



Minutes

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
FULL COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, August 16, 2022, 9:30 a.m.

Meeting Held in Person at Cass County Road Commission

MEMBERS PRESENT (in person):

Marchetti, Roseann, Chair, Cass County Commissioner
Doroh, Kurt, Vice Chair, Van Buren County Commissioner
Akinwale, Yemi, Treasurer, Berrien County Representative
Preston, Linda, Secretary, Cass County Representative (arrived at 9:35 am)
Gundersen, Kristen, Alternate Secretary, Berrien County Representative
Remus, Richard, Alternate Treasurer, Berrien County Representative
Catherman, Rick, Van Buren County Representative
Curran, Jim, Berrien County Commissioner
DeLong, Don, Cass County Representative
Dodd, James, Cass County Representative
Fette, Dan, Berrien County Representative
Hanson, Don, Van Buren County Commissioner
Hanson, Sandra, Van Buren County Representative
Pantaleo, Paul, Berrien County Representative
Petersen, Jan, Van Buren County Representative
Stauffer, Dick, Berrien County Representative
Torzynski, Robert, Pokagon Band Representative
Tyler, Doug, Cass County Representative
Wood, Gary, Berrien County Representative
Wuerfel, Julie, Berrien County Representative

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Freehling, Teri Sue, Berrien County Commissioner
Newton, Matthew, Van Buren County Representative
Patterson-Gladney, Gail, Van Buren County Commissioner
Stover, Jim, Berrien County Representative

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ACCEPTANCE AND/OR REVISION OF CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Marchetti presented the Consent Agenda. Kurt Doroh moved to “**ACCEPT THE CONSENT AGENDA AS PRESENTED.**” Paul Pantaleo seconded, which carried unanimously. Marchetti brought up a revision to add a Letter of Support for the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning as number six in the agenda. Jim Curran moved to

“ACCEPT REVISION OF AGENDA.” Don DeLong seconded, which carried unanimously.

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Director Egelhaaf invited the board members to ask for further detail on any portion of the report.

Rich Remus inquired about our revenue thus far and if we are on track. Director Egelhaaf stated that we are very much on track with our income and expenses. He shared that the budget is based on previous years and that the effects of COVID have not been a good indicator of where we should be in subsequent years.

Paul Pantaleo brought up the lack of success with the Upton Foundation Grant for the Regional Food Branding Project and asked what the future might hold. Egelhaaf stated that we are continuing to explore possibilities and imagining our way into a place that is more persuasive and marketable to grantors. Don Hanson inquired about the objective of this project. Director Egelhaaf explained it is to build the food sector in this region.

Kurt Doroh gave an update on the Van Buren Broadband Survey. Doroh shared the highlights of the findings, including funding availability. Egelhaaf talked about the gaps in those who have not been served, and that knowing who is unserved is a huge step forward.

Rich Remus asked for an update on Palisades. Director Egelhaaf shared that there is a second change in due date for their funding application. He also stated that with the Economic Recovery Strategy we are still in the assessment side of things and weaving together the effects of this closure. Kurt Doroh said he was at a meeting with Holtec and they are discussing the possibility of a smaller reactor at the Palisades site and for resources to be reused.

Kurt Doroh moved to **“ACCEPT THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT.”** Linda Preston seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

4. AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR EX. DIRECTOR EVALUATION

Chair Marchetti stated that SWMPC needs a board member from each county to volunteer and assist Kurt Doroh to evaluate the director. The members who volunteered/chosen were Don DeLong from Cass County, Sandra Hanson from Van Buren County, and Teri Sue Freehling from Berrien County.

5. SWMPC REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION WORK PLAN

Director Egelhaaf gave a summary and background of the Regional Transportation Work Plan.

Linda Preston moved to **“APPROVE SWMPC REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION WORK PLAN.”** Doug Tyler seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

6. LETTER OF SUPPORT

Director Egelhaaf explained the Letter of Support from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. They have submitted a mega grant for rail improvements at Union Station. Egelhaaf stated that this grant will include double tracking in the Niles area and it will help improve the efficiency of passenger rail and the way that passenger rail interrelates with freight. He explained this letter is to support their application.

Jan Petersen moved to “**APPROVE LETTER OF SUPPORT.**” James Dodd seconded, which carried unanimously.

7. PLANNER PRESENTATION

Associate Planner, Kris Martin gave a presentation on the GEO Broadband Modeling Software/Southwest Michigan Broadband Initiative Project. Martin talked about what Broadband is and the impacts of Broadband on a community. He explained GEO software and how it is used. The software has been used in Berrien County but the license agreement may also be used in Cass and Van Buren Counties at the same cost. He shared that the Berrien County Broadband Task Force partnered with Merit on data collection. A map was shown on the difference between survey responses and FCC breakdown. Martin shared how and why the GEO model is so helpful. He went over some features of the software, including cost analysis and data access by townships, cities, and villages. Martin talked about working with local ISPs and used data from Watervliet Township as an example. Martin states that the need for parcel data is very important and that they are working with GEO partners for a more accurate cost and map.

Kurt Doroh asked if the Van Buren County Survey findings can merge with this software. Martin responded with a yes and that the ultimate goal is to overlay this data.

Rich Remus wondered how much fiber is being used. Director Egelhaaf responded that ISPs don't tend to share the maps of their infrastructure with the public sector but that issue seems to be in the process of moving from fully private infrastructure to a hybrid of public and private. As that happens, the mapping becomes more accessible in the public space.

Chair Marchetti wondered if everyone will be able to afford broadband. Martin talked about low income assistance and encourages people to talk to their provider about price ranges.

Kris Martin stated that he will share his presentation slides on the SWMPC website.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public present, and thus no public comment.

9. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Dick Stauffer shared that there was a good presentation on the building of sound walls along I-94 in 2023/24.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Don Hanson moved to adjourn the meeting. Kurt Doroh supported the motion. The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 10:50 am.

Respectfully submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. John Egelhaaf". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "K. John" and the last name "Egelhaaf" clearly distinguishable.

K. John Egelhaaf, AICP

Date: August 16, 2022