

## **Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority Meeting**

### **APPROVED Minutes**

November 25, 2024

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  
Peter Urscheler, Phoenixville Borough Mayor, Treasurer  
Tom DiBello, Montgomery County Commissioner, Assistant Treasurer  
Scott France, Executive Director, Montgomery County Planning Commission, Secretary  
David Hunter, Executive Director, Berks County Planning Commission  
Stephanie Henrick, Mayor of Pottstown

#### **Authority Members Absent:**

Eddie Moran, Mayor of Reading

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

Christian Leinbach, Chair of the SRPRA, called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

#### **2. Adoption of October 28, 2024 Minutes**

Christian Leinbach called for any corrections to the minutes. There were no corrections to the minutes.

*As there were no corrections to the minutes, Christian Leinbach announced that the SRPRA's October 28, 2024 meeting minutes stand approved as presented.*

#### **3. Board Member Comments**

Vice Chair Marian Moskowitz thanked Christian and the SRPRA team for holding last month's in-person Board meeting event in Reading. Christian concurred that it was great to have the Reading Station full and hoped to welcome passenger rail to the station soon.

#### **4. Public Comment on Agenda Items**

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

*There were no public comments on agenda items.*

#### **5. Committee Reports**

##### **a. Finance – Mayor Peter Urscheler, Chair**

##### **i. Committee Update**

Mayor Peter Urscheler reported that the SRPRA's banking signature authority documents have been updated to reflect Brian O'Leary's recent retirement.

Peter said that the SRPRA's PA DCED LSA grant application would be submitted before the November 30th deadline and that over 40 letters of support from federal, state, county and municipal officials were received to accompany the application.

Peter reminded the Board that the Finance Committee voted to advance the recommendation to the Board to support the use of QuickBooks accounting software for the Authority's bookkeeping and accounting needs at a rate of \$17.00. Calendar year 2024 to date information has been entered so the annual reporting should be smooth going forward.

ii. **Motion to Pay Bills – Action**

Peter indicated the Finance Committee recommends that the Board ratify the SRPRA's four prepaid bills paid between October 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024 totaling \$134.33 and three invoices dated between October 31<sup>st</sup> and November 5<sup>th</sup> totaling \$7,145.77. Three invoices were monthly payments; in addition, an April 2024 invoice for \$7,000.00 was paid to the SRPRA's accounting firm, Maillie. The Finance Committee recommends the ratification of the prepaid bills in the amount of \$7,145.77 and the approval of payment for the outstanding bills in the amount of \$43,795.84.

*Peter Urscheler motioned, Marian Moskowitz seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to approve the payments of prepaid and outstanding bills presented in the SRPRA's November 25, 2024 Board meeting packet.*

b. **Personnel – Comm. Moskowitz, Chair**

i. **Committee Update**

Marian Moskowitz, Committee Chair, reported that there were no updates for the Personnel Committee.

6. **CIDP Update**

a. **Recent Progress – Tom Frawley**

Tom Frawley reported that the FRA asked SRPRA to update the CIDP application's Statement of Work to reflect FRA's revised template and he and the team continue to work with Norfolk Southern to finalize the draft non-disclosure agreement (NDA) and budget for NS' participation in Step 2.

b. **Resolution to Authorize PA DCED LSA Grant Application – Action**

Tom explained that the resolution before the Board is a template provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (PA DCED) to authorize the SRPRA's application for a statewide Pennsylvania Local Share Account (LSA) grant in the amount of \$1,000,000.00. The signed Resolution must accompany SRPRA's grant application. If the grant is approved, it will be used for a portion of the local matching funds required to complete Step 3 of the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development Program.

*Peter Urscheler moved, Stephanie Hendrick seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to accept the signed resolution as presented in the SRPRA's November 25, 2024 Board meeting packet and authorize its submission to PA DCED as part of the LSA grant application.*

7. **Executive Director's Report – Tom Frawley**

Tom Frawley reported that he attended the October 30th PennDOT sponsored Round Table to provide input to the 5-year update of the Pennsylvania State Rail Plan. He committed to provide language and maps describing the SRPA project to PennDOT for their use. PennDOT will circulate a final draft in early summer 2025 for SRPRA review before finalizing.

Tom Frawley also reported that he attended the Passenger Rail Legal Workshop in Washington, DC on November 7-8<sup>th</sup> and was able to confer with representatives from other CIDP projects, including Colorado Front Range and MassDOT's Boston-Albany Corridor, both of which have entered CIDP Step 2 by virtue of their having begun work under other FRA programs prior to creation of the CIDP.

**8. Marketing Team Report–David Hunter**

David Hunter thanked Brian O'Leary for his work accomplished while serving on the Marketing Team and the SRPRA Board.

David reminded the Board that the SRPRA's contract with Virtual Farm will conclude at the end of December. He said that his committee recommends that the contract be renewed and Tom Frawley is preparing the contract.

David explained that he and Tom Frawley met this morning with Dave Peacock of Lamar Advertising of Reading to discuss an approach for implementing their generous offer to provide SRA public service announcements on highway billboards in the 3 counties to put out the word about the passenger rail project, at no cost to SRPRA. They are thinking about slogans and ways to advertise.

**9. Planning Team Report–Scott France**

Scott France reported that he is coordinating with Tom Frawley on getting the project into Task 2 including periodic meetings with the FRA. Conversations with AMTRAK on promoting bus operation continue. He is working with DVRPC on Pottstown area's possible site locations for a rail station. As well, he's working on Norfolk Southern's estimates to inform FRA submissions.

**10. Other Business**

Board Chair Christian Leinbach emphasized that 2025 would be a critical time for the rail project. He noted that resolutions must be passed by majority vote of the Boards of Commissioners in the 3 counties (Berks, Montgomery and Chester) to re-authorize the SRPRA's continued operation. He requested that Dan Becker research the statutory deadline by which such resolutions must be provided to the Pennsylvania Secretary of State, as well a practical deadline to ensure all three resolutions are provided to the Secretary of state well in advance of the statutory deadline.

**11. General Public Comment**

Andrew Kline of Berks County and President of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) commented that he is seeking to make contact with someone at the SRPRA. His Reading Branch would like to host a tech-focused update webinar on the SRPRA project.

Christian thanked Andrew and connected him with Tom Frawley; Andrew provided his email address: [akline.asce@gmail.com](mailto:akline.asce@gmail.com). Tom said he will reach out to Andrew.

**12. Adjourn**

Christian Leinbach announced that the SRPRA's December Board meeting is scheduled for December 23rd at 3 p.m. As the holidays are near, he asked Tom Frawley to email reminders to Board members to verify attendance to ensure a quorum will be reached.


Christian called to adjourn the meeting.

*David Hunter motioned, Peter Urscheler seconded, and all voted unanimously, to adjourn the November 2024 meeting of the SRPRA Board.*

**Next Board Meeting**

December 23, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Respectfully submitted,



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FINAL