

April 2022 Executive Director Board Report

I apologize that for the second time in a row, I'm not at our board meeting. I am currently on my way to Sandy, Utah for the National Archery in the Schools Program national tournament, both my oldest girls qualified with the Atlantic team for the tournament and it is kind of a big deal! My understanding from Todd is that the last meeting, which I also missed, was one of the best SWIPCO's ever had.

April 1 marked nine years that I have been the director at SWIPCO. Thank you for this opportunity and for your service on our board. I met with the executive committee and I greatly value their feedback. I think we've done a lot in the last nine years and that SWIPCO and SWITA make a huge positive impact on our region every day. I look forward to keeping that going and growing. I am in a position where I do get to see and hear more about what other COGs are doing around the state, and we have a lot to be proud of in our organization here. Our member communities are getting a huge return on their investment. To the average town in our region that may seem normal—of course SWIPCO does X for us—but we really are doing more in our communities than the majority of our peers. That is not a criticism of them, per se, we each work with what we've been given, but we've assembled a team here that is incredibly skilled, and we've structured ourselves in ways that allow us to shift to meet the needs of our region.

I hope everyone is noticing the increase in communications coming out from SWIPCO, especially the newsletter. It's a great blessing to have CJ on board to help communicate what is going on—because it is a lot. The recent disaster CDBG grants for new housing and associated infrastructure, \$90 million for 250 new homes, is gigantic and something everyone should be proud of. I don't think anyone else besides our team could have wrangled all the cats as quickly and efficiently. It will also be a major administrative project over the coming years as those homes are built.

This weekend is one of our twice a year driver meetings, the first one I've ever missed as director, and I'm very sad that I can't be there. As anyone who has followed the yo-yo that is our nation's policies on things like masking, our drivers have been in an increasingly awkward position, at odds with the reality of life in 99% of settings in our region in that they have had to enforce a federal mask mandate. I think this has been an unreasonable burden on the drivers—and trust me, I believe masking has saved lives—but what good is masking in a scenario where the people we are transporting are coming and going from places where they are working or studying close together all day unmasked? As we work on budget, we are looking to do as much as we possibly can on driver salaries to recognize the incredible responsibility that falls to the drivers and to of course remain competitive in the labor market. I do think though that even before we move into next year's budget (July 1) that the board consider some sort of thank you to the drivers as hopefully we move out of pandemic mode. That is something that we can discuss in May but I'd like it to be on your radar.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve our region and thank you for being a good board to work with. I look forward to the coming year and celebrating 10 years as SWIPCO director!