

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission
Meeting Minutes
Corporation Board of Directors & Executive Committee
Northpointe – IUP, Armstrong County
and
Cisco WebEx Meeting
3:00 p.m. – April 24, 2023

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

SPC Board Members present: Pat Fabian, Rich Fitzgerald, Ed Gainey, Sherene Hess, Sean Kertes, Leslie Osche, Vincent Valdes, Diana Irey Vaughan, and Vince Vicites.

SPC Executive Committee Members present were: Pat Fabian, Rich Fitzgerald, Ed Gainey, Lynn Heckman, Sherene Hess, Patrick Joyal, Sean Kertes, Larry Maggi, Leslie Osche, Johnna Pro, Larry Shifflet, Gina Cerilli Thrasher, Vincent Valdes, Diana Irey Vaughan, and Vince Vicites.

Others: Loretta Spielvogel, Lawrence County Board of Commissioners; Doug Chew, Westmoreland County Board of Commissioners; Lisa Frank, Mayor Gainey's Office; Mark Gordon, Butler County Planning and Economic Development; Ann Ogoreuc, Allegheny County Economic Development and Planning; Kevin McCullough, PennDOT Central Office; Dusty Kirk, Reed Smith LLP; Byron Stauffer, Jr., Indiana County Planning and Development; Robert Lesnick, Fayette County; and John Timney, Washington County Authority.

Staff: Mary Brangan, Leann Chaney, Faith Collins, Ronda Craig, Dom D'Andrea, Linda Duffy, Margaret Fonner, Ryan Gordon, Chuck Imbrogno, Jennifer Lasser, Caitlin O'Connor, DJ Ryan, 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 February 27th Corporation Board of Directors and Commission Executive Committee Meeting

Action on the minutes of the February 27, 2023 meeting of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee were approved on a motion by Commissioner Vicites which was seconded by Ms. Pro. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

3. Public Comment – None.

4. Action Item – Resolution 4-23 to welcome Commissioner Loretta Spielvogel – 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 Lawrence County Commissioner Morgan Boyd to accept a position as special assistant to the secretary of Community and Economic Development for the State of Pennsylvania, and

WHEREAS, Lawrence County Commissioner Loretta Spielvogel has been named as the new MEMBER of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the Corporation effective April 24, 2023.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Commissioner Loretta Spielvogel is elected to serve as a MEMBER of the Corporation from the date hereof.

A motion was made to approve Executive Committee Resolution 4-23 by Commissioner Vicites which was seconded by Commissioner Fitzgerald. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

5. Financial Report – Ailisa Sobien

Ms. Sobien gave a brief overview of the budget.

FY 22-23 Budget:	\$22,341,055
Revenue and Expenses:	\$ 6,607,118
Percent of Budget:	30.0 %

6. Transportation Report – Dom D’Andrea

Mr. D’Andrea summarized the Transportation Report.

- Policy level review and update of LRP strategies (Fall 2022) **Completed**
- Work Group Meetings (October- February) **Completed**
- Meetings with Transit Operators (October-February) **Completed**
- PPP/Public Meetings (Fall 2022) **first round of meetings completed**
- TTC/TOC approval of LRTP project lists (March 2023) **Completed**
- SPC Conducts the Environmental Justice Analysis (January-April)
- SPC Conducts AQ Conformity (March-April)
- SPC Assembles the LRP Document (March-April)
- 30-day Public Comment Period and Public Involvement (May-June 2023)
- LRP Adoption (June 26, 2023)

2023 Long Range Plan Meeting Schedule:

COUNTY	DATE	TIME	FORMAT	PLACE
Beaver	May 11, 2023	2:00 PM	Virtual	Provided link
Washington	May 15, 2023	3:00 PM	In person	Courthouse Square Building
Indiana	May 18, 2023	3:00 PM	In person	CareerLink
Lawrence	May 22, 2023	11:30 AM	In person	Hutchison Community Center
Armstrong	May 23, 2023	3:00 PM	In person	BC3
City of Pgh.	May 25, 2023	5:30 PM	Virtual	Provided link
Westmoreland	May 30, 2023	5:00 PM	In person	County Courthouse

Fayette	May 31, 2023	5:30 PM	In person	(former) Gallatin Bank Building
Greene	June 1, 2023	5:00 PM	In person	Career and Tech Center
Butler	June 6, 2023	5:00 PM	Virtual	Provided link
Allegheny	June 8, 2023	6:00 PM	Virtual	Provided link

Mr. D'Andrea stated that earlier this month, SPC received correspondence with regard to open applications for congressional budget requests. Many of them required a quick turnaround and were due within a couple of weeks. We coordinated with the PennDOT Districts and others, and the projects that were submitted for the region.

7. Strategic Initiatives Report – DJ Ryan

Mr. Ryan gave brief update on the Strategic Initiatives Report.

General Updates:

Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) toolkit
 SWPA Decarbonization Forum meetings ongoing

Sponsored Programs Development:

Justice 40 Initiative
 Debrief and prepare for Safe Streets for All and MEGA funding
 Streamlining application processes for SPC discretionary programs

Environmental Programs:

Cathy Tulley started mid-March
 Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG)

Freight Planning:

Allegheny River Discussions – Policy Committee
 Discussion around new rail line Chicago-Central Ohio-Pittsburgh
 Technical Assistance – Washington County Comprehensive Plan

Active Transportation:

Active Transportation Plan – Delmont, Monongahela ATPs
 Complete Streets Policy Development
 Norfolk Southern/Trail Meeting – Etna-Shaler-Sharpsburg (on to Erie)
 Active Transportation Forum June 6th 10am (Virtual)

8. Broadband Connectivity Report – Andy Waple

Mr. Waple gave an update on Broadband.

- Kick off meeting to be scheduled with PBDA and PREP partners on April 26
- Project will support small businesses in the nine County SPC PREP region to strengthen their growth through access to technology.
- Multi-pronged survey (digital and paper) to gauge small business owners' use and understanding of the impact and capacity-building capabilities that reliable, high-speed broadband can bring to a business.
- The survey will explore the knowledge level and use of technology for online business operations.

- Promotions toolkit for use by SPC and PREP partners will be developed.
- The team will work with PREP partners and other regional partners to develop a comprehensive survey outreach campaign.

Pennsylvania Broadband Development Authority – Capital Projects Broadband Infrastructure Program

- \$200M from federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
- Open May 10 – July 10, 2023
- Awards: \$500k - \$10M (25% match required)
- Applicants: Businesses, Non-Profits, Local Governments, Economic Development Organizations
- Projects: Broadband infrastructure projects delivering 100/100 service in unserved or underserved areas

Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry - PAsmart Supporting Broadband Infrastructure through Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships

- Objective: to expand and support existing Registered Apprenticeship and/or PreApprenticeship Programs in broadband-related occupations with specific focus on diverse talent pipelines and underserved populations. For the purposes of this initiative, supported occupations include: telecommunications technician, line erector (power-line distribution erector), line installer-repairer, telecommunicator, line maintainer, telecom installer technician, and network engineer.
- \$800K available
- Open through June 12, 2023
- Awards: Up to \$200k
- Applicants: Businesses, economic development organizations, industry associations, labor organizations, nonprofit organizations, post-secondary institutions, and STEM ecosystems

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Community Connect Grants

- Provides financial assistance to eligible applicants that will provide broadband service in rural, economically-challenged communities where service does not exist.
- \$79M available
- Open through June 20, 2023
- Awards: \$100k - \$5M (15% non-federal match required)
- Applicants: State and Local Governments, Non-Profits, Businesses, LLCs
- Projects: Construction, acquisition, or leasing of facilities used to deploy broadband service for residents, businesses and community anchor institutions (CAIs)
- Also, can be used to provide free broadband service for CAIs for up to two years

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Broadband Technical Assistance Program

- Provides financial assistance through cooperative agreements to eligible entities to receive or deliver broadband technical assistance and training and supports the development and expansion of broadband cooperatives.
- \$20M available
- Awards: \$50K - \$1M
- Open through June 20, 2023
- Applicants: State and Local Governments, Colleges and Universities, Non-Profits, Businesses, LLCs
- Projects: Project planning and community engagement, financial sustainability, environmental compliance, construction planning and engineering, accessing federal resources, and data collection and reporting.

Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) ARISE Connect Humanity Planning Grants

- Program provides grantees with funding and expertise to establish a holistic Digital Equity Connectivity Plan which will help them secure the partnerships and financing they need to advance internet access in their communities.
- Open to communities in ARC region. (up to 50 awards, focused on distressed communities)
- Awards: up to \$30k (\$20k match required – cash or in-kind)

- Complete Community Readiness Form by April 30
- 4-6 month process from application to completion
- Continued support to secure funding to build your broadband network after planning phase.

9. Economic and Workforce Development Report – Jenn Lasser

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

Planning and Development:

- Continued focus on small business resiliency & growth
- Expanded Pathways to New Economy Careers
- ARC AREA Development – Regional Projects invited for application
- ARC POWER - CLOSED
- Strategic Planning with Local Government, DCED, EDOs, Workforce Development and Industry for future stimulus dollars
- Continued Broadband Discussions – Small Business Survey
- Actively Recruiting for PTAC Manager and Business Finance Manager
- Data represented for February/March 2023

Business Assistance (PREP) – Export:

- Continued focus on small business resiliency & growth
- Expanded Pathways to New Economy Careers
- ARC AREA Development – Regional Projects invited for application
- ARC POWER - CLOSED
- Strategic Planning with Local Government, DCED, EDOs, Workforce Development and Industry for future stimulus dollars
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Business Assistance (PREP) – Gov. Procurement:

Assistance Provided

40 Companies Assisted

54 Counseling Sessions

Contract Awards

12 companies, 44 awards totaling \$1.9M

Events

4 events (35 attendees)

Topics: Cost Estimating, Small Business Certifications, Sub contracting and David Bacon DOL

Current Opening - PTAC Manager

Business Assistance (PREP) – Commercial Lending:

Assistance Provided

54 Companies

79 Counseling Sessions

Events

2 events

Where to Start when Starting a Business

Commercial Lending Overview

Current Opening: Manager of Business Lending

Community Economic Technical Assistance:

Keystone Opportunity Zones (KOZ)

Inquiries – 4 - Applications - 7

Businesses – 4 - Investment – 30.8M

Jobs Created – 25 - Jobs Retained - 24

Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP)

7 classes held with 57 Attendees

Maintenance Techniques with Stormwater Facilities
Outdoor Advertising - Traffic Signal Basics
Project Estimating - Culvert Inspection
Stormwater Facilities Maintenance and Control

Grant Technical Assistance:

ARC Technical Assistance

Provided Technical Assistance to – 24 Projects (Area Development/POWER/ARISE)

ARC POWER Conference – Held in Pittsburgh March 2023

POWER Submission window is CLOSED!

ARISE still open (multi-state projects)

Area Development Open

EDA Technical Assistance

2 Projects

Economic Adjustment Assistance & Public Works Grants Open

Community Capacity Coordinator:

New role funded by ARC via DCED for 2 years

Our technical assistance has gone for 5-10 projects per year (2019/2020) to over 45+(2023) under ARC

Additional support needed to assist our regional partners with grant technical assistance

Welcome Faith Collins!

- Prior SPC PTAC Coordinator – knows sam.gov system
- Prior Grant experience
- Community Partner Outreach experience

Expanding into Webinars, Technical Assistance Webpage, Outreach to more partners who need our assistance. Much more in FY23/24

10. Message from Executive Director - Vincent Valdes
Next Meeting Date – June 26, 2023

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

Executive Session

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

11. Corporation Board Action on Resolutions 5-23 and 6-23 to approve two loans was unanimous.
12. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Margaret Fonner
Corporation, Secretary-Treasurer

Vincent Vicites
Commission, Secretary-Treasurer