

SCHUYLKILL RIVER PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY  
BOARD MEETING PACKET  
DECEMBER 18, 2023

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## Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority

### Meeting Agenda

December 18, 2023, 3pm\*

1. Call to Order
2. Adoption of November 27 Minutes
3. Board Member Comments
4. Public Comment on Agenda Items
5. Report on FRA CIDP Application Acceptance
6. Award of Consultant Contract to begin SDP Preparation – *Action*
7. Direction to Virtual Farm Creative for 2024 level of effort – *Action*
8. Committee Reports
  - a. Finance – Commissioner Lawrence, Chair
    - i. Motion to Pay Bills – *Action*
  - b. Marketing & Public Relations – Brian O’Leary, Chair
    - i. Committee Update
  - c. Planning – Scott France, Chair
    - i. Committee Update
  - d. Personnel – Commissioner Moskowitz, Chair
    - i. Committee Update
  - e. Community Engagement – Jim Gerlach, Chair
    - i. Committee Update
  - f. By-Laws – Scott France, Chair
    - i. Report on revision of Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation
9. Executive Director’s Report
10. Acceptance of Letters of Resignation – *Action*
11. Other Business
12. General Public Comment
13. Adjourn

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority will be held virtually at 3:00 PM on Monday, January 22, 2024. Public participation is available via the public registration link provided on the website. All SRPRA Board meetings are open to the public.

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\*Public participation in SRPRA virtual meetings can be accomplished via the registration link provided on the website. Please visit the Authority website for more information and the registration link. [www.GoSRPRA.com](http://www.GoSRPRA.com)

SCHUYLKILL RIVER PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY

BOARD MEETING PACKET

DECEMBER 18, 2023

DRAFT MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 27, 2023 MEETING

# Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority Meeting

## DRAFT Minutes

November 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  
Kenneth Lawrence, Jr., Montgomery County Commissioner, Treasurer  
Scott France, Executive Director, Montgomery County Planning Commission, Secretary  
Peter Urscheler, Phoenixville Borough Mayor, Assistant Treasurer  
Brian O’Leary, Executive Director, Chester County Planning Commission  
Jim Gerlach, President, GRCA, Assistant Secretary  
Stephanie Henrick, Mayor of Pottstown

### **Authority Members Absent:**

Eddie Moran, Mayor of Reading

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

Executive Director Tom Frawley announced that Christian Leinbach, Chair of the SRPRA, was detained on a Berks County legal matter and would not be able to join the meeting until later. Tom asked that Commissioner Marian Moskowitz, Vice Chair of the SRPRA, would lead the meeting, and she called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Mr. Dan Becker of Kozloff Stoudt Attorneys, legal counsel for the Authority, then read the guidelines for making public comments.

### **2. Adoption of October 23, 2023 Minutes**

Marian Moskowitz called for any corrections to the minutes.  
Stephanie Henrick, Mayor of Pottstown, requested that the spelling of her last name be corrected.

*Subject to the requested corrections to the draft minutes of the October 23, 2023 SRPRA meeting being made, Mayor Peter Urscheler moved for their adoption and Jim Gerlach seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.*

### **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. Adoption of 2024 Meeting Schedule– Action**

Marian Moskowitz called for a vote on the adoption of the proposed 2024 SRPRA Board meeting dates.

*Mayor Peter Urscheler introduced a motion to adopt the 2024 meeting schedule, Scott France seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.*

## 6. Committee Reports

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

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

Mayor Urscheler said the Finance Committee met on November 13th. There were three bills presented for payment, subject to the Board’s approval.

*Mayor Urscheler motioned, Brian O’Leary seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to approve the payments of three bills presented in the SRPRA’s November 27, 2023 Board meeting packet.*

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

#### i. Committee Update

Brian O’Leary reported that social media outreach for SRPRA continues. Currently, the Authority has 105 Instagram followers, 392 Facebook followers, and 233 LinkedIn followers. He encouraged everyone to continue to share to increase exposure.

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

#### i. Committee Update

Scott France reported that last month’s Board meeting was held in Pottstown and was a great success, thanks to the hosting of the Borough and the Montgomery County Community College. There will be a meeting with PennDOT officials tomorrow in Harrisburg. Still coordinating with the FRA on the existing federal appropriation grant. Also, a review of proposal submissions for will soon be underway for SRPRA consultant services and there should be recommendations at the December Board meeting. The next meeting with SEPTA has not yet been scheduled. Scott announced that the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee approved a proposed work item with DVRPC to conduct station facilities planning as well as a station vision plan.

### d. **Personnel – Comm. Moskowitz, Chair**

#### i. Committee Update

Commissioner Moskowitz, Chair, said that the Committee had no news to report.

### e. **Community Engagement – Jim Gerlach, Chair**

#### i. Committee Update

Jim Gerlach said the Committee had not met since the last SRPRA Board meeting. The Committee is prepared to reengage with stakeholders upon hearing of the FRA decision regarding the SRPRA’s application for the corridor ID program. The Committee is planning for a number of meetings as soon as the FRA decision is made. After the swearing in of new Commissioners, an informational session will be held to bring them up to date on the status of the project. Jim reminded the Board that he will be leaving the Board at the end of the year. He asked Mayor Stephanie Henrick who is coming onto the Board to consider joining Mayor Urscheler and Mayor Moran on the Community Engagement Committee.

### f. **By-Laws – Scott France, Chair**

#### i. Revision of Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation– *Action*

Regarding the Articles of Incorporation amendment, Scott France explained two of the member counties (Berks and Montgomery) have passed their own resolutions supporting amendment of the SRPRA Articles of Incorporation, and the third (Chester County) has their resolution on the agenda for their upcoming Board of Commissioners meeting. Once the Commissioners in all three counties have voted in favor of amending the Articles of Incorporation, Dan Becker will advertise and file Articles of Amendment with the Commonwealth.

Regarding the bylaws, Scott said that they had been reviewed at the October meeting and he sent out a copy of the updated bylaws on October 27th, which included one minor change that had been identified at the October 23rd meeting. He recommended that a motion be put forth today to take action on adopting the bylaws. Scott France called for the Board to vote on the bylaws.

*Scott France motioned, Christian Leinbach seconded, all voted unanimously, to adopt the revised SRPRA bylaws.*

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

Tom Frawley, Executive Director, reported on the November 15, 2023 meeting with FRA administration officials to narrow the statement of work on the SRPRA's application, by limiting the statement of work on fully funded and accomplished items. The statement of work has been modified to corresponding adjustments to the schedule and budget documents, and they are attachments that go with the grant agreement itself. Grant agreement signing should take place in the next few weeks. The FRP advertisement for a consultant was posted on October 27th; the submission deadline has been moved to December 4th and a recommendation should be ready in time for the SRPRA's December Board meeting. Tom said he will attend the PennDOT meeting tomorrow and the following day (Wednesday) join with the Executive Committee to meet with the FRA including Dr. Santiago Cruz-Roveda, who is the corridor ID and development program leader.

After the report, Dan Becker reminded Tom Frawley that the approved 2024 SRPRA Board meeting dates must be advertised. Tom acknowledged the requirement and asked if Kozloff Stoudt would arrange the mandatory advertisement in the newspapers of record in the three counties regarding the intent to file.

#### **8. Other Business**

Commissioner Ken Lawrence shared that he will be resigning as of December 31, 2023. He thanked the Board for the plaque he was presented with at last month's meeting and said it was a pleasure to work with the SRPRA Board. He added that he looks forward to boarding the passenger train once service is restored, and indicated that he would be boarding the Pottstown Station.

On behalf of the SRPRA Board, Christian Leinbach, Chair, said that it was a joy to work with Commissioner Lawrence, thanked him for his leadership, and hoped he could find a way to continue his involvement with the SRPRA.

#### **9. General Public Comment**

*There was no public comment.*

#### **10. Adjourn**

Marian Moskowitz called to adjourn the meeting.

*Brian O'Leary motioned, Peter Urscheler seconded, all voted unanimously, to adjourn the November 2023 meeting of the SRPRA Board.*

**Next Board Meeting**

December 18, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Respectfully submitted,



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Ann Marie Meehan

SCHUYLKILL RIVER PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY

BOARD MEETING PACKET

DECEMBER 18, 2023

CONSULTANT SELECTION FOR  
PLANNING AND ENGINEERING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



**SCHUYLKILL RIVER PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY CONSULTANT SELECTION SUMMARY  
REGARDING PROPOSALS RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO  
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS No. 2023-02  
SEEKING CONSULTANT SERVICES TO PERFORM  
ACTIVITIES RELATED TO PREPARATION OF A PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SDP)**

Prepared December 15, 2023

**OVERVIEW**

Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority (SRPRA of the Authority) advertised on October 27, 2023 its Request for Proposals (RFP) no. 2023-02 seeking consultant services to perform activities related to preparation of a passenger rail Service Development Plan (SDP). A proposal evaluation team, was assembled consisting of seven members, six of whom represented the Planning Commissions of Berks, Montgomery and Chester Counties, plus the Executive Director. A proposal evaluation manual or booklet and a proposal scoring matrix were prepared that reflected the process and scoring weights identified in the RFP. Five Addenda were issued, modifying the Statement of Work (SOW) to reflect changes directed by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), revising the proposal due date from November 22 to December 4, and making other changes to respond to questions submitted by prospective proposers and to effect minor typographical errors.

Five proposals were received prior to the deadline. All were reviewed and deemed responsive. All were evaluated taking into consideration the previously prepared evaluation booklet and scoring matrix, and input from References. The two highest ranked proposers were asked to respond to questions regarding their proposals, and their responses were then taken into consideration as well. The Executive Director participated in meetings of the proposal evaluation team but did not score the proposals, having recused himself due to having an existing contractual relationship with one of the proposers.

**RESULTS**

The five proposals were ranked at the conclusion of the evaluation, as follows:

- 1 – AECOM
- 2 – Urban Engineers
- 3 – WSP
- 4 – STV
- 5 – DB E.C.O

**RECOMMENDATION AND ACTION**

The proposal evaluation team recommends award of a contract to AECOM subject to negotiation of a budget and schedule. SRPRA would be represented by the Authority Executive Director, one or more of the County Planning Commission Executive Directors, and Counselor Dan Becker. If an agreement cannot be reached within ten business days, negotiations would be terminated, and new negotiations initiated with the second ranked proposer. The action requested of the Board is to authorize such negotiations, and to authorize the Executive Director to execute the resultant contract.

SCHUYLKILL RIVER PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY  
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VIRTUAL FARM CREATIVE  
CALENDAR YEAR 2024 DIRECTION

**SCHUYLKILL RIVER PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY**  
**DIRECTION FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2024**  
Prepared December 15, 2023

**OVERVIEW**

Schuykill River Passenger Rail Authority (SRPRA of the Authority) entered not a contract with Virtual Farm Creative (VFC) on June 22, 2023, based on a proposal received from VFC in response to the Authority's Request for Proposals (RFP) no. 2023-01 advertised on March 8, 2023 and seeking a social media consultant, and negotiated by a subcommittee of the Marketing & Public Relations Committee (the Committee). The initial proposal was for \$20,000 spread over eight months, combining start-up tasks, such as establishing social media channels and branding refinement, with ongoing monthly tasks such as creating and releasing social media posts. Due to delays on the part of SRPRA, work did not begin until July and VFC has both completed its start-up tasks and performed its monthly tasks at a higher level of effort than originally proposed, including more frequent posts and help designing improvements to the Authority website. Monthly fees have been invoiced paid at the agreed rate of \$2,500 and a total of \$15,000 will be expended for July through December 2023. This compares to \$20,000 budgeted for social media consultant work during 2023.

**RECOMMENDED LEVEL OF EFFORT FOR 2024**

The VFC proposal contained a range of optional tasks in addition to the ongoing monthly tasks started on 2023. To reflect completion of the start-up tasks in 2023, the monthly charge for continuing of the ongoing maintenance and support of the social media channels was priced at \$1,717 per month or \$20,600 for the year, which corresponds with the amount budgeted for these services during 2024. Optional tasks included in the proposal were as follows:

- Comprehensive strategic plan
- Original objective-focused copywriting in brand voice
- Custom, stylized illustration in brand standard
- Unlimited photography/video and post production
- Redesign gosrpra.com for greater impact, professionalism and utility
- Establish efficient blog at gosrpra.com (WordPress theme & SEO)
- Establish Email system and opt-in (Mailchimp and stylize)
- Quarterly email blasts/newsletter (development, list management)

Requesting that all of these optional services be provided would increase the monthly fee to \$4,500 which would total \$54,000 for the year, which is far in excess of the 2024 budget amount of \$20,600. The Committee recognizes the level of ongoing social media activity has increased, and has also opted to have VFC provide ongoing support of improvements to the website (5<sup>th</sup> bullet), and creation and maintenance of a newsletter (8<sup>th</sup> bullet). Based on this scope, the Committee has negotiated a monthly fee of \$2,400 for 2024. This proposed monthly fee is more than the previously identified base amount of \$1,717 and would result in an annual cost of \$28,800. This amount is \$8,200 more than currently budgeted for the year.

### **ADDITIONAL SERVICES INITIATED IN DECEMBER 2023**

After acceptance of SRPRA into the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development Program, the Committee concluded that the website needed an immediate update to reflect a change in focus from generating interest for advocacy to reporting project planning and design progress. Similarly, it was concluded that with 120+ names of "subscribers" accumulated to-date it was time to design a virtual newsletter or email blast. VFC is poised to begin these activities immediately upon direction with a planned completion within a few weeks. These activities have been negotiated to cost \$3,000 as a one-time fee, to be charged against the 2023 budget which currently anticipates a \$5,000 surplus.

### **RECOMMENDATION AND ACTION**

The Marketing & Public Relations Committee and the Executive Director recommend that VFC be directed to perform the identified level of effort for 2024 at a monthly fee of \$2,400 and that one-time additional tasks be initiated in December 2023, be continued to completion and be charged against the remaining budget for 2023.

SCHUYLKILL RIVER PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY  
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BILLS RECEIVED SINCE NOVEMBER 27 MEETING

1152 15th Street NW, Ste 450  
Washington, DC 20005  
Telephone: 202-955-5543  
Fax: 202-955-5543  
Federal EIN: 27-0038938

**DATE:** 12/15/2023  
**INVOICE #** \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR:** SRPRA Rail consulting services  
**PROJECT NO.** 1061  
**ACCOUNT CODE:** 4100

**BILL TO:** Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority  
Attn: Thomas E. Frawley  
633 Court Street  
Reading, PA 19601  
tom@frawleyconsulting.com

Billing Period Start:	Billing Period End
11/1/2023	11/30/2023

**DUE DATE:** **1/14/2024**

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
Primary Services Tasks (November 1, 2023 - November 30, 2023)	\$ 3,920.00
<i>Please reference the above-mentioned invoice number on your payment.</i>	

	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	\$ 3,920.00
ABA#	065000090	<b>TAX RATE</b> 0.00%
Beneficiary Acct #	3316957006	<b>SALES TAX</b> -
Beneficiary:	Smart Growth America	<b>OTHER</b> -
	<b>TOTAL</b>	\$ <b>3,920.00</b>

**ALERT! OUR BANK INFORMATION HAS CHANGED! PLEASE REMIT PAYMENT USING THE UPDATED BANK DETAILS PROVIDED ABOVE.**

**THANK YOU.**



**VFC, Inc.**  
 31A Ridge Road, Suite One  
 Phoenixville, Pennsylvania 19460  
**VirtualFarm.com**

# Invoice

Date	Invoice No.
11/22/2023	14594

SRPRA  
 Thomas Freawley

Terms
Net 30

Description	Amount
ANNUAL MARKETING PARTNERSHIP: December 2023	2,500.00
Refer to proposal for defined plan elements and reactionary marketing consultation (start date 7/2023 - 12/2023)	
Billed monthly \$2500.00	
Sales Tax	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,500.00</b>

To remit payment via ACH: Phoenixville Federal Bank and Trust 533 Kimberton Rd. P.O Box 1046 Kimberton, PA 19442  
 ACH# 231374916, Account: Virtual Farm Creative, Account # 0041033796 \*Please email ideas@virtualfarm.com with invoice #'s and invoice amounts  
 paid for ACH payments.  
 INVOICES ARE DUE UPON RECEIPT  
 THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS!

**FROM: THOMAS E FRAWLEY CONSULTING, LLC**  
**551 Daventry Road**  
**Berwyn, PA 19312-1740**  
**Attention: Thomas E. Frawley**

Thomas E. Frawley Contact Information: Tom@FrawleyConsulting.com 610-724-5028 (Mobile)
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**TO: SCHUYLKILL RIVER PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY**  
**Berks County Courthouse and Government Services Center**  
**633 Court Street**  
**Reading, PA 19601**  
**Attention: Finance Committee**

Contract Date: 20SEP2022	Sequential Payment Request Number: 15
Start Date: 26SEP2022	Invoice Number: 2023-11
	Invoice Date: 12DEC2023

Invoice for services performed as Executive Director of the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority for the period: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 through Thursday, November 30, 2023.

LABOR, INCLUDING OVERHEAD AND FEE				
ELEMENT DESCRIPTION		TASK HOURS	CONTRACT RATE	TOTAL LABOR CHARGES
November 2023		79.50	\$130.00	\$10,335.00
				\$10,335.00

EXPENSES, AT COST			
DESCRIPTON OF EXPENSES		NOTES	EXPENSES INVOICED
Travel expenses via Amtrak to Harrisburg			\$189.33

TOTAL CHARGES THIS INVOICE - LABOR AND EXPENSES		
		\$10,524.33

INVOICE LABOR, EXPENSES, AND HOURS SUMMARY AND STATUS			
	LABOR	EXPENSES	TOTAL
CHARGED PRIOR TO 01NOV2023	\$119,371.50	\$1,742.05	\$121,113.55
CHARGED DURING 01NOV2023 - 30NOV2023	\$10,335.00	\$189.33	\$10,524.33
OVERALL CHARGED TO DATE	\$129,706.50	\$1,931.38	\$131,637.88
PREVIOUS INVOICES OUTSTANDING	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL INVOICES OUTSTANDING INCLUDING THIS INVOICE	\$10,335.00	\$189.33	\$10,524.33

	HOURS
HOURS EXPENDED PRIOR TO 01NOV2023	1,120.15
TOTAL HOURS CHARGED DURING 01NOV2023 - 30NOV2023	79.50
TOTAL HOURS CHARGED 01SEP2022 THROUGH 30NOV2023	1,199.65

I have personally examined this billing statement. All entries are correct and reasonable for the services performed and allowable costs incurred, and no item on this statement has been previously billed.



Thomas E. Frawley, P.E., Esq. - Principal


12-DEC-2023  
 DATE



Thomas E. Frawley, P.E., Esq., MBA - Executive Director  
 Hours - Wednesday 01NOV2023 through Thursday 30NOV2023  
 Invoice Number: 2023-11  
 Invoice Date: 12DEC2023

DAY	DATE	HOURS	DESCRIPTION OF PRIMARY ACTIVITIES PERFORMED (ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PROVIDED IN ATTACHED MONTHLY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT)
Wednesday	1	3.00	Marketing & Public Relations Cmte meeting
Thursday	2	2.00	
Friday	3	6.00	RFP Addendum No.1; Proposal Evaluation Process Development
Saturday	4	1.00	Social media posts
Sunday	5	1.50	Admin
Monday	6	5.00	RFP Addendum No.1; Proposal Evaluation Process Development
Tuesday	7	5.00	Proposal Evaluation Forms
Wednesday	8	2.50	Proposal Evaluation Manual Booklet and Scoring Spreadsheet
Thursday	9	3.50	Proposal Evaluation Manual Booklet and Scoring Spreadsheet
Friday	10	3.50	
Saturday	11	0.00	
Sunday	12	0.00	
Monday	13	6.50	Addendum No.2; Proposal Evaluation Manual Booklet
Tuesday	14	5.00	Addendum No.3; Proposal Evaluation Manual Booklet
Wednesday	15	3.00	Addendum No.3; FRA Coordination Meeting; Finance Committee meeting
Thursday	16	0.00	
Friday	17	0.00	
Saturday	18	0.00	
Sunday	19	0.00	
Monday	20	3.50	Addendum No.4
Tuesday	21	6.00	Addendum No.4; Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday	22	5.00	Proposal Evaluation Manual Booklet and Scoring Spreadsheet
Thursday	23	0.00	
Friday	24	0.00	
Saturday	25	0.00	
Sunday	26	1.50	Proposal Evaluation Manual Booklet and Scoring Spreadsheet
Monday	27	5.50	Addendum No.5; SRPRA Board meeting
Tuesday	28	7.00	Addendum No.5; PennDOT Meeting in Harrisburg
Wednesday	29	3.50	FRA CIDP Team Introduction Meeting
Thursday	30	0.00	

Task Totals:	79.50	
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Certified:  Date: 12-DEC-2023  
 Thomas E. Frawley, P.E., Esq. - Prinicpal



SCHUYLKILL RIVER PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY  
BOARD MEETING PACKET  
DECEMBER 23, 2023

TRANSPORTATION FOR AMERICA (T4A)  
DECEMBER 2023 MONTHLY REPORT

## Nov/Dec 2023 Report to the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority

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### Corridor ID Program Updates

On December 8th, 2023, the Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority (SRPRA) was awarded up to \$500,000 from the [Federal Railroad Administration \(FRA\)](#) in Corridor Identification and Development Program (CIDP) funding. This funding would serve as the gateway for creating new connections between the Northeast Corridor (NEC) and Reading. The SRPRA would work with the FRA to develop a scope of work for the first step of the project, during which no local match is required. Once the first step has been completed, the SRPRA will negotiate with the FRA on the next phase which will require a 10% match. Applications do not need to be resubmitted for each step; only a negotiation with the FRA to advance to the subsequent stage is required. An overview of the process for the grant can be found [here](#).

### RAISE Program NOFO Released

On November 30th, 2023, the [FRA](#) published a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program for 2024. The RAISE program makes \$1.5 billion available for transportation projects with significant local or regional impact, including passenger rail projects. The DOT encourages applicants to consider how their projects support the creation of good-paying jobs with strong labor standards, and address racial equity and climate change. The NOFO can be found [here](#). Applications are due on February 28, 2024.

### FRA awards \$8.2 billion for passenger rail projects nationwide

On December 8th, 2023, the [Federal Railroad Administration \(FRA\)](#) awarded \$8.2 billion for 10 passenger rail projects nationwide, through the Fed-State and Corridor ID grant programs. Projects announced through the Fed-State National program will advance two high-speed rail corridors and fund improvements to existing rail corridors for expanded service and performance. These investments would see added frequencies and expansion to the Pennsylvania Keystone Corridor between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, enabling more frequent and reliable rail service for riders. We bring this to your attention to underscore how these investments will improve connectivity for riders from Reading, Pottstown, and Phoenixville once their corridor is developed.

### House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) hearing on intercity passenger rail

On November 29th, 2023, the House T&I subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials held a [hearing](#) entitled, “Getting on the Right Track: Navigating the Future of Intercity Passenger Rail in America” to explore the development of passenger rail in a way that ensures connectivity, reliability, and safety. The witness list included Mr. Andy Daly from CSX Railroad, Ms. Stacey Mortenson from the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority, Mr. Lee Ohanian from the Hoover Institution, and Hon. Kirk Watson, Mayor of Austin, Texas.

## **Surface Transportation Board (STB) Passenger Rail Advisory Committee**

On November 13th, 2023, the [STB](#) announced that it intends to establish a federal advisory committee titled the Passenger Rail Advisory Committee (PRAC). The committee would be expected to provide guidance to the STB on passenger rail service issues and will comprise 18 voting members. A decision seeking nominations will be issued following the filing of the charter of the Committee at least 15 days following the publishing of the notice. We bring this to your attention as an opportunity to apply to serve on the committee once the call for nominations is published.

## **Upcoming Funding Opportunities**

### **FY23 Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program**

In December, 2023, the [Federal Railroad Administration \(FRA\)](#) will announce the availability of \$573 million in competitive, discretionary funding for highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossing improvement projects that focus on improving the safety and mobility of people and goods. FRA will host a webinar following the NOFO release to provide a program overview for potential grantees.

### **FY22-23 Restoration and Enhancement Grant Program**

In December, 2023, the [FRA](#) will also announce the availability of \$104 million in competitive, discretionary funding for operating assistance grants for initiating, restoring, or enhancing intercity passenger rail transportation. FRA will host a webinar following the NOFO release to provide a program overview for potential grantees.

### **FY23-24 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI)**

In December to January, 2023-2024, the [FRA](#) will announce the availability of competitive, discretionary funding for capital projects that improve passenger and freight rail transportation systems in terms of safety, efficiency, or reliability. FRA will host a webinar following the NOFO release to provide a program overview for potential grantees.

For questions or more information, please contact John Robert Smith at [jrsmith@t4america.org](mailto:jrsmith@t4america.org) or 601-527-5040.

SCHUYLKILL RIVER PASSENGER RAIL AUTHORITY

BOARD MEETING PACKET

DECEMBER 18, 2023

LETTERS OF RESIGNATION



**KENNETH E. LAWRENCE, JR.**  
**CHAIR**  
**MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**COURTHOUSE**  
**P.O. BOX 311**  
**NORRISTOWN, PA 19404-0311**  
**610-278-3025**    **KENNETH.LAWRENCE@MONTGOMERYCOUNTYPA.GOV**

Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority  
Att. Thomas Frawley

December 6, 2023

Dear Thomas,

This letter is to inform you of my resignation as a board member of the SRPRA Board, effective December 31 as my term as a Montgomery County Commissioner concludes. It has been a pleasure to serve on the SRPRA Board as an inaugural member and I wish you must success in the future.

Sincerely

Kenneth E. Lawrence, Jr.  
Chair, Montgomery County Board of Commissioners

**Jim Gerlach**

Thu, Dec 14, 4:46 PM (20 hours ago)

to Christian, Michael, Isihelnik@countyofberks.com, me, Katie

Dear Commissioners- this serves to notify you that as of the conclusion of the SRPRA Board meeting on Monday, Dec. 18, 2023, I will resign my position on the Board. It has been an absolute pleasure serving with all of the Board members and staff on this exciting effort to restore passenger rail service along the Schuylkill River corridor, and I wish you continued success in bringing this important infrastructure project to fruition. The citizens and communities of Berks County and the region are most fortunate to have your leadership and service! Best- Jim

**Jim Gerlach**

*President & CEO*



606 Court Street | Reading, PA 19601

Tel: 610.898.7783 Fax: 610.478.9553

[jgerlach@greaterreading.org](mailto:jgerlach@greaterreading.org)