensuring integration with the CEDS.

Entrepreneurship & Business Assistance

Mikala will be scheduling a meeting in June so she can have an update at the July meeting.

Round Table Discussion

Johnsonburg Strategic Plan and Downtown Revitalization

John McGranor and Joy Fronzoli presented the Johnsonburg Borough Strategic Plan, focusing on downtown revitalization and the potential for a business incubator, and discussed funding options and the need for a feasibility study.

Johnsonburg Borough's strategic plan, developed with public input, identified four priorities: downtown improvement, housing quality, partnerships/shared services and blight elimination. The plan is nearing completion, with a separate blight plan underway.

The borough is renovating the historic Brick Block Building, with three units completed and 12 remaining vacant. The plan includes creating affordable rental space and possibly a business incubator, seeking partnerships with organizations like PennWest Clarion Small Business Center and PA Wild Center.

The group discussed funding challenges and the potential for MAP and Main Street grants. Christi Martoi noted ongoing conversations with Representative Armanini and the need for a feasibility study to unlock further funding opportunities.

John explained the Municipal Assistance Program (MAP) for planning grants, with a September 30 deadline, and the Community Technical Assistance Program (CTAP), which offers up to 400 hours of free planning help. Links and further information will be shared with the group.

Cameron County

There was no report

Clearfield County

Paul discussed the upcoming Federal Opportunity Zone designation, whitewater projects in engineering, and a challenging spec building project in Du Bois. Jodi reported on energy grid education efforts, infrastructure upgrades, and a new natural gas/data center project partnership.

Elk County

Tracy announced the **“Elk County Salutes America’s 250th Anniversary: The Great American Duck Race”** on Saturday, June 27, 2026, at Sandy Beach Park from 11:30 AM – 4 PM. Mike Handley reported on plans for a new boat launch at the Ridgeway Mills Riverfront, with funding secured and completion targeted for October. Matt Pfeufer updated on the City of St. Marys data center zoning revision is out for public comment.

Jefferson County

Jess reported a \$1.2 million grant for asbestos abatement at a dilapidated hospital, with future plans for demolition and redevelopment. Katie Donald highlighted a multimodal grant for new sidewalks, ongoing co-working space promotion, and progress on the hospital outpatient expansion project.

McKean County

Ann described the closure of Bradford Hospital's ER and related healthcare access concerns, ongoing work on ordinances for solar, wind, and data centers, a new workforce housing project, broadband expansion through BEAD programs, and recent grant successes. Kate Kenedy reported on the Knox and Kane Rail Trail completion, police station relocation and the Kane Area Children's Museum renovation

Potter County

Kal announced the enactment of the Revitalize Potter County plan, funded by a MAP grant, and the expansion of the Wild Out Gravel project in collaboration with Cameron County.

Workforce Development and EMS Study Updates

The McKean County Career Link is relocating, with staff maintaining services virtually and reopening scheduled. Career links across the region are hosting successful job fairs and awarding training grants. The region met its goal of \$200,000 in incumbent worker training reimbursements, with plans to continue next year. The mobile career link unit is being scheduled for various locations, including courthouse events, to increase accessibility.

The EMS study, led by MCM Consulting and supported by Representative Marty Causer and the McKean County Commissioners, is nearing a draft release. The study logs call data to identify solutions for regional emergency services challenges.

The region received a Jobs for Veterans State Grant, with employment rallies held and more planned, in collaboration with Elk County partners to avoid duplication and maximize solutions.

Amy raised a previously submitted concept paper for EMS and 911 funding via insurance, which could generate significant regional revenue. Pam confirmed the consulting firm and legislators have the proposal and will ensure it is considered in the study's solutions.

Final Thoughts and Adjournment

The next CEDS meeting will be Wednesday, July 15, 2026, starting at 10:00 AM.

With no other comments, Sherry called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Pam Streich moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ann Robinson. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM.