

Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority Meeting

APPROVED Minutes

June 26, 2023

3:00 p.m.

The following members were in attendance:

Authority Members in Attendance:

Christian Leinbach, Berks County Board of Commissioners, Chair
Scott France, Executive Director, Montgomery County Planning Commission, Secretary
Jim Gerlach, President, GRCA, Assistant Secretary
Kenneth Lawrence, Jr., Montgomery County Commissioner, Treasurer
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:

Marian Moskowitz, Chester County Commissioner, Vice Chair
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.
Mr. Dan Becker of Kozloff Stoudt Attorneys, legal counsel for the Authority, read the guidelines for making public comments.

2. Adoption of May 22, 2023 Minutes

Christian Leinbach called for any corrections to the minutes.

As there were no corrections or objections to the draft minutes of the May 22, 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. Authority Membership: Adopt Ongoing Appointment Durations – Action

SRPRA Executive Director, Tom Frawley explained that according to the Authority’s incorporation papers and its bylaws, there were initial terms for the Authority’s Board members ranging from one to five years to stagger the terms, but the regular term in office as a member was never established. Dan Becker said that the Authority’s act sets the term, and that he should be able to find that information prior to the end of the meeting. (He subsequently determined that the term for subsequent appointments is five years; see Item 9, below.)

Christian Leinbach suggested that the action be tabled for the moment as no action might be required. Christian asked Tom to move to the next agenda item.

6. Report: Congressionally Mandated \$750k Grant – Tom Frawley, Executive Director

Tom Frawley, Executive Director of the SRPRA, reported that he met virtually with representatives of the FRA on June 21st and received a new template for the Statement of Work (SOW) from them. He's updating the drafts SOW and corresponding budget and schedule, and should have the revised drafts to the FRA this week to finalize the grant agreement.

7. Committee Reports**a. *Finance – Commissioner Kenneth Lawrence Jr., Chair*****i. Motion to Pay Bills –Action**

Commissioner Lawrence said there two bills presented for payment, subject to the Board's approval.

Commissioner Lawrence motioned, and Peter Urscheler, Assistant Treasurer, seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to approve the payments of two bills presented in the SRPRA's June 26, 2023 Board meeting packet.

b. *Marketing & Public Relations– Brian O'Leary, Chair***i. Report: Social Media Consultant Contract**

Brian O'Leary reported that the committee has worked out a contract with the social media consultant, Virtual Farm.com. The committee will meet with their representatives on July 5th to craft out a game plan for moving forward.

Separately, Brian noted that several individuals had reported that the SRPRA website appeared to be down, impeding the ability of some to participate in the meeting, and they have contacted the web host and are working on trying to resolve the SRPRA's website access issue.

c. *Planning – Scott France, Chair***i. Amtrak Meeting Report**

Scott France reported that he, Brian O'Leary and Tom Frawley went to Washington D.C. on June 8 for a meeting with Amtrak officials; Jim Gerlach participated in the meeting virtually. As the corridor ID program's grants have not yet been awarded, the meeting was to coordinate what SRPRA hopes to accomplish while waiting for the FRA CIDP announcement. Amtrak expressed support for beginning an alternative routes analysis and other tasks related to preparation of the Service Development Plan, and encouraged the Authority to further coordinate with PennDOT.

ii. Request Authorization to Solicit Consultant Proposals – Action

Scott said that has provided guidance regarding the \$750k federal grant funding. The 750k would not be eligible to be used as future match money, so if the SRPRA is ready to go, there is no reason not to get started on the Service Development Plan. He said he would provide a motion to give approval to Executive Director, Tom Frawley, to move ahead and solicit consultant services proposals.

Scott France, Secretary, motioned, and Peter Urscheler, Assistant Treasurer, seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to approve the authorization of SRPRA Executive Director, Tom Frawley, to solicit consultant proposals on behalf of the SRPRA.

Personnel – Comm. Moskowitz, Chair

i. Committee Update

On behalf of Commissioner Moskowitz, Chair, who was absent, Peter Urscheler, Assistant Treasurer, said that he had no news to report.

d. Community Engagement – Jim Gerlach, Chair

i. Committee Update

Jim Gerlach reported that his committee hasn't met recently; he spoke with Tom Frawley last week about the idea of circling back to the state legislative delegation in the corridor region to provide them with a written summary update, and to hold an in-person meeting after Labor Day to obtain feedback from them on the project.

Christian expressed support for not awaiting the FRA's decision and encouraged Jim to plan a September meeting as that is a core group of the project's advocates on the Commonwealth level. Jim said he would reach out to committee members for a quick committee call.

8. Executive Director's Report

a. Internet Domain Name Renewals – Action

Tom Frawley, Executive Director, said that 18 different domain names were originally secured for the Authority and have been paid for by John Weidenhammer. The cost would be \$35 monthly in order to retain control of them, and he asked that the Board introduce a motion to authorize him to facilitate the transfer and continue the subscriptions to all 18 domain names, going forward.

Brian O'Leary motioned, and Peter Urscheler, Assistant Treasurer, seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to approve the authorization of SRPRA Executive Director, Tom Frawley, to facilitate the transfer and continue the subscriptions to all 18 domain names, going forward, on behalf of the SRPRA.

9. Other Business

Tom Frawley said that he was invited to be a panelist at the June 28th meeting of the Women's Transportation Seminar in Philadelphia, where he would appear alongside fellow panelist, Congresswoman Chrissy Houlahan. Representative Houlahan will be presenting on the topic of the bipartisan infrastructure law, while Tom will be making a presentation on the SRPRA project.

Dan Becker returned to tabled Agenda Item #5 re the Authority's Board membership. He said that he determined that under the Municipal Authorities Act, SRPRA Board members would be appointed in staggering terms of one to five years, and then, as they roll off, the new term is five years for each incoming member. Therefore, no action by the Board was required.

10. General Public Comment

Christian Leinbach, Chair, said that there was question from Nate Leshner of Earl Township. He asked if a date has been selected for the vote on the Authority reauthorization. Christian said that the answer is no. The reauthorization votes will happen in 2025, when the Commissioners of Chester, Berks and Montgomery counties will have to vote to reauthorize the Authority to continue, on or before June 15th 2025.

Adjourn

Christian Leinbach called to adjourn the meeting.

Assistant Treasurer Peter Urscheler, motioned, and Christian Leinbach, seconded, all voted unanimously, to adjourn the June 2023 meeting of the SRPRA Board.

Next Board Meeting

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

Respectfully submitted,

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