

**MINUTES**  
**Plainwell BRA DDA TIFA**  
**May 12, 2026**

1. Chairman Larabel called the meeting to order at 7:30am in City Hall Council Chambers.
2. Pledge of Allegiance was given by all present.
3. Roll Call: Present: Nick Larabel, Paul Rizzo, Jim Turley, David Steffen, Rimante Grigaliunas, Randy Wisnaski and Justin Lakamper  
Excused: Adam Hopkins
4. Approval of Minutes:  
**A motion by Rizzo, seconded by Turley, to accept and place on file the BRA DDA TIFA Meeting Minutes of the 04/14/2026 meeting. On a voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed.**
5. Public Comment: None.
6. Chairman's Report: None.
7. Recommendations and Reports:
  - A. **A motion by Rizzo, seconded by Wisnaski, confirming BRA payables for April 2026 in the amount of \$138.37. On a voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed.**
  - B. **A motion by Wisnaski, seconded by Larabel, confirming DDA payables for April 2026 in the amount of \$622.64. On a voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed.**
  - C. **A motion by Larabel, seconded by Turley, confirming TIFA payables for April 2026 in the amount of \$44.80. On a voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed.**
  - D. During the budget review process, mathematical errors were noted in the TIFA 25-26 Projected Totals line item. This will be corrected before submitting the draft budget to Council for review.  
**A motion by Larabel, seconded by Steffen, recommending the amended draft DDA BRA TIFA budget to Council for consideration and final approval. On a voice vote, all in favor. Motion passed.**
8. Communications:  
**The March 2026 Summary and Detail Financial Reports and City Council meeting minutes from 02/23/2026 and 03/09/2026.**
9. Public Comment: None.
10. Staff Comment:
  - A. Lakamper provided an update on the dam project, sharing he met with the DNR. This project has several stakeholders- the City of Plainwell, the DNR and the property owners. Since the DNR maintains partial ownership of the dams, they have a say in the overall project. They are also a potential source of funding, so their input is important. The DNR has concerns about how the project has been designed so far, as the design doesn't contemplate the earthen embankments along the Mill Race. The DNR's goal is to remove the dams and get out of dam ownership. One idea being discussed is to try grade and lower the entirety of the Mill Race, hoping that it might naturally flow and not need the dam structures to maintain some amount of water. We still need to obtain letters of support from the property owners, so we can submit permits and get official feedback from the permitting agencies and use that information toward a new design plan, if needed. Two property owners are in support, one is not. The current engineering grant runs out in December, and can't be extended, so we need to get as far as we can with the current engineering company by December. We will probably need design changes to get funding, and there may be grant money available for a new design. The DNR understands the importance of the Mill Race to Plainwell, however, as a main source of funding, ultimately it is up to them. We need to find a compromise.

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Larabel asked if everyone was onboard with grading the channel to which Lakamper replied that EGLE and the DNR are both in favor, with permits, and this is more than likely the design that will move forward. Larabel asked if it might be possible to use sheeting to dry up the Mill Race, allowing for dry construction instead of wet. Lakamper wasn't sure. Larabel stated it is encouraging that the regulatory agencies haven't forced anything yet and seem to recognize the importance of keeping the Mill Race. Lakamper stated the graded option eliminates our maintenance of and liability for the structures in the water. If we do nothing, and they fail, the Mill Race goes away anyway, and if the failure causes contamination of the river, it would be Plainwell's responsibility to clean it up.

Lakamper discussed the construction happening in the Mill buildings, sharing that Classic Auto Mill has begun removing some cement fixtures and leveling the floors.

Larabel asked if there was an update from Weyerhaeuser concerning PFAS on the Mill site. Lakamper shared that the project has been handed off to a new person. The soil management plan and draft covenants still need to be reviewed. Turley asked if Watts Homes remains interested in building on the site, and Lakamper replied yes, but only if both projects can move forward.

11. Board Member Comments: None.

12. Adjournment:

**A motion by Rizzo, seconded by Turley, to adjourn the meeting at 8:29am. On a voice vote, all voted in favor. Motion passed.**

Submitted by: JoAnn Leonard, City Clerk