



Southcentral Michigan Planning Council

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Board Meeting Agenda

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, August 4, 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 11:32am.
2. Representatives Present/Introductions
 - a. Board members present: Bomba, Drost, Morse, Hazelbaker, Carahaly, Grieve, and Pangle
 - b. Staff present: Fred Nagler and Steve Stepek from KATS, Adams and Trueblood, SMPC staff
 - c. Others present: Lotta Jarnefelt from Kalamazoo County
3. Representatives Excused
 - a. Woodin was unable to attend and notified staff prior to the meeting.
 - b. **Woodin was excused by unanimous consent.**
4. Approval of the Agenda
 - a. **The agenda was approved without revisions by unanimous consent.**
5. Approval of the Minutes
 - a. Changes to the August minutes were suggested by Jarnefelt in the Public Comment period to clarify the Kalamazoo Twp. solid waste commission work. The chair also requested that the minutes list Jarnefelt as member of public. Adams made the suggested changes.
 - b. **The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.**
6. Public Comments
 - a. No comments were made.
7. Acceptance of the Financial Report
 - a. Review and accept quarterly report: Adams had to make several edits to the Financial Report due to changes in reporting requirements, so it was not in the online packet as of the meeting, but will be uploaded to the website and sent to the board with a narrative once these changes have been made.
 - b. The chair requested that the amended minutes also be uploaded in the September packet, and that board packets be sent out earlier for future meetings.
8. Transportation
 - a. The KATS report was presented by Nagler. He explained that KATS has been administering the rural task force and doing road ratings in Calhoun County. He said that most of their work has been doing PASER ratings; they can only do non-federal ratings this year since MDOT will not participate and KATS cannot do them without MDOT. During a recent TAMC conference call, KATS' ability to bill against federal funds and contract for the MDOT work program were extended administratively to July 31, 2021. Next year KATS expects every federal aid road to be rated. This year KATS is focusing on roads that have not been rated in the last 3 years; all paved roads should have a rating by end of year.
9. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy / EDA
 - a. Update on CEDS work conducted to-date: Adams explained the scope of work for the CEDS has been staying on track. The committee has finalized the goals and objectives, and has prioritized the most

important strategies. An outline of the goals, objectives and strategies is included in the meeting packet. SMPC's next steps are to do data collection and analysis, including the SWOT analysis, regional analysis of economic conditions in region, and soliciting public feedback. Staff is creating a public input process and hope to have committee approval for that in early September. The CEDS Committee will not meet in September so that staff can write the plan and incorporate public input. It is anticipated that the Committee will review the plan at the next meeting in October, and give final approval in November.

- b. Update on the application to EDA: Staff has been asking for updates from the EDA about every 2 weeks, but response has been that it is still under review.
- c. Discussion local EDA applications: Adams reviewed the Vicksburg wastewater application, which is large but crucial. Drost is working on an EDA application for Comstock Twp. Coldwater is also considering an application, but they are not applying for CARES Act funding.

10. Strategic Plan

- a. Review 2019 Strategic Plan: Adams presented the updated Strategic Plan. He reviewed the Mission and Vision, as well as Goals and Objectives, which direct the work of SMPC. Grieve asked which Goals and Objectives could have the highest ROI in terms of staff time. Adams said that the activity that most aligns with the mission and vision is probably applying for state and federal funding. Morse commented that increased collaboration would help accomplish the goals and objectives without duplication. Carahaly asked whether 'improving fiscal health of member organizations' is an appropriate goal for the county governments; Morse said she thought it is related to supporting funding applications. Adams said that supporting funding applications for SMPC members ensures that they get more benefits than they paid for in their membership.
- b. Discuss updates: Adams said that 'increase regional prosperity' sticks out as potentially needing amended, and Trueblood agreed. Staff will propose changes to the strategic plan at the next meeting, and board members should send their feedback to staff. Carahaly asked about the budget included in the packet; Adams replied that the budget will need approved at the next meeting, so it is presented for board members to review. He also said that the potential of EDA grant funding could change the budget, and asked whether board members wanted to put in a place-holder; Carahaly said yes. Morse asked if the EDA funding would be new money, and how the funds would be used. Carahaly said that the grant application specified activities for SMPC to pursue, and Adams said that these would likely be high-level project codes on this budget. Adams said that the EDA funding would replace MEDC, Housing, and CEDS budgets; if EDA funding comes in, SMPC local funds can be invested into contractual services for trail planning, broadband planning, and other services. Carahaly asked about the balance of the budget, and Adams said he would provide it at the next meeting; it is estimated at around \$140K.
- c. The Chair led a discussion around the budget item for SMPC membership to the Michigan Association of Regions (MAR). Carahaly asked whether the investment in MAR is still worthwhile, or if the money would be better spent joining the Michigan Association of Planning. Jarnefelt said that KTWP gave up MAP membership as part of cutting budget, which costs around \$650 per year for up to 12 people. Adams said that the value of MAR is having a network of regional planning organizations and potentially lobbying on behalf of regions; although that is not the direction the organization is going, he wondered if change was more likely from inside or outside MAR. Grieve commented that it sounds like eliminating the membership from the SMPC budget would send a message. Adams asked how to communicate the board's message about this change. Morse, Bomba, and Drost supported giving direct feedback if that is the message that the board wants to send. Bomba asked if SMPC staff could contact other RPOs to see if they feel the same, and asked which organization could take care of lobbying. Grieve reviewed the two organizations' websites, and said that MAR looks like a good platform to convene RPOs. Bomba said that looking at reform from inside could be helpful, and that MAP and MAR work well together, but that the board should communicate their desire for change. Morse asked if both entities are willing to merge, and whether they have the same goals. Carahaly said that he's had a few conversations about this in the past with the MAP director. Hazelbaker said he agrees with the chair's points, and that SMPC should communicate that it will not pay dues and why. Adams said that he could communicate the displeasure of the board to the MAR group next week. Drost said that MAP sounded like a good opportunity, but any withdrawal should come with a direct dialogue with MAR to try to support change, and merge the two organizations. Adams said he could inform MAR of the board's displeasure with the organization's

current form, explain what SMPC has eliminated it from the upcoming budget, and specify desired changes to be made. Board members supported this idea.

11. Local Government Assistance and Planning Activities

- a. Regional broadband discussion: SMPC is helping some folks in Calhoun County put together a coalition to increase access and availability of broadband.
- b. Regional brownfield discussion: Adams said that SMPC crafted an RFP for the EPA brownfields redevelopment grant application approved by the board last month, and contacted all four counties to see if they could support the application. Calhoun County cannot apply because they received funding last year but they may be able to join the coalition; St. Joseph and Branch Counties are supportive; Kalamazoo County is planning to apply but is not adverse to SMPC applying as well. The application would likely be a joint application between SMPC, Branch, and St. Joseph Counties, with the potential to add Calhoun County if allowed. Adams asked if board members supported this type of application given the staff time costs. Carahaly said that there is potential to compete with Kalamazoo County, but they are not guaranteed to receive it, and thus it is a risk not to apply. Grieve said that applying for grants was earlier stated as the top SMPC priority. Jarnefelt said that Kalamazoo County is planning to apply, but they do not anticipate that the brownfield authority would be against SMPC applying as well. Morse and others were pleased to hear Jarnefelt's perspective that the application would not cause intraregional competition. Bomba said that the land bank has an assessment grant while another city department has the redevelopment grant, and she asked Adams to confirm whether Calhoun could participate in the coalition. Carahaly asked for the RFQ to be posted online soon, and Adams said that he would post it, and email the RFQ to potential partners and the board as soon as possible. All board members present agreed with this approach. Adams said we would seek one contractor to apply and administer the grant; some will apply for free and some will request a fee to do so.
- c. Updates on various projects: No updates were provided due to time constraints.
- d. Update on regional Housing Toolkit: Staff said that SMPC is seeking to publish this in a visually appealing way and will be working with a designer in the next few months to put this together.
- e. Update on St. Joseph County Housing Plan: Adams said that staff had had a meeting earlier that day, and there are some tweaks to be made to the plan in the next month to wrap it up. He said that SMPC will look to create guides for different constituencies as well. Carahaly said he was glad that staff could recalibrate to meet the county's needs, and thanked staff for their work on this plan.

12. Staff Report/Other:

- a. 2021 SMPC Budget Discussion: No further discussion was held on the budget; action to approve the budget will be taken at October's meeting.
- b. Monthly Correspondence: EPA application RFQ will be sent out soon and Adams will notify the board.

13. Representative Comments

- a. No comments were made.

14. Action: Adjournment

- a. Hazelbaker motioned to adjourn, and Carahaly adjourned the meeting at 1:10pm.

Next Meeting:
October 6, via GoToMeeting