

**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING**

**July 17, 2019  
Commission Office**

**Convened: 10:00 A.M.**

**Adjourned: 11:30 A.M.**

**Members in Attendance:**

Hon. Ted Beam  
Mr. Jay Cessna  
Mrs. Sharon Clapper  
Hon. S. Paul Crooks  
Hon. Barry Dallara  
Hon. Bruce Erb  
Mr. James Foster  
Hon. Josh Lang

Mr. Thomas Luciano  
Hon. Mark Sather  
Hon. Pam Tokar-Ickes  
Hon. Gerald Walker  
Hon. Scott Walls  
Mr. Arthur Wilkin  
Hon. Mark Wissinger

**Others in Attendance:**

Mr. Daniel Bowers  
Mr. Brandon Carson  
Mr. George Gvozdich

Mr. Steven Howsare  
Mrs. Debbi Prosser  
Ms Deborah Shaffer

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Commissioner Erb, President, called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M

**MINUTES, May 15, 2019:**

A motion was entered by Commissioner Lang to approve the May 15, 2019 Finance Committee and Board of Directors' meeting minutes, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster and was unanimously approved.

**ACCOUNTS PAYABLE:**

Mr. Daniel Bowers, Director of Finance, presented the Accounts Payables and reported no changes to the information submitted. He also provided a brief overview of the bank summaries indicating that SAP&DC's financial position is the same as normal for this time of year.

A motion was entered by Mr. Wilkin to approve the Accounts Payable report, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Walker and was unanimously approved.

### **SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD REPORT:**

Mrs. Susan Whisler, Director, SAWDB, announced that the SAWDB has submitted its proposal, entitled reSTART, for funding that was made available through the US Department of Labor. The SAWDB is requesting \$455,000 and will provide for the hiring of three re-entry specialists who will work closely with the county probation and parole offices, judicial system and local resources to prepare and connect those formerly incarcerated with employment. Funding will also be used to cover paid work experiences and supportive services to reduce their barriers to employment. Award announcements are expected in late September and the grant will run from December 1, 2019 through September 30, 2022.

Mrs. Whisler also announced that the SAWDB received notification of its PY 19 allocation. Although it received an overall cut in funding of \$254,887 compared to its PY 18 funding levels, it is not expected to cause any significant reduction in workforce services due to careful financial management and the ability to secure additional flexible funding.

Effective Monday, July 1<sup>st</sup>, the Blair County office of PA CareerLink<sup>®</sup>, Pennsylvania's American Job Center Network, opened in the Altoona Area Public Library. The new location is a comprehensive site, offering a wide variety of services to job seekers and employers. Mrs. Whisler thanked the Blair County Commissioners, the Altoona Public Library and School District and the Greater Altoona Career & Technology for making the move possible. The official grand opening is scheduled for August 15<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM.

Mrs. Whisler also provided a report depicting the success of the well-attended, one-day conference, "*Alleghenies Ahead*", which was jointly sponsored by the SAWDB and Startup Alleghenies. The conference was geared to employers at all stages and covered topics ranging from hiring your first employees and embracing a multi-generational workforce to employee recruitment in a competitive marketplace and business trends in artificial intelligence.

Mrs. Sharon Clapper thanked Mrs. Whisler for her assistance and support with the *Teacher in the Workplace* grant. It was an extremely successful day with 27 teachers from nine schools that benefited in seeing and learning about the real-life skills their students need to be competitive for future employment.

**REGIONAL GREENWAYS MINI-GRANT AWARDS:**

Mr. Brandon Carson, Director, Planning & Community Development Division, explained that the Regional Greenways Mini-Grant Program is funded through the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). The program is administered by SAP&DC and is intended to provide funding for projects that support implementation of the overall goals related to conservation, recreation, alternative transportation and economic development. The program started in 2013 and is now on its fifth round. As was the case last year, priority is placed on projects that support the Southern Alleghenies Planning and Development Commission's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in addition to the Southern Alleghenies Greenways and Open Space Network Plan.

Eight project applications for funding were received; these were then reviewed by the Planning Division staff in conjunction with the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) to score and rank the projects. A total of \$150,000 was available this year for project funding. Mr. Carson then presented and briefly reviewed those projects that were approved for funding by the Committee and requested concurrence by the Board of Directors.

He also announced that \$200,000 is expected to be made available for round six of the Regional Greenways Mini-Grant Program.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Dallara to approve awarding the projects for Regional Greenways Mini-Grant funding, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crooks and was unanimously approved.

**REVISED FY 2019 APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION (ARC) INVESTMENT PACKAGE:**

Mr. Carson, reported that, as is permitted by ARC, two new projects were submitted to SAP&DC staff for FY 2019 ARC Investment Package funding consideration. He then reviewed both projects and stated that following review by SAP&DC staff is recommended that approval be given for the addition of the projects, as presented.

Mr. Carson informed members that the newly appointed ARC Co-Chair is being particular in reviewing projects. It has been determined that he is very selective about projects and in particular has been careful about approving projects for health training at universities.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Beam to approve the revised project list recommended for Appalachian Regional Commission FY 2019 funding, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster and was unanimously approved.

**FY 2020 APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION (ARC) INVESTMENT PACKAGE:**

Mr. Carson then stated that, as customary, SAP&DC is required each year to submit its project recommendations for funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

Mr. Carson then presented and provided a detailed review of the list of the projects that were developed from requests received by SAP&DC staff.

Mr. Carson explained to members that, as was the case with revised FY 2019 Investment Package list, additional projects may be added and/or removed later by the Board, as requested. He further stated that there is a limited amount of money allotted for projects submitted by all seven of Pennsylvania's Local Development Districts (LDDs); therefore, all projects may not be funded.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Tokar-Ickes to approve the projects recommended for Appalachian Regional Commission FY 2020 funding, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wilkin and was unanimously approved.

**EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROJECTS:**

SAP&DC is designated by the Federal Office of Management and Budget (under E.O. 12372) to review requests for Federal financial assistance within its six-county service area for concurrence with relevant regional planning documents. Mr. Carson briefly reviewed those projects requesting federal financial assistance, as presented, and stated that all are consistent with the Commission's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Crooks to approve the Projects Under Executive Order 12372, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Wilkin and was unanimously approved.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

Mr. Steven Howsare, SAP&DC Executive Director, and Mr. Wilkin reported that the Committee formed to review options for the Commission's office building met this morning prior to the Board of Directors meeting. Discussion was held regarding the various options available such as renewing the current lease with Lawruks and/or leasing/purchasing new space. Currently, there is an overabundance of empty buildings that can be leased and/or purchased thus, making it a "buyers" market.

SAP&DC's office building lease expires September 30, 2020 making it crucial that a decision be made in the near future. Members will be kept informed as discussions/negotiations proceed.

Mr. Carson explained that Commissioners Lang and Crooks had approached him regarding the issue/challenge of a shortage of trained first responders, especially firefighters in small, rural municipalities. A major obstacle confronting those individuals interested in being a first responder is the cost and time required for State mandated training. This problem has been a major concern discussed at the 911 meetings held at the Commission's office. Mr. Carson, stated that he plans to have recently hired staff look into what is being done to combat this problem in other municipalities and it may be possible for SAP&DC staff to not only make recommendations based on their findings, but to provide free or low cost training for municipalities in the region. Members will be kept informed as information becomes available.

The next meeting of SAP&DC Board of Directors will be held Wednesday, September 18, 2019 beginning at 10:00 A.M.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Josh Lang

Secretary