City Of Bloomington - Bloomington Urban Enterprise Association Meeting Minutes

Meeting Information

Date: Wednesday, August 12, 2026

Time: 12:07 p.m.

Location: City Hall, Bloomington, Indiana

Notice: The meeting was appropriately posted and noticed.

Additional Notes or Summary: Hybrid meeting (in person and via video conference).

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Heather Robinson called the meeting to order at approximately 12:07 p.m.

Board Members Present:

- Michael Hover
- Virginia Githiri
- Katarina Koch
- Kate Rosenbarger
- Heather Robinson
- Brad Whistler
- Felisa Spinelli (remote)

Staff present:

- De la Rosa, Executive Director

Guests present:

- Cheryl Gilliland, Deputy Controller, City of Bloomington
- Paige Sharp, Assistant Director of Arts, City of Bloomington

2. Approval of Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes of the July 2026 regular meeting.

Roll call:

- Michael Hover – Approved
- Virginia Githiri – Approved
- Katarina Koch – Approved
- Kate Rosenbarger – Approved
- Heather Robinson – Approved
- Brad Whistler – Abstain
- Felisa Spinelli – Approved

Result: Motion carried. 6-0-1

3. Financial Reports – First and Second Quarter 2026

Cheryl Gilliland, Deputy Controller, presented the Association's First Quarter and Second Quarter 2026 financial reports, including the profit and loss statements, balance sheets, and budget-to-actual comparisons for each quarter.

Ms. Gilliland advised that a correction related to a 2025 posting error, recorded in January 2026, affects the presentation of first-quarter administrative income and expense figures, producing an apparent negative balance that does not reflect the BUEA's actual financial position. She further advised that outstanding RRF loan balances remain on the balance sheet pending reconciliation, which she expects to complete by the third quarter.

For the second quarter, Ms. Gilliland noted that zone membership fee revenue is heavily weighted toward a single large payment not yet received as of the meeting date, resulting in year-to-date income that appears below the annual budget.

Combined grant expenditures reported for the first two quarters of 2026 were: Arts and Culture, $45,000; Education and Entrepreneurship, $45,000; Education, $78,250; and Zone Improvement, $49,300.

Roll call:

- Michael Hover – Approved
- Virginia Githiri – Approved
- Katarina Koch – Approved
- Kate Rosenbarger – Approved
- Heather Robinson – Approved
- Brad Whistler – Approved
- Felisa Spinelli – Approved

Result: Motion carried 7-0.

4. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director De De La Rosa provided a year-to-date update on grant program disbursements in place of a full director's report, as she was out of the office on vacation during the preceding reporting period.

For the Education grant program, $78,250 has been disbursed year-to-date, leaving a balance of $14,250. For the Entrepreneurship program (Business Economic Enhancement Scholarship), $55,710 has been disbursed, including a grant approved at the July meeting, leaving an approximate balance of $290. For the Arts program, $30,000 has been committed or disbursed year-to-date; this figure is separate from the Arts Project Support grant cycle addressed later in the meeting. For the Zone Improvement program, $85,543.16 has been committed or disbursed, including business building improvement, accessibility modification, and safety and security grants approved at the July meeting.

The Director noted that a historic façade grant and a business building improvement grant for Mirth and CFC Properties are anticipated for presentation at a future meeting, pending additional information from the applicants. She also noted that Mirth's grand opening and ribbon cutting were scheduled for Thursday, August 13, 2026, at 12:30 p.m. at Fountain Square Mall.

5. Arts Program Report

Page Sharp, Assistant Director of Arts for the City of Bloomington, introduced herself to the Board. Ms. Sharp began her role at the end of May 2026, following prior consulting work for the City in spring 2026. Her background includes approximately 30 years in arts administration, including museum education roles, a regional arts council serving 14 counties in Indiana, and 11 years with the Indiana Arts Commission, where she served as Deputy Director.

6. Arts Project Support Funding Recommendations

Ms. Sharp presented funding recommendations for the 2026 Arts Project Support grant cycle. Of 78 applications received, 47 were recommended for citywide funding, and 15 met the criteria for funding within the BUEA zone. Of the $50,000 allocated for this purpose, Ms. Sharp recommended awarding $31,000 to the qualifying applicants, to be drawn from the Bloomington Arts Commission projects and operations grants line.

Roll call:

- Michael Hover – Approved
- Virginia Githiri – Approved
- Katarina Koch – Approved
- Kate Rosenbarger – Approved
- Heather Robinson – Approved
- Brad Whistler – Approved
- Felisa Spinelli – Approved

Result: Motion carried 7-0.

7. Arts Incubator Program Modification

Ms. Sharp requested modification of the Board's prior $100,000 allocation to the Arts Incubator program. The proposed allocation is $80,000 for construction and infrastructure and $20,000 for professional development, revised from the original allocation of $75,000 and $25,000, respectively. Ms. Sharp also requested extending the deadline to spend these funds to the end of calendar year 2027.

Ms. Sharp explained that the incubator's original leased facility, a 10,000-square-foot space, has leases expiring at the end of summer 2026. The program will relocate to twelve visual-artist studios to be constructed on the lower level of the Showers Building. The relocation is supported by a READI grant application led by Indiana University in partnership with the City and several other partners, which received $3 million of a $3.5 million request. Ms. Sharp noted that the ten-year lease agreement with the building's property owner includes free use of an 800-person-capacity event space twelve times per year. Board members discussed the program's initial focus on visual artists, opportunities for future cross-disciplinary collaboration, and potential community event programming at the space.

Roll call:

- Michael Hover – Approved
- Virginia Githiri – Approved
- Katarina Koch – Approved
- Kate Rosenbarger – Approved
- Heather Robinson – Approved
- Brad Whistler – Approved
- Felisa Spinelli – Approved

Result: Motion carried 7-0.

8. Good of the Order

A Board member raised the possibility of the Association establishing a grant program to support affordable commercial space for small businesses and service providers within the zone, citing the loss of businesses such as shoe repair services due to rental costs, and referencing comparable models in Fort Wayne and Indianapolis. No formal action was taken; staff agreed to research the concept further.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The Board had not finalized the next meeting date at adjournment due to scheduling conflicts around the Labor Day holiday; it will be confirmed separately.