

# Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority Meeting

## Approved Minutes

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

#### **2. Adoption of January 23, 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 January 23, 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 submitted.*

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

Tom Frawley said that the FRA application's text and appendices are almost complete, and he has shared them with Amtrak and PennDOT for their input. The application is on track to be complete and available for submission between one and two weeks prior to the March 27 FRA application due date. Jim Gerlach expressed appreciation for PA State Representative Joe Ciresi's work on obtaining letters of support for the project. As well, Tom Frawley recognized Katie Cunfer's efforts in this regard as well. Christian Leinbach recognized the contribution of Transportation for America, from which Steven Coleman Kenny was in attendance.

Vice-Chair Marian Moskowitz noted that the application doesn't mention Washington D.C. as a destination for the proposed rail line. Tom explained that although the corridor was defined as

ultimately providing a single seat ride between Reading, Philadelphia and New York, connecting trips to Washington would be feasible as soon as operation begins on the Reading-Philadelphia segment, and that the possibility of a one-seat ride to Washington could be explored after the defined corridor is implemented. Steven Coleman Kenny of Transportation told the Board that service to D.C. could be considered in future years. Tom thanked the Board for their suggestions and welcomed their input on the draft application.

**a. Motion to Authorize Submission of Application – Action**

Tom Frawley asked the Board to vote on authorizing him to submit the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) application on behalf of the SRPRA.

*Marian Moskowitz motioned, and Jim Gerlach seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to authorize Thomas E. Frawley, Interim Executive Director of the SRPRA, to submit the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) application on behalf of the SRPRA.*

**6. Subcommittee Reports**

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

**i. Auditor Solicitation Update**

Mayor Peter Urscheler reported that the Finance Committee met on February 15, 2023. He said there are two action items presented today for the Board.

**ii. Motion to Accept Engagement Letter and Authorize Direction to Begin 2022 Audit –Action**

Mayor Peter Urscheler said this action would be to accept Maillie LLP's engagement letter and authorize them to begin the 2022 audit for the SRPRA.

*Peter Urscheler motioned, and Marian Moskowitz seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to accept the engagement letter from Maillie LLP, and authorize them to begin the SRPRA's 2022 audit.*

**iii. Motion to Pay Bills –Action**

Mayor Peter Urscheler said there was one outstanding bill for the Authority to be paid in the amount of \$9,475.00 for Thomas E. Frawley Consulting, LLC for January 2023 service tasks provided as Interim Executive Director.

*Peter Urscheler motioned, and Jim Gerlach seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to approve the payment of Invoice 2023-01 in the amount of \$9,475.00 payable to Thomas E. Frawley Consulting, LLC for January 2023 services.*

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

**i. Committee Update**

Brian O'Leary reported that the committee held their February meeting to prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire a consultant to help with the SRPRA's communications, primarily its social media, newsletters and press releases. Brian asked the Board if they had any suggestions regarding distribution of the RFP to let him or Tom Frawley know. The next committee meeting will be held on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

**c. Planning – Scott France, Chair****i. Committee Update**

Scott France reported that the committee has been working with Tom Frawley and Transportation for America on the FRA application. Meeting was held between Tom Frawley and Senator Fetterman's staffer, Madeleine Marr, who expressed their interest in assisting with the project. The committee has been coordinating with PennDOT on their letter of support. Scott gave a shout-out to David Hunter who is leading the APA National Conference's mobile workshop on the SRPRA project. The mobile workshop will visit and meet with local participants at three proposed rail stops in Phoenixville, Pottstown, and Reading on Sunday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Scott said community engagement meetings continue; last month a meeting was held in Pottstown with elected officials and staff on initial coordination.

Brian O'Leary added that the Phoenixville community meeting is scheduled for March 22<sup>nd</sup>. David Hunter said that March 7<sup>th</sup> is the Berks County meeting.

Christian added that Steven from Transportation for America posted in the chat box that his organization is meeting with Senator Fetterman's office this Friday (March 3<sup>rd</sup>) to discuss small rural transit funding and to please email him anything that the Authority would wish to share or emphasize with the Senator's staff.

**d. Personnel – Comm. Moskowitz, Chair****i. Committee Update**

Marian Moskowitz, Vice Chair, reported that the committee met a few weeks ago and will be meeting again next week to discuss a formal request to the Board regarding Tom Frawley's continued contact as Interim Director.

**e. Community Engagement – Jim Gerlach, Chair****i. Committee Update**

Jim Gerlach reported that there was a meeting on February 7<sup>th</sup> with Pottstown, primarily with council members and elected officials, including a round table discussion about the status of the project. The Berks County meeting will be held on March 7<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 at the Schmidt Center, Reading Community College. The Chester County/Phoenixville meeting will be held on March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30 p.m., location to be determined.

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

Tom Frawley, Interim Executive Director, reported that a briefing was held on February 3<sup>rd</sup> for U.S. Representative Chrissy Houlahan and her staff. Tom said that as well as engaging a service to help with the SRPRA's communications, he anticipates that the Authority will need to engage the services of a planning/environmental/engineering consultant in the coming months.

**8. Other Business**

*There was no other business discussed.*

**9. General Public Comment**

Howard Brown, member of the public, asked if the SRPRA is tracking ridership numbers for the Amtrak Thruway bus service from Reading and Pottstown to Philadelphia. Christian said they are not.

**Adjourn**

*Jim Gerlach motioned and Peter Urscheler seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:45 p.m.*

**Next Board Meeting**

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

Respectfully submitted,



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Ann Marie Meehan

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