

Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association Meeting

AGENDA for May 13, 2026, at 12 p.m.



This meeting will be held In-person in the **McCloskey Conference Room (Suite 150, City Hall, 401 N. Morton St)** and may also be accessed via Zoom at the following link:

<https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/84576005312?pwd=SERpaXRLenV0U0J6dXlCNTVGVmNPUT09>

Meeting ID: 845 7600 5312

Passcode: 953182

Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association meetings can be watched on CATS TV, available here: <https://catstv.net/>.

Materials for this meeting can be found on the Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association's website, which is located at the following address: <https://bloomington.in.gov/business/buea/meetings>

1. **Roll Call**
 - Approval of Minutes - March 2026
2. **Director's Report**
3. **Financial Report**
 - Grant Update
4. **New Business -**
 - Election for Secretary
5. **General discussion**
6. **Adjournment**

Board Membership

Pursuant to applicable law and policy, and in compliance with Indiana Code 5-14-9-6, the following details are provided regarding the officers serving on this committee:

Name	Appointed By	Term
Heather Robinson, Chair	Mayor	2/1/2024 - 1/31/2028
Felisa Spinelli, Vice Chair	Common Council	2/1/2023 - 1/31/2027
Kate Rosenberger	Common Council	2/1/2025 - 1/31/2029
Katarina Koch	Common Council	
Virginia Githiri	Mayor	2/1/2024 - 1/31/2028
Jane Kupersmith	Mayor	2/1/2024 - 1/31/2028
Michael Hover	Mayor	2/1/2024 - 1/31/2028
Brad Wisler	Mayor	2/1/2024 - 1/31/2028

The City of Bloomington is committed to providing equal access to information. If you encounter difficulties accessing this notice or related meeting materials, please contact the Department of Economic and Sustainable Development at 812-349-3419 or e-mail esd@bloomington.in.gov and provide your name, contact information, and a link to or description of the document or web page you are having problems with.

Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association

Board Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2026 | 12:05 p.m. | McCloskey Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

- Jane Kupersmith, BUEA
- Virginia Githiri, BUEA
- Heather Robinson, BUEA
- Katerina Koch, BUEA
- Kate Rosenberger, BUEA
- Michael Hover, BUEA
- Felisa Spinelli, BUEA (remote)

STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT

- De de la Rosa, Economic & Sustainable Development (staff liaison)
- Taegan Garner, staff
- Cheryl Gilliland, Deputy Controller, City Controller's Office
- **Guest:** Eric Ost, member of the public

Absent: Brad Wisler (scheduling conflict)

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order. The board welcomed its newest member, Katerina Koch, who fills the C3 position previously held by Mary Morgan. Koch introduced herself: she relocated to Bloomington over 12 years ago, left for approximately 7 years, and returned in 2023. She currently serves as Executive Director of the Lotus Education Arts Foundation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES — DECEMBER 2025 AND FEBRUARY 2026

Staff noted that the December 2025 minutes required re-approval due to an error in the original recording and notes in which motion and second language was omitted. The board agreed to consider approval of the December 2025 and February 2026 minutes together.

No corrections or comments were raised on either set of minutes.

Motion to approve the December 2025 and February 2026 meeting minutes. Motion carried by roll call vote (all members present voting yes).

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Staff reported on the following:

- **EZID Reminders and Invoices:** Outreach to zone businesses will be sent the following week. Staff confirmed that DMA will continue to represent Novo Nordisk.
- **Board Vacancies:** Board members were reminded to submit recommendations for remaining open seats to staff or directly to Jennifer Crossley in the Clerk's Office.
- **Entrepreneurship Support Organization (ESO) Convening:** Staff participated in a recent ESO meeting with representatives from the Mill, SBDC, and the Chamber of Commerce. Discussion focused on organizational roles and shared resources.
- Key outcomes and initiatives from the ESO meeting include:
 - o A rotating resource desk at the Mill, open to the public and entrepreneurs, where staff from each organization will take turns providing information about available programs and services.
 - o A database of resources compiled by former Amplify small business staff, to be developed into a resource guide and eventually used for ecosystem mapping. BUEA will be included in the database.

FINANCIAL REPORTS — Q4 2025 / YEAR-END

Deputy Controller Cheryl Gilliland presented the Q4 2025 financial reports, including a budget-to-actual summary and year-end balance sheet. Key highlights:

- **Revenue:** BUEA exceeded budgeted income by approximately 83%, in part due to back-payments received during the year.
- **Expenses:** BUEA spent 61% of its budgeted expenses, an improvement from 48% in 2024, reflecting more realistic budget-setting and stronger program delivery.
- **Grant Expenditures:** Across all grant categories, BUEA spent approximately 56% of budgeted grant funds. Staff noted that while 100% utilization is the goal, an average of 50% across programs is considered a strong benchmark given the volume of funds and variation in program demand.
- **Management Fee Correction:** The administration category shows a 14% overage due to a \$50,000 check written to the City of Bloomington for internal management that was inadvertently deposited back into the BUEA account rather than the City account. A corrected payment was issued in January 2026, which will appear as a negative \$50,000 in Q1 2026 reporting. The net income for 2025 is therefore approximately \$500,000 higher than shown, and the overage in the admin category is not a true overage.
- **PALS Loan Balance:** The year-end balance sheet still reflects the PALS loan balance, which the board authorized for forgiveness following the summer 2023 tornado. Because the correction did not occur until after year-end and forgiveness funds are already budgeted in 2026, the board agreed to reflect the adjustment in 2026 reporting rather than make a prior-year adjustment.

Motion to approve the Q4 2025 financial reports as presented, with the notation that the management fee overage reflects a corrected accounting error and does not represent an actual overspend. Motion carried by roll call vote (all members present voting yes).

BUSINESS BUILDING IMPROVEMENT GRANT APPLICATION — WONDERLAB

Staff disclosed serving on the WonderLab board in a non-voting capacity and confirmed with legal counsel that presenting the staff report does not constitute a conflict of interest, as staff is not voting and is acting in a staff liaison role, not as a board representative.

Project Summary: WonderLab applied for a Business Building Improvement Grant to fund the replacement of windows in its facility, which are original to the building. WonderLab has received BUEA grants previously but has not previously applied for this specific grant program.

Grant Request: \$4,094.16 (50% match required)

Total Project Cost: \$8,188.31

- **Windows (City Glass):** \$7,793.11
- **Staff labor (installation-day operations):** \$395.20

Discussion — Staff Labor Costs: The board discussed the inclusion of \$395.20 in WonderLab staff time, representing approximately 16 hours of labor to clear the gift shop and be present on-site during the installation. The installation is scheduled for a Monday, when WonderLab is closed and staff would not ordinarily be working. The board noted this level of detail and justification has not typically appeared in prior applications, where labor costs are generally lumped under a single line item.

The board reached general consensus that the staff labor cost is reasonable and appropriate in this case given the following factors:

- The installation requires the gift shop to be cleared of merchandise, which is work specific and necessary to the project.
- The installation is scheduled on a Monday, when the museum is closed, meaning staff are being called in outside their normal schedule.
- WonderLab documented the rationale clearly in their application narrative.

The board also discussed whether to add explicit language to grant guidelines addressing staff labor eligibility. Views included:

- Adding a cap on reimbursable staff time (e.g., a dollar or percentage limit).
- Allowing staff time to count toward the applicant's required match rather than as a direct grant expense.
- Deferring any policy language pending further experience with such requests, to avoid creating an easy avenue for larger or less justified claims.
- Ensuring that any future eligibility language is applied consistently across for-profit and nonprofit applicants.

Staff noted that the Business Building Improvement Grant does not currently include a list of ineligible expenses (unlike the Minor Improvement grant, which does), and flagged this as an item to address in future guideline updates.

Action Item: Staff will develop a recommendation for the board on how to address staff labor costs in grant guidelines, including possible cap language or in-kind match treatment.

Motion to approve the WonderLab Business Building Improvement Grant application in the amount of \$4,094.16, including the staff labor component as presented. Motion carried by roll call vote (all members present voting yes).

Grants - Education:	2025 Budget	2025 disbursed	2025 Balance	2026 Budget	Disbursed/ Committed in 2026	Balance	
School Grants (MCCSC Foundation)	\$ 50,000.00	\$ (50,000.00)	\$ -	\$ 75,000.00	\$ (75,000.00)	\$ -	Annual commitment - 25k increase for 2026
Resident Economic Independence Scholarships	\$ 15,000.00	\$ (1,790.00)	\$ 13,210.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -	\$ 15,000.00	a scholarship to attend post-secondary classes to further their economic independence
Lemonade Day	\$ 2,500.00	\$ (2,500.00)	\$ -	\$ 2,500.00	\$ (2,500.00)	\$ -	Annual Commitment to the Boys & Girls Club supporting youth entrepreneurship
Sub-Total	\$ 67,500.00	\$ (54,290.00)	\$ 13,210.00	\$ 92,500.00	\$ (77,500.00)	\$ 15,000.00	

Grants - Entrepreneurship:	2025 Budget	2025 disbursed	2025 Balance	2026 Budget	Disbursed/ Committed in 2026	Balance	
Ivy Tech/SBDC/Cook Center	\$ 45,000.00	\$ (90,000.00)	\$ (45,000.00)	\$ 45,000.00	\$ -	\$ 45,000.00	Annual grant agreement
Business Economic Enhancement Scholarship	\$ 10,000.00	\$ (2,400.00)	\$ 7,600.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ (3,200.00)	\$ 6,800.00	Used to pay for economic development classes, business workshops, professional organization membership dues, or
Dimension Mill Zone day passes	\$ 1,000.00	\$ (1,000.00)	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	\$ -	\$ 1,000.00	1-day pass per to work at the Mill
Uncategorized grants	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	Moved to BBIG
Unbudgeted Grants	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	Moved to BBIG as funds have not been utilized multiple years
Sub-Total	\$ 76,000.00	\$ (93,400.00)	\$ (17,400.00)	\$ 56,000.00	\$ (3,200.00)	\$ 59,200.00	

Grants - Arts and Culture:	2025 Budget	2025 disbursed	2025 Balance	2026 Budget	Disbursed/ Committed in 2026	Balance	
Arts Incubator	\$ 100,000.00	\$ -	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ -	\$ 100,000.00	ADA-accessible construction costs & professional development program for resident artists
Bloomington Arts Commission Arts Project and Operations grants	\$ 50,000.00	\$ (27,982.00)	\$ 22,018.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ -	\$ 50,000.00	Discretionary spending on City-led arts initiatives, including \$25,000 to Waldron Arts Center operating expenses
City Arts Programming	\$ 40,000.00	\$ (40,000.00)	\$ -	\$ 40,000.00	\$ -	\$ 40,000.00	Bloomington Arts Commission Arts Project and Operations grants
Unbudgeted grants	\$ 20,000.00	\$ (14,620.00)	\$ 5,380.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00	Assistance for the O.T. 987 installation in the Trades District
Total	\$ 210,000.00	\$ (82,602.00)	\$ 292,602.00	\$ 210,000.00	\$ -	\$ 210,000.00	

Grants - Zone Improvement:	2025 Budget	2025 disbursed	2025 Balance	2026 Budget	Disbursed/ Committed in 2026	Balance as of May 2026	
Direct Assistance Small Business (BUEA Minor Repair Grant) & Community Support	\$ 25,000.00	\$ (2,000.00)	\$ 23,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ (1,820.00)	\$ 8,180.00	<i>New funding- physical improvements, emergency assistance, and financial aid.</i>
SEEL Energy Efficiency Grant Program	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00	<i>Administered by Sustainability (ESD)</i>
Historic Façade Grant	\$ 50,000.00	\$ (30,000.00)	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ (40,000.00)	\$ 130,000.00	<i>Historic building improvements</i>
Small Business Safety & Security	\$ 35,000.00	\$ (22,996.25)	\$ 12,003.75	\$ 30,000.00	\$ (5,000.00)	\$ 35,000.00	<i>To Improve the general security of businesses</i>
Business Building improvement	\$ 30,000.00	\$ (45,557.77)	\$ (15,557.77)	\$ 40,000.00	\$ (10,644.16)	\$ 50,644.16	<i>To assist small business owners in updating and improving internal and external structures</i>
Business Accessability Modification	\$ 25,000.00	\$ (7,276.50)	\$ 17,723.50	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00	<i>To help business owners complete ADA modifications to meet requirements</i>
Total	\$ 185,000.00	\$ (107,830.52)	\$ 77,169.48	\$ 210,000.00	\$ (57,464.16)	\$ 267,464.16	

Grants Include:

<i>Bobbi Boos, Bloomington Farm Stop Collective - BMRG</i>	\$820.00	<i>Sarah Cheney, Bloomington Athletic Massage - BEE</i>	\$1,200.00
<i>Eric Weingold, GM - World Foods Market - BMRG</i>	\$1,000.00	<i>Kaytee Lorentzen, The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce- BEE</i>	\$1,200.00
<i>WonderLab Museum of Science, Health & Technology (Lydia Potter) - BBIG</i>	\$4,094.16	<i>Adnan Javeed, STEP Inc - BEE</i>	\$800.00
<i>Lisa Keplinger -That's the Rub, LLC- BBIG</i>	\$6,550.00	<i>Justin Fox - Fox Capital 415 LLC - S&S</i>	\$5,000
<i>First Christian Church of Bloomington (DO</i>	\$40,000.00		

Potential Grant Changes

Program Definition:

Business Building Improvement Grant

The grant is available online. Available on a rolling basis.

The BUEA Business Building Improvement Grant is available to small businesses and non-profit organizations in the Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association's (BUEA) downtown zone. Applicants are limited to a single Business Building Improvement Grant per fiscal year. This grant may not be used to support the purchase of weapons or devices that may cause physical harm to humans or animals. The BUEA staff and board have the right to refuse to approve any project they deem unsuitable for this grant.

Purpose:

This grant aims to improve the physical condition of business buildings in the Enterprise Zone and to promote economic vitality and community beautification. This grant seeks to assist small business owners in updating and improving internal and external aesthetics, preserving structural integrity, and other capital improvements and repairs. The grant provides up to \$10,000 in funding to help businesses resolve issues and continue serving their customers.

Proposal:

Add existing language from the Minor Improvement Grant to all capital improvement grants (see below)

Optional Additions:

1. Add Personnel Costs to Ineligible Expenses
2. Define Eligible Labor Costs
3. Shift Labor to In-Kind Matching

Minor Improvement Grant: Existing Language for Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible Expenses:

- Routine maintenance (e.g., cleaning, cosmetic upgrades).
- Major renovations or structural overhauls.
- Purchases of new equipment or supplies not related to repairs.
- Debt repayment or refinancing of existing loans.

Proposal: Add Existing Language

For the WonderLab project, the labor requested but not funded would fall under routine maintenance. If no changes were made, labor could continue to be included in funding requests, and the board could decide whether or not the cost is eligible based on other criteria.

Benefits

- Allows the board to practice discretion.
- Businesses can continue to request project-specific labor costs.

Concerns

- Awards could vary, and consistency is a concern.
- Applicants do not always break down labor, which can make decision-making difficult.

*One modification to the grant could be requiring applicants to break down labor costs. This could provide more information without changing the eligible/ineligible expenses.

Optional Addition 1: Add Personnel Costs to Ineligible Expenses

One way to eliminate labor costs from requests would be to explicitly exclude personnel costs from the grant.

Potential Language:

- All personnel costs are ineligible under this program.
- Any personnel costs that are not directly related to project implementation are ineligible. If requesting personnel costs, please explain how it is crucial to the project.

Benefits

- Provides a clear guideline for applicants and board members.
- Encourages applicants to provide further details on personnel costs.

Concerns

- Could lead to more applicants requesting project-related personnel costs.
- Personnel can be interpreted differently, and some may request administration costs, application work, etc.
- Increases the amount of information required to apply.

Optional Addition 2: Define Eligible Labor Costs

Labor costs could be added to eligible expenses, subject to certain stipulations. This option is very similar to Option 2, except it defines eligibility rather than ineligibility. The existing guidance, "Types of Repairs Covered", does not list labor as an eligible cost. For this option, language could be added to this section.

Potential Language:

- Labor required to make repairs and execute the project.

An eligible expenses category could also be added to the grant guidance. The section could cover more than just labor, but it would allow the board to define labor expenses.

Potential Language:

- Labor expenses directly related to project implementation are eligible. Any labor costs requested must be broken down in the applicant's budget.

Benefits:

- Gives applicants guidance on requesting labor costs.
- Provides the board with clear guidelines on what is eligible.

Concerns:

- Increases the amount of information applicants must provide.

Optional Addition 3: Shift Labor to In-Kind Matching

In-Kind matching would allow applicants to reduce their match amount by the amount they are reporting in labor. Extra guidance would need to be provided within the grant guidelines, explaining what in-kind is and what is eligible.

Potential Language:

- This grant allows in-kind matching for labor costs associated with project implementation. For any labor costs associated with the project, take the total expected labor cost and subtract that amount from your expected match. Include that breakdown with your application.

Benefits:

- Allows businesses to lower their match and receive some relief for labor costs.
- If the grant is below the max amount, the result is the same as Options 1 and 2.

Concerns:

- In-kind is a technical, administrative term that can be confusing for applicants.
- The application process would require additional calculations.
- With current grant administration standards, there is no way to follow up on in-kind matching.