

Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority Meeting

APPROVED Minutes

January 23, 2023

3:00 p.m.

The following members were in attendance:

Authority Members in Attendance:

Christian Leinbach, Berks County Board of Commissioners, Chair
Marian Moskowitz, Chester County Commissioner, Vice Chair
Scott France, Executive Director, Montgomery County Planning Commission, Secretary
Jim Gerlach, President, GRCA, Assistant Secretary
Peter Urscheler, Phoenixville Borough Mayor, Assistant Treasurer
Brian O’Leary, Executive Director, Chester County Planning Commission
David Zellers, Montgomery County Director of Commerce

Authority Members Absent:

Kenneth Lawrence, Jr., Montgomery County Commissioner, Treasurer
Eddie Moran, Mayor, City of Reading

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Christian Leinbach, Chair of the SRPRA, called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.
Mr. Dan Becker of Kozloff Stoult Attorneys, legal counsel for the Authority, read the guidelines for making public comments.

2. Adoption of December 19, 2022 Minutes

Christian Leinbach called for any corrections to the minutes.

As there were no corrections or objections to the draft minutes of the December 19, 2022 SRPRA meeting submitted, the minutes were approved.

3. Board Member Comments

There were no Board member comments.

4. Public Comment on Agenda Items

There were no public comments submitted.

5. Federal Railroad Administration Corridor Program Application Update

Tom Frawley described the three-step Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) application process: 1) develop scope, schedule and cost estimate to prepare service development plan (SDP); 2) prepare SDP; and 3) engineering and design. The SRPRA application covers steps 1 and 2. A SAM (System for Award Management) number, required for federal contracts or grants, was requested in December. Internal schedule dates are: January 27th-initial draft; February 3rd-letters of support due; March 3rd-completed application package; March 6th submission; and March 20th-FRA application due date.

6. Subcommittee Reports

a. **Finance – Peter Urscheler, Assistant Treasurer**

As Commissioner Lawrence was not present, Mayor Peter Urscheler asked Tom Frawley to provide an update on the solicitation of an auditor for the SRPRA.

i. Auditor Solicitation Update and Action

Tom Frawley said that although there were three qualified firms invited based on the initial screening, and two of those expressed interest in proposing, and the deadline had been extended in response to a request by one of the two interested firms, only the one proposal was received, from Maillie LLP. Dan Becker advised that it was appropriate to instruct Tom Frawley to obtain a professional services agreement from Maillie LLP so it can be reviewed and execution of an agreement can be voted upon at next month's meeting. Marian Moskowitz motioned, Peter Urscheler seconded, and the Board voted unanimously to obtain a professional services agreement from auditor, Maillie LLP and to include vote to award contract on agenda for February 27 Meeting.

ii. *Motion to Pay Bills-Action*

Mayor Peter Urscheler said there was one outstanding bill for the Authority to be paid in the amount of \$7,232.00 for Thomas E. Frawley Consulting, LLC for December 2022 service tasks provided as Interim Executive Director, and 2) \$7,000.00 for Smart Growth America for their invoice covering November and December, 2022.

Peter Urscheler motioned, and Brian O'Leary seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to approve the payment of Invoice 2022-12 in the amount of \$7,232.00 payable to Thomas E. Frawley Consulting, LLC for December 2022 services and Invoice 23-SGA-110 in the amount of \$7,000.00 to Smart Growth America for November and December services..

b. **Marketing & Public Relations– Brian O'Leary, Chair**

i. Committee Update

Brian O'Leary reported that the committee met last week and focused on social media, with plans to focus on: FaceBook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and perhaps later, Instagram. Weekly posts would have best impact, and SRPRA has the content. There would be a need to hire someone to manage accounts for approximately 5 hours per week, so a scope of services should be prepared. Brian asked if this should be an action item added to next month's agenda.

c. **Planning – Scott France, Chair**

i. Committee Update

Scott France reported that his committee is still trying to arrange a meeting with Senator Fetterman. The committee recently had a productive meeting with Andy Batson, PennDOT's Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation. A letter of support has been requested from and promised by PennDOT. Local level planning efforts continue, which is important for the FRA application.

Christian Leinbach, Chair, asked Scott to follow up with Howard Brown of Pottstown to obtain a letter of support from Pottstown.

Transportation for America continues to contribute to compiling a strong FRA application. The committee also continues to work on community engagement with Jim Gerlach's committee. The SRPRA's Zoom account will be transferred to come under Tom Frawley's management for future meetings. The APA Conference will be held in Philadelphia on April 2-4th, 2023. The SRPRA's passenger rail initiative presentation has been accepted; the presentation will be held via bus trip from the Philadelphia Convention Center to the three stops: Pottstown, Reading and Phoenixville. Scott said he will keep the Board informed with a view to their participation in the event.

d. **Personnel – Comm. Moskowitz, Chair**

i. Committee Update

Marian Moskowitz, Vice Chair, and Christian Leinbach, Chair, discussed with the Board the impending expiration of Tom Frawley’s contact as Interim Director. Mr. Leinbach expressed his support for Tom’s work, proposed the elimination of his “interim” status and the preparation of documents for a long-term contract to be reviewed at the SRPRA’s February Board meeting, prior to the expiration of Tom’s contract. He recognized the value of Tom’s contributions to the SRPRA and endorsed this action.

e. **Community Engagement – Jim Gerlach, Chair**

i. Committee Update

Jim Gerlach reported that the committee is trying to schedule three meetings in the “anchor” towns of Reading, Pottstown and Phoenixville. They are compiling the invitee list, developing the appropriate process for holding community session meetings and agendas with similar formats that are informational and include stakeholder feedback in late January 2023.

7. **Interim Executive Director’s Report**

Tom Frawley, Interim Executive Director, reported that he had no additional information to report.

8. **Other Business**

There was no other business discussed.

9. **General Public Comment**

Jeff Whitman, member of the public, asked if the SRPRA would use existing rail lines or would high speed lines be added. Christian said that the SRPRA would use existing rail lines and that the railway is not “high speed rail”.

Christopher Tompkins commented that the Connecticut DOT Shoreline East commuter rail service has an effective Instagram account that SRPRA members should check out. Christian suggested that Brian O’Leary and his Marketing & Public Relations committee could check it out.

Adjourn

Marian Moskowitz motioned and Jim Gerlach seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:40 p.m.

Next Board Meeting

February 27, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Respectfully submitted,



Ann Marie Meehan