

Schuylkill River Passenger Rail Authority Approved Meeting Minutes

January 27, 2025

3:00 p.m.

The following members were in attendance:

Authority Members in Attendance:

Christian Leinbach, Berks County Board of Commissioners, Chair
Tom DiBello, Montgomery County Commissioner, Assistant Treasurer
Marian Moskowitz, Chester County Commissioner, Vice Chair
Peter Urscheler, Phoenixville Borough Mayor, Treasurer
Scott France, Executive Director, Montgomery County Planning Commission, Secretary
David Hunter, Executive Director, Berks County Planning Commission

Authority Members Absent:

Eddie Moran, Mayor of Reading
Stephanie Henrick, Mayor of Pottstown

1. Call to Order

Christian Leinbach, Chair of the SRPRA, called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. Authority Election of Officers for 2025 – Action

Scott France, Secretary of the SRPRA provided an overview of the SRPRA Board positions, term durations, succession rules and a slate of recommendations the SRPRA Board members received in the meeting packet prior to the meeting. There are six officer positions and two formal committees. The officer terms are two years for Chair, and one year for Vice Chair, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary. The current Chair's term expired at the end of 2024. He said the positions that will be voted upon will be Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary. Scott explained that only Finance and Personnel Committees are formalized and held to public Sunshine Act requirements; other informal working groups are not subject to elections.

A motion was made by Peter Urscheler to accept the slate of recommended nominees: Commissioner Marian Moskowitz for Chair, Commissioner Tom DiBello for Vice Chair, Peter Urscheler for Treasurer, Scott France for Secretary, David Hunter for Assistant Treasurer, Christian Leinbach for Assistant Secretary, Peter Urscheler for Chair of the Finance Committee, David Hunter for Finance Committee member, Commissioner Tom DiBello for Finance Committee member, Commissioner Marian Moskowitz for Chair of Personnel Committee, Eddie Moran for Personnel Committee member, Stephanie Henrick for Personnel Committee member, and Scott France in the event that Stephanie Henrick declines to serve on the Personnel Committee. The motion was seconded by Christian Leinbach. In the absence of additional nominations, the nominations were closed and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Adoption of December 23, 2024 Minutes

SRPRA's newly elected Chair, Commissioner Marian Moskowitz, called for any corrections to the minutes. There were no corrections to the minutes.

As there were no corrections to the minutes, Commissioner Marian Moskowitz announced that the SRPRA's December 23, 2024 meeting minutes stand approved as presented.

4. Board Member Comments

There were no Board member comments.

5. Public Comment on Agenda Items

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

Jeff Witman of Exeter Township commented on the Finance Committee's report regarding AECOM billing of overhead charges, which he thought was large.

Tom Frawley said that he would reach out to AECOM on this question, and reminded attendees that the charges are 100% reimbursable under Step 1 of the FRA grant.

6. Committee Reports**a. Finance – Mayor Peter Urscheler, Chair****i. Committee Update**

Mayor Peter Urscheler reported that the SRPRA Finance Committee met last week. The banking signature authority documents and banking information will be changed after today's annual reorganization to reflect newly elected officers.

Peter said that there is an administrative issue associated with the FRA CIDP Step 1 grant regarding the need to reallocate funds between the Task 1 and Task 2 budgets. Tom Frawley submitted a Grant Adjustment Request Form to the FRA to effect the required change.

Peter said that while Tom Frawley was exploring new grant application opportunities, he was advised by FRA staff who suggested it was premature to make application in the current cycle, so the SRPRA will defer submission of new grant applications at this time.

ii. Motion to Pay Bills – Action

Peter indicated the Finance Committee recommends that the Board ratify the SRPRA's three prepaid bills paid between December 31st, 2024 and January 6th, 2025 totaling \$147.77 and three invoices dated between January 1st and January 14th totaling \$24,496.98. The Finance Committee recommends the ratification of the prepaid bills in the amount of \$147.77 and the approval of payment for the outstanding bills in the amount of \$24,496.98.

Peter Urscheler motioned, Commissioner Christian Leinbach seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to approve the payments of prepaid and outstanding bills presented in the SRPRA's January 27, 2025 Board meeting packet.

Peter reminded attendees that the Finance Committee meetings are public and can be attended via Zoom. He encouraged everyone interested to attend the meeting and said proposed dates for the 2025 meetings were posted on the SRPRA website, gosrpra.com.

iii. Motion to Revise 2025 Committee Meeting Schedule – Action

Peter explained that while the SRPRA's 2025 Finance Committee meetings were scheduled and approved, a change in date is required for the May 2025 meeting. The May Board meeting was advanced from May 26th to May 19th to avoid conflict with the Memorial Day Holiday. The Finance Committee is therefore proposing to reschedule their May 21st meeting to May 14th so that their meeting can precede the Board meeting.

Peter Urscheler motioned, David Hunter seconded, all voted unanimously, and the motion was carried to approve the revision of the 2025 SRPRA Finance Committee to reschedule the May meeting from May 21 to May 14th.

b. Personnel – Comm. Moskowitz, Chair

i. Committee Update

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

7. CIDP Update

a. Recent Progress – Tom Frawley

Tom Frawley reported that the project is on the verge of Step 2 of the passenger rail project. Tom is still working with the FRA and Norfolk Southern to resolve outstanding issues with the creation of standardized service development and nondisclosure agreements, and general guidance regarding budget. Going forward, he anticipates specific guidance going forward from the FRA to plan the move from Step 1 to Step 2.

8. Executive Director’s Report – Tom Frawley

Tom reported on Amtrak bus service between Reading, Pottstown and Philadelphia. Amtrak has operated this service through a contract with Kraff bus service for 2 ½ years, operating at a \$260K annual loss. Amtrak and the bus operator have identified substantial potential operating cost savings. SRPRA has been providing marketing support through social media channels, and has also identified some operational improvements that will be proposed to Amtrak. Commissioner Moskowitz raised the question of potential impacts of the President’s recent Executive Orders that place a hold on IIJA expenditures. Tom shared that public statements to-date appeared to focus on renewable energy and did not mention passenger rail, but indicated that he would continue to monitor analyses being performed by FRA and our consultant AECOM regarding potential impacts.

9. Marketing Team Report – David Hunter

David Hunter, Chair of the Marketing Team, shared four digital images from Lamar Advertising of Reading presented as public service announcements on a space available basis, and he encouraged everyone in the 422 corridor to keep an eye out for SRPRA messages currently appearing on the digital billboards.

David requested the participation of the SRPRA’s members serving as County Commissioners in creating some short video interviews. These interviews are intended to add content and variety to the SRPRA’s marketing initiative by demonstrating how restoration of the rail line will affect their counties.

10. Planning Team Report–Scott France

Scott reported that the team continues to coordinate with Tom Frawley, FRA and AECOM.

Scott announced that planning has begun for the April 28th SRPRA Board meeting which will be held in-person in Pottstown. He will be reaching out to Pottstown officials in this regard.

Scott reminded the Board that the SRPRA’s bylaws require the reauthorization of the SRPRA before the three year anniversary of the Authority’s incorporation in June 2022; the authorization will need to be obtained from all three participating counties by June 2025.

Dan Becker, Esq., of Kozloff Stoudt advised the Board that a draft resolution has been prepared by his office and is under review. Dan will circulate the draft resolution to board members for review.

11. Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

12. General Public Comment

There was no general public comment.

13. Adjourn

Christian Leinbach wished everyone happy holidays and happy new year, and he reminded attendees that 2025 will mark the three-year anniversary of the SRPRA Authority. He said it was a privilege working with everyone from the two boroughs and the City of Reading and commended them on their unity in their goal of restoring passenger rail service to the tri-county region.

Marian Moskowitz called to adjourn the meeting.

Peter Urscheler motioned, David Hunter seconded, and all voted unanimously, to adjourn the January 2025 meeting of the SRPRA Board.

Next Board Meeting

February 24, 2025 at 3:00 p.m. via Zoom

Respectfully submitted,



Ann Marie Meehan