

# Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority Meeting

## Approved Minutes

March 27, 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  
Kenneth Lawrence, Jr., Montgomery County Commissioner, Treasurer

### **Authority Members Absent:**

Eddie Moran, Mayor, City of Reading

#### **1. Call to Order**

Commissioner Christian Leinbach, Chair of the SRPRA, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. He called for a moment of silence for those affected by the recent deadly factory fire that occurred in West Reading.

Mr. Dan Becker of Kozloff Stoudt Attorneys, legal counsel for the Authority, read the guidelines for making public comments.

#### **2. Adoption of February 27, 2023 Minutes**

Christian Leinbach called for any corrections to the minutes.

- a. *As there were no corrections or objections to the draft minutes of the February 27, 2023 SRPRA meeting submitted, the minutes were approved.*

#### **3. Board Member Comments**

*There were no Board member comments. However, Chairman Leinbach identified the need to amend the meeting Agenda to include an action under the Personnel Committee Report by which the Interim Executive Director’s contract would be extended beyond its end date of March 31, 2023. It was stated that because of the urgency, such an amendment to the Agenda was permissible under Commonwealth law, and that the Board’s action in this regard should take place before opening Public Comment on Agenda Items. The Board voted unanimously to amend the meeting Agenda.*

#### **4. Public Comment on Agenda Items**

*There were no public comments submitted.*

#### **5. Federal Railroad Administration Corridor Program Application Update**

Tom Frawley said that he completed and filed the SRPRA’S FRA application last week; one week ahead of the March 27 FRA application due date. He thanked everyone who contributed to the effort, in

particular the County Planning Departments and the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance. He reported that as of a few days prior, the FRA had received some 70 new corridor applications, 13 applications for new frequencies on existing routes, and 28 applications for extensions of existing routes. He noted that despite the substantial number of applications, he remained cautiously optimistic based on FRA's stated intention to favor multi-jurisdictional applications, (both state and local) that demonstrate partnering and local support, and to focus on applications that address social equity issues. He added that he believes a decision on the application will probably be made known in late summer of 2023. Brian O'Leary commended Tom on his efforts on the grant application.

## 6. Subcommittee Reports

### a. *Finance – Commissioner Kenneth Lawrence Jr., Chair*

#### i. FY 2022 Audit Update

Commissioner Ken Lawrence asked Tom Frawley to update the Board on the SRPRA'S 2022 audit being conducted by its accounting firm, Maillie LLP. Tom said that Maillie is on schedule to deliver the audit on time to meet the state submission deadline.

#### ii. Motion to Pay Bills –*Action*

Commissioner Lawrence said there were three outstanding bill for the Authority to be paid: two invoices (\$3,500.00 each) for Smart Growth America for January and February services; and one for Thomas E. Frawley Consulting, LLC for \$10,950.00 for February 2023 service tasks provided as Interim Executive Director.

*Commissioner Lawrence motioned, and Peter Urscheler seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to approve the payments of Invoice 23-SGA-150 for \$3,500.00 and Invoice 23-SGA-151 for \$3,500.00, payable to Smart Growth America, and the payment of Invoice 2023-02 in the amount of \$10,950.00 payable to Thomas E. Frawley Consulting, LLC for February 2023 services.*

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

#### i. Committee Update

Brian O'Leary reported that the committee held their March meeting and prepared and released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a consultant to help with the SRPRA's communications. Brian said that five responses were received and will be reviewed during the Committee's April 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, after which he hoped to provide the Board with recommendations at the April SRPRA Board meeting.

### c. *Planning – Scott France, Chair*

#### i. Committee Update

Scott France reported that the committee benefitted from input from PennDOT and Amtrak on SRPRA's FRA application. Scott gave a shout-out to Transportation for America for their contribution and to Katie Cunfer who helped with the letters of support.

Scott said he was looking at the budget assembled for the Authority's application, which estimated Steps 1 and 2 costing between \$2.0 and \$2.5 million, and provided information on funding sources. Last week Berks County received the funding agreement for the long awaited \$750k Congressionally directed grant, and Montgomery County was notified of a state local share account (LSA) award for

deadline is because formation of the Authority was approved by the three counties on two different dates in April, and was not formally accomplished until June when incorporated with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. He requested that Dan check the Authority's documents and report back to the Board at next month's meeting. Christian asked that these two items be included as action items on the April agenda.

9. **General Public Comment**

*There was no public comment.*

**Adjourn**

*Jim Gerlach motioned and Brian O'Leary seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:36 p.m.*

**Next Board Meeting**

April 24, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Respectfully submitted,



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Ann Marie Meehan

**FINAL**