

Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority Meeting

July 25, 2022

3:00 p.m.

The following members were in attendance:

Authority Members

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

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Marian Moskowitz, Vice Chair of the SRPRA, called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

2. Adoption of July 6, 2022 Minutes

Marion Moskowitz motioned and Jim Gerlach seconded to approve the draft minutes of the July 6, 2022 SRPRA meeting.

3. Board Member Comments

There were no Board member comments.

4. Public Comment on Agenda Items

There were no public comments submitted.

5. Consultants

a. Overview of Authority Options

Brian O’Leary reminded the Board that the selection of a consultant could assist in: 1) helping to navigate the political and federal passenger rail process; 2) providing administrative support; and 3) eventually selecting an Executive Director.

b. Guest Presenters: John Robert Smith, Consultant, and Alex Metcalfe of TEMS

John Robert Smith, Consultant, presented his qualifications and experience with Transportation for America for creating and implementing policy on the SRPRA’s behalf. His proposal includes one year of service with an optional additional year. He added that his proposal is designed to prepare the SRPRA to qualify for corridor status and secure significant funding streams needed, as well as navigating the political aspects of the process.

Alex Metcalfe of TEMS presented his and his organization’s experience with the development of passenger rail corridors in Boston, Reading/Philadelphia, and British Rail. He stated that there were three areas highlighted in his proposal in which he and his organization can help the Authority: 1) providing ongoing management/subcommittee support; 2) assisting in a search for an Executive Director; and 3) preparing a blueprint study laying out all aspects of the process, including action plans, time-line for five years to make for a smooth organizational implementation.

6. Organizational Needs**a. 2022 Meeting Schedule Review**

Scott France reminded the Board that although the 2022 SRPRA Board meetings were scheduled for the 4th Monday at 3 p.m. each month, the meetings in September and December conflicted with holidays. He proposed that the meetings for those months be rescheduled for September 19th and December 19th.

Commissioner Ken Lawrence motioned, and Dave Zellers seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to accept the SRPRA Board's September 19th and December 19th, 2022 meetings.

b. Interim Solicitor

Commissioner Ken Lawrence said that based upon their service and support they have provided the SRPRA and the Tri-County Passenger Rail Committee, he determined that the best course of action would be to appoint Kozloff Stoudt Attorneys to service as Interim Solicitor for the SRPRA.

Commissioner Ken Lawrence motioned, and Dave Zellers seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to appoint Kozloff Stoudt Attorneys of Wyomissing, PA as interim solicitor for the SRPRA.

c. Public Comment Policy

Scott France proposed the following guidelines for making public comments at SRPRA's Board meetings: 1) a person will state their name, municipality, and purpose of their comment with maximum of two minutes; and 2) for a person speaking on an organization's behalf, stating their organization's name, purpose of comment with five minutes duration; and 3) the total time limit for public comment will be set at thirty minutes unless the Chair opts to extend that time.

A motion was made by Brian O'Leary and seconded by Jim Gerlach to adopt the proposed public comment policy; all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried.

d. Insurance Coverages

Scott France presented his findings upon consulting with KMRD on insurance carriers and levels of coverage for the SRPRA's officers. Old Republic Insurance Company was the recommended carrier, but upon discussion, the Board members agreed that further discussion was required regarding the level of coverage required. Chester and Montgomery County reviewed the proposal but Berks has not. The Board members agreed to table discussion and defer the vote until next month.

A motion was made by Scott France and seconded by Brian O'Leary to table the vote on general liability insurance coverage and revisit it at the August 22, 2022 meeting. All voted unanimously, and the motion was carried.

7. Subcommittee Reports**a. Finance – Comm. Lawrence, Chair****i) Banking Services**

Commissioner Lawrence reported that after considering the banking services of three community banks (Truist, Univest and Victory), he would recommend the SRPRA opt for Victory Bank.

A motion was made by Commissioner Lawrence and seconded by Commissioner Moskowitz for the SRPRA to establish a banking relationship with the Victory Bank. All voted unanimously, and the motion was carried.

ii) **Signature Powers**

Commissioner Lawrence reminded the Board that he and Peter Urscheler as Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, respectively, have signature approval, but a third Board member signature should be added for the Authority and all three signatories should review.

iii) **Budget**

Brian O'Leary presented a proposed 2022 SRPRA draft budget that he created and said it could be changed while decisions are being made. As the SRPRA's consultant has not yet been selected, the Board decided to table the adoption of the proposed budget and revisit it in a future executive session.

b. **Marketing – Brian O'Leary, Chair**

i) **Logo**

Brian O'Leary shared some sample logos based on three themes: 1) river/rail; 2) simplified; and 3) acronym. Upon discussion, the Board agreed to study the logos further and send their final recommendation for the Committee to review and approve.

ii) **Website Development**

Brian O'Leary presented three website domain name domain options for the Authority: 1) ridesrpra.com; 2) schuylkillrail.com; and 3) gosrpa.com. Board members selected gosrpa.com for the Authority.

iii) **Press Release**

Brian O'Leary reported that a press release prepared by Montgomery County's Communications Director, Kelly Cofrancisco formally submitted the SRPRA's intentions to the FRA.

c. **Planning – Scott France, Chair**

i) **Notification of Interest Submitted**

Scott France said a notification of interest has been electronically submitted to the FRA's website and posted online. A letter of partnership will be sent to PennDOT notifying them of the creation of the Authority along with a request for formal support, an invitation to join future Authority meetings, and the desire to coordinate together in the future.

ii) **Letters to AMTRAK/PennDOT**

Scott France said that the Amtrak letter has not been sent yet, but he will send them an email invite them to future Board meetings. Two additional letters to SEPTA and Norfolk Southern will be sent out in the future.

iii) **Translation**

Regarding translation at SRPRA meetings, there is no translation service proposed at this time, Scott said, but the Planning Committee is open to exploring the use of various translation tools in the future.

iv) Consultants

After discussion, the Board decided to table this action and hold an executive session in seven to ten days to discuss the selection of a consultant. Scott France said he would send the Board members a Doodle poll electronically with a choice of dates.

A motion was made by Brian O’Leary and seconded by Scott France to hold an upcoming executive session to discuss the choice of consultants. All voted unanimously, and the motion was carried.

Commissioner Moskowitz adjourned the meeting at 4:32 p.m.

Executive Session Meeting

TBD, via Zoom

Next Board Meeting

August 22, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Marie Meehan