

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

February 24, 2025

3:00 p.m.

The following members were in attendance:

### **Authority Members in Attendance:**

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

### **Authority Members Absent:**

None

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

Marian Moskowitz, Chair of the SRPRA, called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

#### **2. Adoption of January 27, 2025 Minutes**

Marian Moskowitz called for any corrections to the minutes. There were no corrections to the minutes.

*As there were no corrections to the minutes, Marian Moskowitz announced that the SRPRA's January 27, 2025 meeting minutes stand approved as presented.*

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

*There were no Board member comments.*

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

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

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

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

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

Mayor Peter Urscheler reported that the SRPRA Finance Committee met on February 19. The banking signature authority documents and banking information are being updated to reflect officers elected during the January Board meeting.

Peter said that the FRA CIDP Grant Adjustment Request Form (GARF) that Tom Frawley submitted on behalf of the SRPRA on January 13th remains in process. Once the form has been signed by FRA's representatives, reimbursements can resume.

Peter said that the SRPRA received an inquiry on February 4th from Pennsylvania DCED regarding SRPRA's commitment to the local share of matching funds for CIDP Step 3. A commitment letter was drafted and approved by Commissioners Leinbach, Moskowitz and DiBello and transmitted to PA DCED on February 10th.

ii. **Motion to Pay Bills – Action**

Peter indicated the Finance Committee recommends that the Board ratify the SRPRA's three prepaid bills paid between January 31st, 2025 and February 18th, 2025 totaling \$147.77 and approve for payment the six invoices dated between February 2nd and February 18th totaling \$31,098.09.

*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 February 24, 2025 Board meeting packet.*

Peter reminded attendees that the Finance Committee meetings are public and can be attended via Zoom. The next Finance Committee meeting will be held on March 19th. He encouraged everyone interested to attend the meeting and said meeting information can be found on the SRPRA website, [www.GoSRPRA.com](http://www.GoSRPRA.com).

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

i. **Committee Update**

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

**6. CIDP Update**

**a. Recent Progress – Tom Frawley**

Tom Frawley reported that the project remains on the verge of Step 2 of the FRA Corridor Program. 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 facilitate SRPRA's move from Step 1 to Step 2.

Tom addressed a question from last month's public comment regarding AECOM billing rates of overhead charges. He reported that his findings are that AECOM's overhead rate is 123.5% and fee is 10.00% and that both are typical of the industry standards.

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

Tom said that there is a PennDOT sponsored project using federal grade crossing improvement funding for three grade crossings in downtown Reading. He reviewed the plans for the crossing improvements and reported that the work consists of replacement and upgrades of safety warning apparatus and there doesn't appear to be anything that would create issues going forward impacting the SPRA project.

Tom reported that Amtrak bus service between Reading, Pottstown and Philadelphia will be suspended shortly. Amtrak has operated this service through a contract with Krapf bus service for 2 ½ years, operating at a \$260K annual loss. Tom pointed out that Amtrak has very explicitly indicated that the suspension of the bus in no way adversely affects or should be interpreted as a lack of support and enthusiasm for the implementation of the passenger rail service.

Tom reported that Berks and Chester Counties have approved and reaffirmed the continuation of the

SRPRA for an additional 47 years, with Montgomery County set to approve in early March. The three resolutions are identical, and when all three have been passed, they will be submitted as part of the Articles of Amendment to the Department of State in Harrisburg as required to modify SRPRA's founding document.

Tom reminded the Board that the SRPRA's 2024 audit has begun. Most of the requested materials have been sent to SPR's auditor, Maillie LLP, and he expects it will be completed well in advance of the required deadline for submission to Pennsylvania DCED in Harrisburg.

Chair Marian Moskowitz welcomed and introduced meeting attendee Matt Edmond, formerly Montgomery County Transportation Director, who is now the new Executive Director of the Chester County Planning Commission.

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

David Hunter, Chair of the Marketing Team, requested that attendees please reach out to him or Tom Frawley if you notice SRPRA messages on Lamar Advertising's digital billboards. He also asked Todd from Virtual Farm to confirm with Lamar that the advertising related to Amtrak's discontinued bus service is removed from the outdoor advertising public service announcement program.

David thanked Marian Moskowitz, Chair, for her participation in creating a short video interview reel with Todd of Virtual Farm that is intended to add content and variety to the SRPRA's marketing initiative. Commissioners DiBello and Leinbach will be next to record their reels, followed by the mayors and finally the planning directors.

**9. 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, which takes place in June 2025. So far, Chester and Berks Counties have voted unanimously for reauthorization, with Montgomery County scheduled to vote in March.

**10. Other Business**

*There was no other business discussed.*

**11. General Public Comment**

Chuck Orttwein of Boyertown Borough, Berks County, commented that he recognizes that the Authority is still set on continuing the development of passenger rail and asks that the SRPRA reconsider the realities in light of recent actions by USDOT Secretary Duffy, President Trump and the DOGE process. Time and money could be better spent solving other problems, including employment, homelessness, and veteran support.

**12. Adjourn**

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**

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

Respectfully submitted,



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Ann Marie Meehan

APPROVED