

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission  
Minutes of the Meeting  
January 31, 2022 – 4:00 p.m.  
Cisco Webex Meeting

The one hundred and fifty-second meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission was called to order by Chairman Osche.

Members: Darin Alviano, Jennifer Beer, Mike Belding, Brad Berlin, Kevin Boozel, Morgan Boyd, Scott Bricker, Tom Ceraso, Ali Doyle, Pat Fabian, Rich Fitzgerald, Kim Geyer, Shelia Gombita, Mark Gordon, Joe Grata, Kelly Gray, Lynn Heckman, Sherene Hess, Diana Irey Vaughan, Fred Junko, Katharine Kelleman, Sean Kertes, William Kovach, Bob Macey, Larry Maggi, Jack Manning, Jeff Marshall, Kevin McCullough, Leslie Osche, Johnna Pro, Mavis Rainey, Bob Regola, Aurora Sharrard, Nick Sherman, Larry Shifflet, Loretta Spielvogel, Gina Cerilli Thrasher, John Timney, and Vince Vicites.

Others: Ann Ogoreuc, Allegheny County Economic Development; Rachel Duda and Angela Saunders, PennDOT District 12-0; Jim Gagliano, Lawrence County; Jim Ritzman, Penonni Consultant; and Erich Zimmermann, NARC.

Staff: Kristin Baum, Jared Bedekovich, Kirk Brethauer, Ronda Craig, Dom D'Andrea, Margaret Fonner, Colleen Friend, Chuck Imbrogno, Erin Adams Kepple, Tom Klevan, Jenn Lasser, Shannon O'Connell, Kay Tomko, Dave Totten, Cathy Tulley, Vincent Valdes, and Andy Waple.

1. Chairman Osche called to order the January 31, 2022 meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission.
  - a. Quorum – There being a quorum present the meeting proceeded.
  - b. Any Conflict of Interest Declaration on Action Items – None

2. Action on Minutes of the December 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2021 meeting by Diana Irey Vaughan which was seconded by Rich Fitzgerald. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

3. Public Comment – None

4. Financial Report – Margaret Fonner

Ms. Fonner stated she will give a brief update on the budget as of November 30<sup>th</sup>. We are about 35.64% of budget with expenses at this point. We hired two new employees within our Department. I'm happy to report that our new Grant Contract Administrator is one of the new hires and he started today. Interviews for our retiring accountant group position are ongoing, and we should be able to fill the position soon.

5. Presentation on Infrastructure Investment Bill – Erich Zimmermann, Deputy Director, National Association of Regional Councils

Mr. Zimmermann thanked SPC for the invitation to appear before the Commission. He stated that it is an exciting time in Washington, and I'm sure many communities as well as you anticipate what may be coming your way from this infrastructure bill. The goal of this presentation is to give you something of a broad overview of what the bill contains. We'll have some time at the end if folks want to get into more specifics on some of the specific programs that are in the bill, you can find a full analysis of the legislation at my website at narc.org.

Mr. Zimmermann gave a breakdown on how the funding is allocated, what's in the bill for transportation, and pilot programs that the MPOs might have eligibility for important issues in their region. But most importantly, when to expect grant applications to open, which will, of course, be very important. We are encouraging folks to think ahead as much as humanly possible, get projects in order to line them up with what's in the bill, there's a ton of detail on this legislation, that will give you a good sense of where Congress expects us to head in terms of how to pick projects and what projects they're going to focus on. Notify your member of Congress, let them know what's important. This way, they have in mind what projects need funding.

6. Action on Resolution 1-22 Approve Submission of the 2022-2024 Unified Planning Work Program to the Appropriate Funding Agencies – Andy Waple

A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ("SPC") to approve submission of the 2022-2024 Unified Planning Work Program to appropriate funding agencies.

WHEREAS, the 2022-2024 Unified Planning Work Program documents all transportation and transportation-related planning activities to be undertaken within the SPC region from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2024;

WHEREAS, the 2022-2024 Unified Planning Work Program identifies planning tasks to be performed by SPC staff and the staffs of the member Counties, the City of Pittsburgh, and the Port Authority of Allegheny County using planning assistance funding from the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission approves submission of the 2022-2024 Unified Planning Work Program;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Executive Director, on behalf of SPC, is hereby authorized to enter into Agreements and/or Supplements with the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration of the Department of Transportation, and the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation relating to the 2022-2024 Unified Planning Work Program and pursuant to application requests; and

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Executive Director, on behalf of SPC, is authorized to enter into Contracts with the Counties of Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington, Westmoreland, the City of Pittsburgh, and the Port Authority

of Allegheny County covering work items delineated in the 2022-2024 Unified Planning Work Program.

A motion was made by Rich Fitzgerald to approve Resolution 1-22 to Approve Submission of the 2022-2024 Unified Planning Work Program to the Appropriate Funding Agencies, which was seconded by Bob Macey. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

7. Action on Resolution 2-22 to Honor the Services of James Gagliano, Lawrence County and 3-22 to Honor Services of Christopher Wheat, Washington County – Leslie Osche

A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION to honor the services of James Gagliano, Jr.

WHEREAS, Jim Gagliano has served with distinction as Lawrence County’s Citizen representative on the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission since 2003;

WHEREAS, he has served commendably as an adviser to Lawrence County’s Public Participation Panel;

WHEREAS, he brought his experience and enthusiasm to the deliberations of the Commission;

WHEREAS, during his career, Jim has been Lawrence County’s Planning Director twice and has worked as its Administrator for 15 years being named “Administrator of the Year” by the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP) in 2018;

WHEREAS, he has furthered the Commission’s role as a forum for cooperative planning and decision making in southwestern Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, he gave generously of his time by attending countless meetings associated with his appointment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Officers, Members, and Staff of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission offer their appreciation for his years of service and wish him the very best in his retirement.

A motion was made by Morgan Boyd to approve Resolution 2-22 Honoring the Services of James Gagliano, Lawrence County, which was seconded by Jennifer Beer. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION to honor the services of Christopher Wheat.

WHEREAS, Christopher Wheat has served with distinction as Washington County’s Citizen representative on the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) since 2012.

WHEREAS, he has furthered the Commission’s role as a forum for cooperative planning and decision making in southwestern Pennsylvania;

WHEREAS, he brought his skills and experience to the deliberations of the Commission;

WHEREAS, the SPC has benefited considerably from his enthusiastic participation in our planning process;

WHEREAS, his commitment as a public representative is appreciated by the Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Commission wishes to recognize his contribution on behalf of the residents of Washington County and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Region.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Officers, Members, and Staff of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission offer their appreciation for his years of service and anticipate his continuing interest in the work of SPC in the years ahead.

A motion was made by Larry Maggi to approve Resolution 3-22 Honoring the Services of Christopher Wheat, Washington County, which was seconded by Diana Irey Vaughn. The affirmative vote was unanimous

#### 8. Message from the Executive Director – Vincent Valdes

Mr. Valdes stated that he would like to discuss the evolution strategy that SPC has been developing here over the last 9 to 10 months. Over the last few months from time to time, I've been updating folks on where we are with the evolution strategy. SPC has developed a really solid list of recommendations for a reorganization that brings us into the 21st century and set us up to succeed for the region

Mr. Valdes remarked that he wanted to share some of the significant findings in terms of the current state of SPC. This, came directly out of the review, and illustrates what I'm talking about more specifically, regarding the SPCs culture, and therefore, how that culture is reflected in its structure. It's not a synchronized organization. It's not particularly agile in many respects, and without that constant communication, which is unfortunately not present at the SPC, important things have and would, continue to fall through the cracks. Probably the most surprising to me was that there wasn't a mechanism for regional organizational thinking. That is to say, we weren't pushing the envelope on strategy. Strategy is the way you get to the right place. If you don't have a strategy, you've got a vacuum, and you need to be able to talk to your stakeholders identify needs, and within yourselves, for your organization and for any kind of regional initiatives.

Mr. Valdes next presented a functional organizational chart. He explained the model using the terms the front of house and back of house. There are two parts of it that really kind of support each other mutually in terms of a mission to get the job done. SPC created two elements, two parts of an SPC, one of which is programs, and the other, which is financing operations.

SPC is creating Deputy Executive Directors, think of them as corps commanders, if you will, in terms of finance - operations, and programs. They will be responsible each for what you see underneath, a Director of Transportation Planning, and Director of Office of Strategic Initiatives and Policy, and a Director Office of Economic and Workforce Development that's on the program side. On the operation side, Finance and Operation Director, Director of Human Resources, and the Director of Office Information and Data.

In closing, I know some of these findings may be sobering, they come from a neutral party in terms of how we went about the process, but realizing that those things are the existing conditions. This new structure helps us move into the future.

Leslie Osche stated that this is very exciting for the Commission, and certainly long overdue. I see Mr. Fitzgerald shaking his head. I think for those of us who you know, we're looking for change and looking for SPC to become more of a robust organization in the region. I think this is all very exciting for us.

#### 9. Other SPC Business

Seeing no other business before the Commission, Leslie Osche asked a motion to adjourn.

#### 10. Adjourn

Bob Macey moved to adjourn the meeting of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission at 4:47 p.m. and Lynn Heckman seconded. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pat Fabian  
Secretary-Treasurer