

Executive Director's Board Report, 12-10-2020

Things are moving extremely quickly around here as there is a huge amount of work going on. I cannot remember a busier time, for as prolonged of a period of time, at SWIPCO in the last 14 years. The staff has been amazing. Because of Covid restrictions most of the planning and housing staff are working from home, but I have been very pleased with how they've handled it and kept up with the workload. Having them out of the office has also given us a lot of flexibility as we have work done on the office, with the end goal of a newly renovated and socially distanced transit dispatch office. Right now we are in the middle of paint and flooring, and hopefully in the next couple of weeks the transit workstations will be here and all of the moving around will be done. Hopefully that will also correspond with having more of the staff back in the office, and we'll be better positioned to do that.

Because we've been so busy, and we've had staff change positions, we've brought on additional staff, and we've had a staff member leave (Denise Schoening, a dispatcher), I've included on the back of this report our current organizational chart. It is also in the EEO plan that you approved today, but I think it's good to take a step back every now and then and look and see, ok, who does what where.

I do want to put out a special thank you to Pottawattamie County for the things that they've done to help set up the Test Iowa facility at our bus barn in Council Bluffs. Granted, they were kind of desperate for a spot to move from their outdoor testing site, but they were able to get in and do things—like build a vehicle ramp for us out of the building—very quickly. It was a very short period of time between when they approached us and we were ready to go and I think it is a very good example of how entities can move quickly when they share a common goal.

At our October meeting you may recall that the auditors presented the audit in a draft form, as they were awaiting some additional guidance on some aspects of the CARES Act funding. I had hoped to have that on the agenda for final approval today, but Darren from GBK called me this morning that they are still finishing up some things and will definitely have it on the January meeting.

Finally, at this time transit drivers are not specifically identified in the State's Covid immunization plan. Our state association, IPTA, has sent a request that they be added to the early stages of the roll out, hopefully in phase 2 after healthcare workers and care home residents/staff. I know that there is a little bit of latitude at the County level regarding who is a first responder, and I will be sending a letter to each board of supervisors and public health director in each of our counties, simply asking that they keep in mind our drivers as the vaccines are rolled out. I'm sure everyone thinks that their staff is essential and needs vaccinated first. However, keep in mind those transit drivers, most of whom are over the age of 70, and are being asked to transport known positive cases of Covid. We have not refused a single Covid transport, and we've done them in every county. When someone needs to go from the nursing home to the hospital, or back again, often times it is a SWITA driver who is taking them. We have made it work, but know that it is very stressful on the drivers, and if our system goes down, many of these transports become a lot more difficult, so we are looking for your support on this.

