



Southcentral Michigan Planning Council

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Board Meeting Minutes

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, June 2, 2020
MEETING TIME: 11:30 am
MEETING LOCATION: Virtual Meeting
<https://www.gotomeet.me/Upjohn> (Audio and Video)
1-877-309-2073 (Toll Free)
1-669-224-3217
Access Code: 422-647-013

1. Call to Order
 - a. The Chair called the meeting to order at 11:44am.
2. Representatives Present/Introductions
 - a. Drost, Bomba, Carahaly, Hazelbaker, Grieve, Woodin, Pangle
 - b. Others: SMPC staff – Adams and Trueblood; KATS staff – Stepek and Nagler
3. Representatives Excused
 - a. Frisbie, Kale not excused as of 11:50am. Kale joined the meeting late.
4. Approval of the Agenda
 - a. **[Action]** Pangle moved, Woodin second.
 - b. Roll call of votes: Carahaly yes, Bomba yes, Drost, Morse yes, Pangle yes, Hazelbaker yes, Grieve yes, Woodin yes. Motion passed at 11:48am.
5. Approval of the Minutes
 - a. **[Action]** No corrections or objections were made to approving the minutes. Approved by unanimous consent at 11:49am.
6. Public Comments
 - a. None offered.
7. Acceptance of the Financial Report
 - a. No report this month (only quarterly).
8. Transportation
 - a. KATS report: No memo this month. Nagler stated that there is not a lot of work being done on their workplan at the moment, mostly minor communications with MDOT and other agencies, RTF issues and questions on small urban areas; most of their activities have been around how/whether to do PASER ratings for federal aid, since MDOT is not able to participate. KATS is looking at doing non-federal aid ratings, with lower thresholds from TAMC, while waiting on federal aid and MDOT. Stepek provided background on the process of performing PASER ratings and why MDOT's lack of participation limits their ability to do these.
 - b. KATS contract renewal: The Board received the prospective agreement with KATS in the packet. Adams described that MDOT has several requirements for the contract, and this version coincides with their requirements. Stepek stated that once SMPC takes action, KATS will take the contract to their board later this month for approval. The contract term is Oct 1, 2020 through September 30, 2023, in alignment with regular MDOT renewals. There is a clause where SMPC can opt out of the contract for performance reasons; this clause states that SMPC will perform quarterly performance reviews, and that 2/3 of the SMPC board members must support termination of the contract.
 - i. The Chair stated that he gives verbal reviews, but requested Staff write a brief report for quarterly reviews in order to have a written record. He asked if a provision for a succeeding

organization was necessary, since SMPC has discussed partnering more closely with the Upjohn Institute in the future.

- ii. Pangle asked to clarify that the contract was one year or three, and Adams clarified the terms.
- iii. Stepek stated that KATS can change the contract later if a succeeding organization takes over.
 - 1) Adams stated that SMPC will have to determine processes for how to fold this contract into any new agreement with the Upjohn Institute.

c. **[Action]** Pangle moved to approve the agreement as in the packet; Hazelbaker seconded.

- i. Roll call vote: Pangle yes, Woodin yes, Grieve yes, Hazelbaker yes, Bomba yes, Carahaly yes. Morse had audio issues, so no vote was recorded.
- ii. Motion passed.
- iii. Chair stated he will sign the contract as soon as possible, and thanked KATS for their partnership.

9. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy / EDA

a. Update on CEDS work conducted to-date:

- i. Trueblood reviewed the outcomes of the CEDS Committee meeting on May 20. Carahaly stated that staff intend to finish the CEDS within SMPC's fiscal year, by October 2020.
- ii. The Chair requested for the board see a roster of CEDS Committee members. He also discussed the background of the CEDS application process, and described the committee members and chairs.
- iii. Hazelbaker asked about the committee position reserved for a government official representative from Branch County. Staff suggested Hazelbaker or Keith Baker, and Hazelbaker said he would help determine the best candidate.

b. Review and take action on 2020-2021 SMPC Regional Economic Development Plan (REDP):

- i. The Chair described the purpose of the REDP - to bridge the bureaucratic gap between CEDS plans.
- ii. Staff stated that the CARES act funding required a local or regional economic development plan. Since the 2014 CEDS expired, SMPC no longer has a plan approved by the EDA. However, EDA project officers indicated that SMPC could use a modified version of the 2014 CEDS to cover the time between 2014 CEDS and 2020 CEDS.
- iii. The Chair stressed the need for such a plan.
- iv. Staff described modifications to the plan in the packet, which include removing the performance measures and adding a paragraph about the impacts of COVID-19.

c. **[Action]** Pangle moved to approve the REDP, with the changes suggested by staff; Morse seconded.

- i. No further discussion on the REDP
- ii. Roll call vote: Bomba: yes, Morse: yes, Pangle: yes, Hazelbaker: yes, Grieve: yes, Woodin: yes, Carahaly: yes, Drost: yes. Motion passes unanimously.

d. Discuss and take action on EDA application for Capacity Building Grant:

- i. Staff described the funding streams that are being made available to EDDs, and that SMPC is ineligible for since this organization has not achieved EDD status. Instead, SMPC was encouraged to apply for a capacity building grant, which increases capacity for organization that oversees or runs programs in a district that will achieve EDD. The grant comes with a minimum match of 20%, and is competitive. SMPC staff plan to model the recovery programs of other regions to ensure consistency and to increase the competitiveness of the application.

e. Grant Application scope of work:

- i. Develop economic recovery and resiliency plan; provide technical assistance to local governments, businesses, and other stakeholder organizations; create a plan for broadband internet access throughout the region; implement CEDS; expand organizational staffing capacity. Staff is looking at working with the Upjohn Institute to cover the match, but this would require the institute to be the applicant and not SMPC.
- ii. Morse asked how soon the funding would be available, especially since rural areas are struggling to access broadband resources. Staff said that the broadband plan would hopefully be completed by next spring (2021), and potential contract partners are ready to help. Adams added that any potential construction projects would also need such a plan in place to receive funding.

- iii. The Chair described the history SMPC's work with the EDA, and emphasized the need for increased SMPC capacity.
- iv. Grieve asked about the pros and cons of the approach. Staff stated that EDA was alright with the Upjohn Institute taking the lead on the application. Pros were described as achieving the long term goals for the organization's relationship with the EDA, and limiting SMPC's commitment to providing a grant match. Cons were related to the reduction of flexibility in making organizational changes until after the grant expires.
- v. The Chair asked board members and staff their thoughts on whether to apply for the capacity building grant or push for funds at the level of an EDD. He also requested input on whether SMPC or the Upjohn Institute should be the lead applicant. Both board members and staff were in support of applying for the capacity building grant, as it demonstrates progress towards established goals. Board and staff were also in support of Upjohn as the lead applicant.
- vi. **[Action]** Morse moved to allow SMPC to apply for the capacity building grant with the Upjohn Institute as the lead applicant, and Bomba seconded.
 - 1) Roll call vote: Kale yes, Pangle yes, Woodin yes, Grieve yes, Hazelbaker yes, Morse yes, Bomba yes, Carahaly yes, Drost yes. Motion passed.
- vii. Staff stated that they aim to submit the application within the next two weeks.
- f. Discussion on local EDA applications:
 - i. Adams described local projects applying for EDA funding in several of the region's counties. SMPC staff can help put these applications together, facilitate contact with the EDA, and evaluate competitiveness and qualification of applications. Adams stated that public works projects will likely be the most competitive due to their impacts on capital investment and job creation. He also mentioned two applications in Vicksburg and Comstock.
 - ii. Drost described the role of Southwest Michigan First! in these applications; Jill Bland and Joe Agostinelli will be helping with facilitation of applications and public works projects.
 - 1) Adams stated that he and Drost have been working with Bland and Agostinelli on an application, and described the regional recognition of SMPC as the gatekeeper for EDA applications. If the CBG is received, it would likely increase awareness of SMPC's role with the EDA.
 - iii. The Chair described the role of SWMF, and Adams noted the 'patchwork quilt' of economic development groups in SMPC's region. Drost added that SWMF is the lead EDO for the region as designated by MEDC, and that regional economic development and workforce development work closely together to make life better for residents and businesses.

10. Housing

- a. Update on regional Housing Toolkit: Adams described the near-term steps needed to finalize housing feasibility model so that the toolkit can be made available to local groups.
- b. Update on St. Joseph County Housing Plan: Staff have drafted a plan outline and are in discussion with local stakeholders about the direction of this plan.

11. Local Government Assistance and Planning Activities

- a. Updates on various projects: Much of this work is on hold in order to wrap up projects already started, and to put staffing resources towards responding to critical issues.

12. Staff Report/Other:

- a. Monthly Correspondence: SMPC received one notification from EGLE, regarding the environmental impact statement for a main line replacement in the City of Kalamazoo.

13. Representative Comments

- a. Board members provided brief updates on getting back to work and ongoing projects in their jurisdictions. The Chair mentioned the property damage and unrest in the Kalamazoo downtown area on June 1. He stated that the board does not meet in July, but is scheduled to meet next on August 4, which is also election day. However, all representatives said they could still make it on that day.

14. Action: Adjournment

- a. Motion to adjourn: Morse moved, adjourned at 1:23pm.