

Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission  
Minutes of the Meeting  
August 22, 2022 – 4:00 p.m.  
Cisco Webex Meeting

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

Members: Darin Alviano, Tony Amadio, Jenn Beer, Mike Belding, Brad Berlin, Morgan Boyd, Scott Bricker, Tom Ceraso, Ali Doyle, Rich Fitzgerald, Kim Geyer, Shelia Gombita, Mark Gordon, Kelly Gray, Dick Hadley, Lynn Heckman, Sherene Hess, Mark Hilliard, Charles Jones, Fred Junko, Sean Kertes, Katharine Kelleman, Bob Macey, Larry Maggi, Jack Manning, Jeff Marshall, Kevin McCullough, Leslie Osche, Johnna Pro, Mavis Rainey, Robert Regola, Aurora Sharrard, Larry Shifflet, Loretta Spielvogel, Byron Stauffer, John Timney, and Vince Vicites.

Others: Keyla Hernandez-Ulloa, Federal Communications Commission; James Ritzman, Pennoni Associates; Chris Sandvig and Valic Sando, Mobilify; Dusty Elias Kirk, Reed Smith LLP;

Staff: Dan Alwine, Kirk Brethauer, Mary Brangan, Ronda Craig, Tiffany Cummings, Dom D'Andrea, Margaret Fonner, Chuck Imbrogno, Jenn Lasser, Steve Meredith, Shannon O'Connell, Ailisa Sobien, Vincent Valdes, Sara Walfoort and Andy Waple.

1. Chairman Osche called to order the August 22, 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 June 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the June 27, 2022 meeting by Commissioner Amadio which was seconded by Commissioner Maggi. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

3. Public Comment – None

4. Tiffany Cummings Introduction – Margaret Fonner

Work History:

- Introduction into HR started with an HR assistant position at Mon General Hospital in WV.
- Assistant Store Manager for Tween Brands “Justice” stores in Uniontown and Morgantown.
- HR Generalist for Carlisle Construction Materials in Smithfield
- Severed several different HR roles with West Virginia University in Morgantown.

Education:

- Associates Degree from CCAC South in Business Management.
- Bachelor's Degree from California University of PA in HR Management.
- Master's Degree from WVU in Corporate and Organizational Communication.

Upcoming projects at SPC:

- Completion of the newly revised employee performance review process (Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup>).
- Constructing a strategic plan for recruitment and retention of SPC team members.
- Working with our legal team on rejuvenating the current SPC employee handbook.
- Researching current trends in COLA for the region to advise executive leadership on revised compensation practices.

5. 2021-2022 Annual Report Presentation – Shannon O’Connell

Ms. O’Connell presented the 2021/2022 SPC Annual report package begins with an introductory video highlighting some of SPC’s major accomplishments. The video invites the user to “dig a little deeper” and click through an interactive PDF file showcasing numerous successes, “In progress” projects, and a glimpse into several regionally beneficial projects on the horizon. All aspects of the video and PDF, from conception to scripting to designing to animating, were handled completely in-house by SPC’s Communications/Design team.

6. US DOT & NTIA Grant Application Proposals – Andy Waple and Dan Alwine

**Resolution 9-22 – Endorsement of Middle Mile Infrastructure Grant Program Application Program**

Overview:

- Provides funding for the construction, improvement, or acquisition of middle mile infrastructure.
- Expand and extend middle mile infrastructure to reduce the cost of connecting areas that are unserved or underserved to the internet backbone.
- \$980 million available - awards between \$5m and \$100m
- Applications due September 30, 2022
- Awards after March 1, 2023
- At least 30% match required

Approach:

- Identify project areas and routes that best fit program criteria and serves the most homes, businesses and community anchor institutions
- Partner with Counties and fiber owners in project areas
- Discuss potential matching funds with fiber owners and partners
- Utilize existing on-call contract with Michael Baker Intl. to assist SPC staff and partners in developing a regional application

Middle Mile Grant Program – Proposed Routes

Potential Benefits:

- 452 miles of new fiber installations
- 37,964 residents served within 1,000’ (127,954 within 2,500’)
- 17,441 households served within 1,000’ (54,797 within 2,500’)
- 323 community anchor institutions served

A motion was made to approve Resolution 9-22 by Commissioner Fitzgerald which was seconded by Commissioner Macey. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

**Resolution 10-22 – Endorsement of Safe Streets for All Grant Program Application**

Overview:

- Discretionary grant program to fund regional initiatives that prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries.
- Two types of applications: Action Grants & Implementation Grants
  - Implementation: execute safety programs or projects identified in Safety Action Plan
- \$1 billion available - awards between \$5m – \$50m for Implementation proposals
- Applications due September 15, 2022
- 20% match required

Approach:

- 2020 Safety Action Plan (SAP) = eligible for Implementation Grant
- Conduct planning, design, and development activities in support of an SAP and carry out projects and strategies identified in an SAP
- Deliverability & Data Driven: Applications must include crash data where applicable; funds must be expended 5 years after award

- Match Support - apply with existing projects programmed on TIP with non-federal funding

Application Development:

- Top Locations from HSNS or “Top 20” Crash Sites
- Betterments with existing match programmed on 2023 TIP
- Safe Main Streets:
  - Supplemental Planning for Community/Municipal Assistance
  - Main Streets with documented safety needs
- Overlay locations where transit access is impaired by roadway safety

A motion was made to approve Resolution 10-22 by Commissioner Tierny which was seconded by Commissioner Macey. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

**Resolution 11-22 – Endorsement of Bridge Investment Grant Program Application**

Overview:

- Discretionary program for bridge replacement, rehabilitation, and preservation that focuses on reducing the overall number of bridges in poor condition, or at risk of falling into poor condition
- Three types of projects:
  - Large (>\$100m), Small (<\$100m), & Planning
- \$2.36 billion available FY2023 - awards amounts and match requirement determined by project type and costs to fully fund projects
- Applications due September 8, 2022
- Awards ~Q1 2023

Approach:

- There are 1,377 locally owned bridges in the SPC region with 25% in poor condition and 50% in fair condition.
- Deliverability – reviewed local bridges currently on the regional TIP that can begin construction 18 months after obligation of funds
- Review candidates vs. the six U.S. DOT Project Outcome Criteria
- Benefit Cost Analysis is required
- Regional Coordination: PennDOT D-11: Pittsburgh Bridge Bundle – Fort Duquesne, West End, and McKees Rocks Bridges

No more than eight Local Candidates requesting approximately \$45 million (80% of construction):

- Allegheny County: Patton St (Wilmerding), Kenmawr Ave. Ramp (Rankin), McClaren Run (Findlay Twp)
- Butler County: Geibel Road (Summit Twp.)
- Fayette County: North Gallatin Avenue Bridge over Redstone Creek (Uniontown)
- City of Pittsburgh: Charles Anderson (Oakland); Swinburne (Greenfield)
- Westmoreland County: Fairwood Manor Bridge over Tinkers Run (Irwin)

A motion was made to approve Resolution 11-22 by Commissioner Heckman which was seconded by Commissioner Junko. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

7. Affordable Connectivity Program (Federal Communications Commission) – Keyla Hernandez-Ulloa

Agenda

- The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) – Program Description and Design Overview
- Who is eligible for the ACP?
- Consumer Protections Within the Program
- Be A Local Outreach Partner
- Contacts and References

### What is the Benefit?

The Affordable Connectivity Program is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Program that provides a discount on monthly broadband bills for qualifying low-income households. Eligible households can receive:

- Up to \$30/month discount for broadband service and associated equipment rentals;
- Up to \$75/month discount for households on Tribal lands, and;
- A one-time discount for \$100 for a laptop, desktop, or tablet purchased through a participating provider. Participating consumers pay a \$10 to \$50 co-pay.

### What is a Household?

- A household is a group of people who live together and share money (even if they are not related to each other.) If you live together and share money, you are one household. If you either don't live together or you don't share money, you are two or more households.
- A household can qualify because of eligible dependent children that meet the eligibility criteria.
- You may have to answer questions about your household when you apply for the Affordable Connectivity Program.
- A household worksheet will be available to assist in determining household eligibility.

### Examples of Households

#### One Household :

- A married couple who live together must share one ACP benefit
- A parent/guardian and child who live together must share one ACP benefit
- An adult who lives with friends or family who provide financial support must share one ACP benefit

#### Multiple Household:

- Four roommates who live together but do not share money are four separate households. All four can receive the ACP.
- 30 seniors who live in an assisted-living home but do not share money are 30 separate households. All 30 can receive the ACP.
- A student who receives a Federal Pell Grant and lives alone is a different household than his or her parents. Both the student and their parents are separate households and can receive their own benefits.

### A Household is Eligible if:

Household income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, or

If a member of the household meets at least *one* of the criteria below:

- Participates in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Housing Assistance (ex: Housing Choice Voucher Program), SSI, WIC, or Lifeline;
- Participates in Tribal specific programs, such as Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal TANF, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations;
- Participates in the National School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program (Including the Community Eligibility Provision);
- Received a Pell Grant in the current award year;
- Receives Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit; or
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income program.

### Two Steps to Enroll:

- Go to <https://www.affordableconnectivity.gov/> to apply, or print out a mail-in application; and
- Contact your preferred participating provider to select a plan and have the discount applied to your bill.

Some providers may have an alternative application that they will ask you to complete.

Eligible households must both apply for the program and contact a participating provider to select a service plan.

How Does the ACP Protect Consumers?

FCC rules protect Affordable Connectivity Program recipients by:

- Empowering consumers to choose the service plan that best meets their needs (including a plan they may already be on);
- Ensuring consumers have access to supported broadband services regardless of their credit status;
- Prohibiting providers from excluding consumers with past due balances or prior debt from enrolling in the program;
- Preventing consumers from being forced into more expensive or lower quality plans in order to receive the ACP;
- Ensuring that consumers are not liable for early termination fees;
- Reducing the potential for bill shock or other financial harms;
- Allowing ACP recipients to switch providers or broadband service offerings; and
- Providing a dedicated FCC process for ACP complaints.

Become an Outreach Partner:

- The FCC is mobilizing people and organizations to help share important consumer information about the new Affordable Connectivity Program.
- Request A Speaker: Send a speaker request to ACPspeakers@fcc.gov.
- Become A Partner: Send an email to outreach@fcc.gov.

8. Action on Resolution 12-22 to Dedicate the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program to the Memory of Joe Grata – Vincent Valdes

A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION to dedicate the FFY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Pittsburgh Transportation Management Area to the memory of Fayette County Commissioner Joseph P. (Joe) Grata.

WHEREAS, Joe Grata served as a Commissioner representing Fayette County from 2010 until his passing in 2022; and

WHEREAS, Joe was a lifelong public servant and advocate for our region's transportation system first as a longtime transportation reporter for the Pittsburgh Press and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, who shared his deep understanding of the planning, engineering and funding of infrastructure with the public; and

WHEREAS, Later, in his retirement, he worked to advance connectivity, safety and regionalism as an SPC Commissioner representing Fayette County; and

WHEREAS, Joe recognized that all transportation is 'local' in the minds of our communities and further understood the role of mobility to regional economic vitality and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, Joe was instrumental in bringing his expertise to the development of the 2011-2014 TIP, the 2013-2016 TIP, the 2015-2018 TIP, the 2017-2020 TIP, the 2019-2022 TIP, 2021-2024 TIP, and the 2023-2026 TIP; and

WHEREAS, Joe passed away on June 27, 2022, the day the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission adopted the 2023-2026 TIP.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 2023-2026 TIP is dedicated to the memory of Joe Grata; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commissioners and staff of SPC will miss his perspective, intellect, and sense of humor as we continue our work to keep Southwestern Pennsylvania connected and moving forward.

A motion was made to approve Resolution 12-22 by Commissioner Vicites which was seconded by Commissioner Junko. The affirmative vote was unanimous.

9. Message from the Executive Director – Vincent Valdes  
Next Meeting Date – October 24, 2022

10. Other SPC Business

11. Adjourn – 5:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pat Fabian, Secretary-Treasurer