

Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority Meeting

APPROVED Minutes

April 24, 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
Kenneth Lawrence, Jr., Montgomery County Commissioner, Treasurer

Authority Members Absent:

Eddie Moran, Mayor, City of Reading
David Zellers, Montgomery County Director of Commerce

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 Stoudt Attorneys, legal counsel for the Authority, read the guidelines for making public comments.

2. Adoption of March 27, 2023 Minutes

Christian Leinbach called for any corrections to the minutes.

As there were no corrections or objections to the draft minutes of the March 27, 2023 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 on agenda items.

5. Subcommittee Reports

a. Finance – Commissioner Kenneth Lawrence Jr., Chair

- i. FY 2022 Audit Report and Motion to Submit to DCED - *Action*

Commissioner Ken Lawrence said that the Authority’s Executive Director Tom Frawley reviewed the draft audit report and raised two issues. Tom followed up with the auditor Draft audit materials were distributed to members of the Executive and Finance Committees on April 10th, and called for a one page update of one document on April 14th. No additional concerns were raised by either committee, and since no specific concerns were raised by Maillie LLP during the audit process, the Finance

Committee recommends that the statutorily required annual report be submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Community Economic Development (DCED) in accordance with the June 30, 2023 deadline.

Commissioner Ken Lawrence motioned, and Commissioner Marian Moskowitz seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to submit the SRPRA FY 2022 Audit Report to DCED.

ii. Motion to Pay Bills –*Action*

Commissioner Lawrence said there four bills items received and paid, and two bills received, due, and presented for payment, subject to the Board’s approval.

Commissioner Lawrence motioned, and Peter Urscheler seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to approve the payments of six bills presented in the SRPRA’s April 24, 2023 Board meeting packet.

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

i. Report on Solicitation for Social Media Consultant

Brian O’Leary reported that the committee met and reviewed the responses received for the Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a consultant to help with the SRPRA’s communications. The committee will meet again next week to develop a formal recommendation to present to the Board at their May meeting.

c. Planning – Scott France, Chair

i. Committee Update

Scott France acknowledged David Hunter, who was in attendance and asked him to report on the recent APA mobile workshop hosted by the SRPRA where attendees visited and met with local participants at three proposed rail stops in Phoenixville, Pottstown, and Reading. David said the tour was a huge success and thanked the Board members for showing up to the event and for their efforts and goodwill. Christian Leinbach, Chair, added his thanks and thought it was a great event; in particular, he cited Phoenixville Borough’s Mayor Urscheler and Commissioners’ “Blue Ribbon Efforts”, and felt there was real value at all three locations.

Scott reported on the recent VIP visit in Conshohocken with Mitch Landrieu, Senior Advisor to President Biden, and Congresswoman Madeleine Dean to talk about infrastructure projects and restoration of passenger rail service. He added that a Stakeholder’s meeting was recently held in Pottstown last week to bring a broader coalition together for the project. He announced that Pottstown was selected for the Thriving Communities Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Approximately five million dollars will go towards 14 communities identified as “network communities” to work along with to build capacity on acquiring grants and doing planning for infrastructure, including passenger rail. While awaiting word on the SRPRA’s acceptance into the Corridor ID Program to look at future opportunities on ridership study and engineering that will hopefully take place along with acceptance into the Corridor ID Program.

Jim Gerlach asked Tom Frawley that, given Pottstown’s recent acceptance into the Thriving Communities Program should this be highlighted on the SRPRA’s Corridor ID application. Tom thanked Jim for his great question, and although the application predated the award, he said he would contact

his contacts at Transportation for America to ask if there is a mechanism by which updated information of this type can be provided to support the application.

d. Personnel – Comm. Moskowitz, Chair

i. Committee Update

Marian Moskowitz, Vice Chair, said she had no news to report.

e. Community Engagement – Jim Gerlach, Chair

i. Committee Update

Jim Gerlach reported that his committee hasn't done anything further on community engagement as they wanted to wait until Pottstown, Reading and Phoenixville stakeholder meetings were held. He told the Board about the Reading Franklin Street working group will meet this Friday to discuss how the GRCA grant proceeds might best be used in Reading's TOD.

6. Executive Director's Report

Tom Frawley, Executive Director, said that a meeting will be held on May 10th with the FRA and their consultants relating to the congressionally mandated grant awarded to Berks County, to discuss the project and how the funds would be used. He reminded the Board that this grant application preceded the FRA Corridor program application, so integration and coordination will need to be discussed.

Tom told that Board he received an invitation to co-present about the SRPRA project with PA State Representative Chrissy Houlahan at the Woman's Transportation Seminar meeting in Philadelphia on June 28th. Finally, Tom said he is also working with the Planning Committee to develop a professional services agreement to use for the social media contract and for future SRPRA needs relating to planning, ridership, engineering and design strategy that will dovetail with the budget.

7. Other Business

Chair Christian Leinbach said that although the public link through the SRPRA website seems to be working, there seemed to be some confusion over the non-public attendees' Zoom link. He asked Tom to provide the SRPA Board meeting Zoom information again and include it in upcoming Board packets. Tom agreed and asked that anyone who had trouble to get in touch with him.

8. General Public Comment

Christian Leinbach, Chair, said that there was a question from the public from Tony Ryan of Sanatoga: Will passenger rail be run by Amtrak, Septa or another entity? Christian said it will be run by Amtrak.

Adjourn

Christian Leinbach, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 3:33 p.m.

Next Board Meeting

June 26, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Respectfully submitted,



Ann Marie Meehan

FINAL