

Minutes of the Joint Meeting of the
Southwestern Pennsylvania Corporation Board of Directors
and the
Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission Executive Committee
Westmoreland County Community College
Westmoreland County
and
Cisco WebEx Meeting
3:00 p.m. – August 28, 2023

The three hundred seventy-seventh meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Corporation Board of Directors and the one hundred ninety-seventh meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission Executive Committee was called to order by Chairman Osche.

SPC Board Members present: Mike Belding, Pat Fabian, Rich Fitzgerald, Sherene Hess, Leslie Osche, Loretta Spielvogel, Vincent Valdes, and Vince Vicites.

SPC Executive Committee Members present were: Mike Belding, Pat Fabian, Rich Fitzgerald, Lynn Heckman, Sherene Hess, Larry Maggi, Leslie Osche, Johnna Pro, Larry Shifflet, Loretta Spielvogel, Vincent Valdes, and Vince Vicites.

Others: Darin Alvanio, Armstrong County Planning Department; Doug Chew, Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners; Mark Rafail; Fayette County; Kevin Boozel, Butler County Board of Commissioners; Kim Geyer, Butler County Board of Commissioners; Aadil Grinwala, University of Pittsburgh; Ann Ogoreuc, Allegheny County Economic Development and Planning; Brandon Leach, PennDOT Central Office; and Dusty Kirk, Reed Smith LLP.

Staff: Mary Brangan, Kirk Brethauer, Faith Collins, Ronda Craig, Dom D'Andrea, Linda Duffy, Margaret Fonner, Chuck Imbrogno, Jennifer Lasser, Caitlin O'Connor, DJ Ryan, Mason Secreti, Ailisa Sobien, Josh Spano, Cathy Tulley, Sara Walfoort, and Andy Waple.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Osche welcomed members and called the meeting to order.

2. Action on Minutes of the June 26th Corporation Board of Directors and Commission Executive Committee Meeting

Action on the minutes of the June 26, 2023 meeting of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee were approved on a motion by Commissioner Fabian which was seconded by Commissioner Vicites. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

3. Public Comment – None.

4. Remarks on Financial Loan – Commissioner Leslie Osche

Commissioner Osche deferred to Ms. Fonner. Ms. Fonner explained the reasons for the financial loan were as follows:

SPC's Relocation to the Strip District – WHY?

Increase our visibility

Refresh our appearance

Attract and keep talent

Improve proximity to the tech and foundation communities

Revised budget to document the tenant improvement/build-out expense.

- Revenue – Bridgeway Capital Construction Loan
- Expenditure – Burns Scalo Construction contract
 - All inclusive Tenant Build-out contract, signed September 20, 2022
 - Substantially complete and Occupancy Permit received July 7, 2023
- Member Local Funds Use.
- Loan Repayment with interest (10 yr loan term).
- Furniture Lease payment (24 months with \$1 payout).

5. Action on Executive Committee Resolution 13-23 to Welcome Commissioner Douglas Chew – Vincent Valdes

A RESOLUTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CORPORATION to elect MEMBER for the remainder of calendar year 2023.

WHEREAS, a vacancy exists on the Executive Committee due to the resignation of former Westmoreland County Commissioner Gina Cerilli Thrasher to accept a position on the Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Appeals Board, and

WHEREAS, Westmoreland County Commissioner Douglas Chew has been named as the new Member of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the Corporation effective August 28, 2023.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Commissioner Douglas Chew is elected to serve as a Member of the Corporation from the date hereof.

A motion was made to approve Executive Committee Resolution 13-23 by Ms. Heckman which was seconded by Commissioner Maggi. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

6. Financial Report – Ailisa Sobien

Ms. Sobien gave a brief overview of the budget.

FY 22-23 Budget:	\$22,341,055
Revenue and Expenses:	\$ 10,791,197
Percent of Budget:	48.0 %

7. Action on Corporation Board Resolution 12-23 and Executive Committee Resolution 14-23 to Adopt the Revised Annual Budget for FY 2023-2024 – Margaret Fonner

A RESOLUTION OF THE DIRECTORS OF THE SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CORPORATION AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION to adopt a revised Combined SPC Annual Budget, as presented, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Directors of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Corporation and the Executive Committee of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission approve and adopt the FY 2023-24 SPC annual balanced budget of \$24,003,761 (Revenues) and \$24,003,761 (Expenditures) as presented, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023; and

RESOLVED FURTHER that the SPC President and Executive Director, or a designated representative, are hereby authorized to execute all transactions, as delineated in the above-mentioned budget, to carry out the business of SPC.

A motion was made to approve Board Resolution 12-23 and Executive Committee Resolution 14-23 by Commissioner Fabian which was seconded by Commissioner Chew. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

8. Transportation Report – Dom D’Andrea

Mr. D’Andrea summarized the Transportation Report.

Mr. D’Andrea stated The State Transportation Commission held a 60-day Public Comment Period for the statewide 12-Year Transportation Program (TYP) Update back in March and April earlier this year. The public was invited to provide input in various ways through an online public forum, social media, and a survey. All public feedback received was reviewed and compiled to convey current transportation priorities and trends statewide and regionally. Of the 4,250 comments received statewide, 901 comments were made on transportation concerns within the SPC region. The breakdown of the issues within the comments is shown here. Many of the comments were made on roads and bridges.

In Spring/Summer of last year, the update began with public input via the State Transportation Commission’s launch of an interactive web application to gather input on problem areas and priorities around the Commonwealth. This resulted in over 600 comments that were relevant to the SPC region. SPC, working with partners analyzed these comments and either carried them forward into TIP development or assigned them to the most appropriate entity. The initial financial projections were developed. SPC also held a round of public participation panel meetings to solicit input.

In the fall of last year, working with partners, projects were evaluated and selected for inclusion into the draft (after 20 total meetings). The CMAQ and Transportation Alternatives Projects were selected. We found out about the IIJA additional funds in November and revised our financial projections and guidance, and we held another round of public participation panel meetings.

In December of last year, we submitted the pre-draft TIP to PennDOT CO for review. This spring we have:

- conducted the Air Quality and Environmental Justice Reviews;
- evaluated and selected projects within our Smart Transportation Program;
- Opened a 30 day public comment period on the draft documents, held 4 public meetings, and responded to comments received.

Mr. D’ Andrea mentioned at the last meeting, as part of our TIP update, we had opened and consolidated our solicitation and selection process for the Transportation Alternatives, CMAQ, and Carbon Reduction Programs. We did this so that 1) applications can compete across all three programs and 2) so that we can improve our performance measures by getting projects funded by the most appropriate funding yielding the highest benefits. We closed the pre-application period on July 17th and received 41 pre-applications across all ten counties (at least 1 pre-application from each county).

9. Strategic Initiatives Report – DJ Ryan

Mr. Ryan gave an updated on SPC’s Strategic Initiatives Report.

- Grant Applications Submitted:
 - MPDG – Parkway East and East Busway
 - PROTECT – 376 Bathtub
 - PROTECT Planning – Flood mitigation
- Climate Pollution Reduction Grant
 - RFP for consultants out this week
 - Steering committee meetings beginning this fall

Welcomed a new Water Resource Coordinator – WRC is fully up and running again!

- PennDOT Vulnerable Road User meeting logistics
- Municipal Technical Assistance on Active Transportation
- Allegheny River
 - SPC and Port of Pittsburgh Commission are co-leading the effort to save the Allegheny river.
 - Several options are being considered, federal elected officials have been briefed and are offering input

- Invitation went out today for our first meeting

10. Broadband Connectivity Report – Andy Waple

Mr. Waple stated The Initial Proposal is the “first draft” of an Eligible Entity’s Final Proposal for BEAD grant funding, and, among other things, should explain how States and Territories will ensure that every resident has access to a reliable, affordable, and high-speed broadband connection, drawing on all funding available to accomplish this goal, including but not limited to BEAD Program funds

Digital navigators are trusted guides who assist community members in internet adoption and the use of computing devices. Digital navigation services include ongoing assistance with affordable internet access, device acquisition, technical skills, and application support. Beaver and Washington Counties already have programs.

Potential Elements:

Program Roadmap - goals and objectives, outline and mapping of targeted populations, budget examples, funding opportunities and programs, etc.

Asset Mapping and Partnership Development - inventory of community organizations and resources to determine ability and willingness to run and staff programs across the region

Best Practices and Curriculum Resources – inventory of existing, readily available materials best suited to the most common needs of our region’s Program Evaluation and Reporting Templates - regional approach through standardized templates

Marketing and Outreach - A centralized marketing plan and recognizable branding will help digital navigators across the region gain higher visibility and be readily associated as part of a single regional program.

11. Economic and Workforce Development Report – Jenn Lasser

Ms. Lasser gave an update on the Economic and Workforce Development Program.

Serving small business, non-profits and local government.

Continued focus on resiliency & growth

Expanded Pathways to New Economy Careers – BBBRC

ARC Area Development & Local Access Road – Regional Projects Submitted

RRT - IWG Stakeholder Listening Sessions Planning

Continued Broadband Discussions – Small Business Survey

PTAC Manager Selected

Data represented for June/July 2023

Business Assistance (PREP) - EXPORT

Assistance Provided:

31 Companies Assisted

53 Counseling Sessions

Work Orders:

8 Companies

10 Overseas Work Orders

7 Countries

Events

Fancy Food Show in New York City (4 PREP Sponsored Companies)

Go Global Presentation @ IUP (5 companies)

Go Global Growth Conference @ St. Vincent (15 companies)

Business Assistance (PREP) – Commercial Lending

Assistance Provided

31 Companies
54 Counseling Sessions
1 Loan Closed

Team successfully completed – year end close-out & reporting.

Business Assistance (PREP) – Gov. Procurement

Assistance Provided

8 Companies Assisted
9 Counseling Sessions

Contract Awards

15 companies, 48 awards totaling \$5.4M

Events

SPC APEX Accelerator/COSTARS event

Staffing

New PTAC Manager - Aaron Sims Hired and Starting Sept 18th 2023

Community Economic Technical Assistance

Keystone Opportunity Zones (KOZ)

Inquiries – 2	Applications - 28
Business Served – 2	Investment – \$897K
Jobs Created – 0	Jobs Retained – 0
Business Improved - 2	

Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)

1 class being scheduled for fall “Winter Road Maintenance”

Grant Technical Assistance: ARC/EDA

ARC Technical Assistance

Provided Technical Assistance to – 24 Projects (Area Development/POWER/ARISE)
ARISE still open (multi-state projects)
Area Development – Rolling Deadline
Local Access Road – Closed*

EDA Technical Assistance

4 Projects
Economic Adjustment Assistance & Public Works Grants Open
Re-Compete - Open
Tech Hubs - Closed

Spotlight – Fancy Food Show (NYC)

67th Fancy Food Show held at Javits Center in New York City – June 25-27th

SPC’s Rena Liu-Balshe and Jackie Pacheco attended

Additional PREP dollars allowed us to cover costs to send the following small businesses:

Gosia’s Pierogis (Westmoreland)
Cilantro & Ajo (Allegheny)
Three Rivers Salsa (Washington)

Sold Out! 2,200+ food/beverage makers and manufacturers across six continents

30,000+ industry professionals registered – up 20% from 2022

Connections made, products sold! Keeping businesses growing and thriving.

12. Message from Executive Director - Vincent Valdes

Next Meeting Date – **October 23, 2023**

Mr. Valdes stated the election of new officers for the 2024-2026 term have to go before the Nominating Committee, which is Chaired by Ms. Lynn Heckman. He remarked that the Nominating Committee needs to meet in November to have the list of officers for the December 11th Special Meeting.

Mr. Valdes also stated that the October 23rd meetings will be the last set of meetings he will be attending. He is resigning from his position as Executive Director of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission. The search committee is in full swing to find his replacement. He thanked the members for the opportunity to serve the region and to be part of such an important organization, such as the Commission. He is very grateful for the opportunity.

The next meeting of the Board/Executive Committee will be October 23, 2023.

Commissioner Vicites moved to enter Executive Session. Commissioner Fabian seconded. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

Executive Session

Commissioner Fabian moved to come out of Executive Session. Mr. Fitzgerald seconded. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

13. Corporation Board Action on Resolutions 15-23 and 16-23 to approve two loans was unanimous.

14. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Margaret Fonner
Corporation, Secretary-Treasurer

Vincent Vicites
Commission, Secretary-Treasurer