

THE STATE OF TEXAS            §  
COUNTY OF ANDERSON        §  
CITY OF PALESTINE           §

The Economic Development Board of the City of Palestine convened in a regular meeting on Tuesday, September 9, 2025, at 10:00 a.m., at PEDC Office, 100 Willow Creek Pkwy, Suite A, Palestine, Texas, with the following people present: President Dan Bochsler; Vice President Kim Willmott; Secretary/Treasurer Charles Drane; Directors: Firouz Haghighi, Ernest Williams, and Joseph Thompson.

Staff present: PEDC Director Christophe Trahan, Administrative Assistant Melissa Temple and Marketing Analyst Mary Ann Admire.

Others Present: City Manager Teresa Herrera; City of Palestine Financial Director Andrew Sibai; PEDC Attorney Heather Cook (via Zoom), Tabitha Enge (via Zoom), Melody Shields (via Zoom), Cortarvies (via Zoom) and Nelson Varughese (via Zoom).

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

With a quorum present, President Dan Bochsler called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**B. PROPOSED CHANGES OF AGENDA ITEMS**

There were none.

**C. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were none.

**D. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURES**

There were none.

**E. ITEMS FROM BOARD**

Secretary/Treasurer Charles Drane expressed his satisfaction with the progress of the mall, specifically regarding Academy Sports & Outdoors as well as inquired whether the entire mall parking lot would be renovated or just the area around Academy.

Director Firouz Haghighi also raised concerns about a moisture issue underneath the parking lot.

PEDC Director Christophe Trahan responded to both Directors that the parking lot for the entire mall site would be renovated by June 2026 and with that any issue would be resolved.

**F. DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

1. Review monthly Director's Report.
  - Strategic Plan Activity
  - Retail Sector Data
  - Workforce Data
  - Development Services Report

- All other Economic Development Activities
2. Review monthly Marketing Analyst Report.
    - Monthly Marketing Activities
    - Monthly Marketing Analytics
    - All Other Marketing Activities

## **G. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

1. Consider approval of minutes from August 12, 2025.

Motion by Director Firouz Haghighi, seconded by Vice President Kim Willmott to approve item as presented. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously 6-0.

2. Consider approval of PEDC Special Meeting minutes from August 28, 2025.

Motion by Director Firouz Haghighi, seconded by Director Ernie Williams to approve item as presented. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously 6-0.

3. Consider approval of the August 2025 Financial Report.

Motion by Director Firouz Haghighi, seconded by Vice President Kim Willmott to approve item as presented. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously 6-0.

4. Discussion and possible action regarding a Community Development Grant Application and Performance Agreement with Restoring Palestine.

PEDC Director Christophe Trahan provided a brief update regarding the Community Development Application submitted by Restoring Palestine and noted that the following documents are required to proceed with the review: Change of name on the deed for the property located at 907 E. Murchison from Mt. Vernon African Methodist Episcopal Church to Restoring Palestine and the 501(c)(3) determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).

PEDC Director Christophe Trahan also discussed the documents that have been submitted for the Board's consideration are Form 202: Certification of Formation Nonprofit Organization, IRS Employer Identification Number (EIN) and Form 1023 EZ: Application for Recognition of Exemption.

Tabitha Enge of Restoring Palestine indicated her commitment to submit the remaining documents for the Board's review as soon as they are received from the appropriate entities.

5. Discussion and possible action regarding a reimbursement of \$25,000 to the City of Palestine for the Athletic Complex.

Motion by Director Joseph Thompson, seconded by Vice President Kim Willmott to approve item as presented. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously 6-0.

6. Discussion and possible action regarding a regional Teacher Externship Grant.

PEDC Director Christophe Trahan discussed that five to eight regional EDCs, including PEDC, in the East Texas Region are working together to submit a group grant application to the Texas Workforce Commission that aims to create externship programs for teachers. Director Trahan has requested four externships from Anderson County. Westwood ISD Superintendent Wade Stanford has indicated a tentative commitment to allocate two teachers from Westwood ISD. Additionally, Longview and Willis Point have secured sufficient commitment for an In-Kind match for the entire region.

Motion by Director Firouz Haghighi, seconded by Director Ernie Williams to approve a letter of support for Director Trahan to continue in working to develop a externship program for teachers.

7. Presentation by Texas Futura/ Lonestar Oil Tech. regarding project in Willow Creek Business Park.

Texas Futura/Lonestar Oil Tech gave a presentation on the updates regarding their project in Willow Creek Business Park. Phase one of their operations ended at the beginning of September and they will begin phase two in October of 2025. They have encountered setbacks due to tariffs and bad weather but expect to be fully operational by April 2026.

**H. CLOSED SESSION**

President Dan Bochsler announced that the board would go into closed session pursuant to Texas Government Code, Chapter 551, Subchapter D. The time was 10:57 a.m.

1. Section 551.072 deliberation of real property; a governmental body may conduct a closed meeting to deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property if deliberation in an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the position of the governmental body in negotiations with a third person.

a.) PEDC Office Space

2. Section 551.087 deliberation regarding Economic Development Negotiations

a.) Texas Futura/ Lonestar Oil Tech.

**I. RECONVENE IN REGULAR SESSION**

President Dan Bochsler announced the board would reconvene into Regular Session. The time was 11:41 a.m.

**J. TAKE ANY NECESSARY ACTIONS REGARDING CLOSED SESSION ITEM**

1. Take necessary action regarding PEDC office space.

No action was taken.

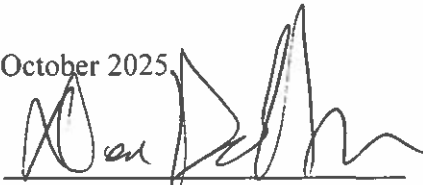
2. Take necessary action regarding Texas Futura/ Lonestar Oil Tech.

No action was taken.

**ADJOURN**

With no other business to come before the Board, President Dan Bochsler adjourned the meeting at 11:44 a.m.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 14th DAY OF October 2025.



Dan Bochsler, President

ATTEST:



Melissa Temple, Administrative Assistant