



Minutes

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

FULL COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, December 16, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.

Meeting held in person at Van Buren ISD Conference Center

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Doroh, Kurt, Chair, Van Buren County Commissioner
Curran, Jim, Vice Chair, Berrien County Commissioner
Preston, Linda, Secretary, Cass County Representative
Catherman, Rick, Van Buren County Representative
Cichon, Peg, Berrien County Representative
DeLong, Don, Cass County Representative
Dodd, James, Cass County Representative
Durm-Hiatt, Marge, Berrien County Representative
Ellspermann, Tom, Berrien County Representative
Engle, Roger, Van Buren County Representative
Fette, Dan, Berrien County Representative
Freehling, Teri Sue, Berrien County Commissioner
Gundersen, Kristen, Alternate Secretary, Berrien County Representative
Hanson, Sandra, Alternate Treasurer, Van Buren County Representative
Humphrey, John, Berrien County Representative
Klemesrud, Kathryn, Berrien County Representative
Leary, Tina, Van Buren County Commissioner
Multhauf, Katie, Cass & Van Buren County Economic Development Ex-Officio
Pantaleo, Paul, Berrien County Representative
Patterson-Gladney, Gail, Van Buren County Commissioner
Stauffer, Dick, Berrien County Representative
Torzynski, Robert, Pokagon Band Representative
Tyler, Doug, Cass County Representative

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Northrop, Alan, Cass County Commissioner
Sinclair, Kim, Treasurer, Van Buren County Representative
Wuerfel, Julie, Berrien County Commissioner

OTHERS PRESENT:

Vettraino, Maria, SWMPC Office Manager
Graham Woodhouse Award Winners

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kurt Doroh called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Office Manager, Maria Vettraino, took roll call, and a quorum was present.

2. ACCEPTANCE AND/OR REVISION OF CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Doroh presented the Consent Agenda excluding the financial reporting. Peg Cichon moved to “**ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA.**” Rick Catherman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

3. GRAHAM WOODHOUSE AWARD PRESENTATION

Berrien County Broadband Project

Executive Director, John Egelhaaf, explained the Graham Woodhouse Award, its criteria, and previous winners. The annual intergovernmental effort award was given this year to the collaborators responsible for the Berrien County Broadband Project. Egelhaaf shared the details of the project, explaining the process, funding, and roles of those involved. Chair Doroh presented the plaque awards to Ben Fineman, Berrien County, Berrien County Broadband Internet Task Force (BCBIT), DCS Technology, Merit Network, Midwest Energy & Communications (MEC), and Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber.

4. BUDGET REVISION

Director Egelhaaf went over the 2025 budget revision. He shared a comparison to the approved February budget and explained the changes in revenue and expenses.

Peg Cichon moved to “**APPROVE THE 2025 BUDGET REVISION.**” Gail Patterson-Gladney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

Egelhaaf presented the financial report, pointing out the revised budget used.

Marge Durm-Hiatt moved to “**ACCEPT THE FINANCIAL REPORT.**” Dick Stauffer seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

5. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Director Egelhaaf summarized the Executive Director’s report. There were no comments or questions regarding the report.

Rick Catherman moved to “**ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT.**” Gail Patterson-Gladney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR EVALUATION: AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT

Vice Chair Curran shared with the Board that the Ad Hoc Committee met with Director Egelhaaf to go over his evaluation, which went very well. Egelhaaf provided Curran a draft of the 2026 budget so the committee could make an informed decision on any salary increase. Vice Chair Curran then stated the committee recommends a 4% salary increase for Director Egelhaaf

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ANNUAL CONTRACT RENEWAL

Peg Cichon moved to **“ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S CONTRACT RENEWAL WITH 4% SALARY INCREASE.”** Don DeLong seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

8. 2026 HEALTH INSURANCE WAIVER

Director Egelhaaf presented the three options to consider for how SWMPC insurance costs will be shared between the staff and the organization. He explained the following options: a hard cap, an 80/20 split, or an exemption that would allow for the continuation of a 98/2 split.

Dan Fette moved to **“APPROVE AN EXEMPTION TO THE 80/20 AND HARD CAP COST SHARE.”** Rick Catherman seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

9. 2026 PROPOSED MEETING SCHEDULE

Office Manager, Maria Vettraino, presented the proposed 2026 meeting schedule and location at Michigan Works in Benton Harbor.

Gail Patterson-Gladney moved to **“APPROVE 2026 PROPOSED MEETING SCHEDULE.”** Kathryn Klemesrud seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

11. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Teri Sue Freehling shared her appreciation for those involved with the Berrien County Broadband Project, Kurt Doroh’s service as our Chair, and Executive Director John Egelhaaf.

Chair Doroh shared his gratitude to the Board and the organization for all they do and stated it has been a privilege to serve as its Chair.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Teri Sue Freehling moved to adjourn the meeting. Jim Curran supported the motion.
The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 10:34 am.

Respectfully submitted by:



K. John Egelhaaf, AICP

Date: December 16, 2025