

SOUTHWEST IOWA PLANNING COUNCIL

SWIPCO Policy Council Meeting

February 23, 2023 @ 1:30 p.m.

Whitney Conference Room, Downtowner Restaurant, 222 Chestnut St, Atlantic, Iowa

OR via ZOOM

Meeting ID: 885 8520 0491

Passcode: 187480

Minutes:

- 1. Call to Order.** Chair Valline called the meeting to order at 1:34 p.m.
- 2. Roll Call.** Jensen took roll call. Members present: Terry Arentson, Chris Clark (zoom), Grace Garrett, Steve Green, Ron Kohn, Todd Maher (zoom), Susan Miller, Jenna Ramsey, Donna Robinson (zoom), Susan Shepherd (zoom), John Straight, and Todd Valline. Staff members present: Rhonda Brown, Mindy Jensen, Mark Lander, Erin Hudson, and John McCurdy. Others present: Abby Vanderwerf for Congressman Feenstra.
- 3. Discuss/Approve Agenda.** Straight moved to approve the agenda; Arentson seconded. The motion passed with all ayes.
- 4. Nominating Committee Report.** McCurdy discussed the nominating committee meeting and reported that the nominating committee recommended the following slate of officers: Todd Valline, Chair; Ron Kohn, Vice Chair; Sherman Struble, Secretary; Charlie Parkhurst, Past Chair.
- 5. Second Representatives.** McCurdy discussed second representatives: Ramsey-Montgomery County; Garrett-Cass County; Shepherd-Fremont County; Lyman-Page County; Struble-Harrison County; Arentson-Shelby County. Green moved to approve second representatives. Arentson seconded. The motion passed with all ayes.
- 6. At-Large Members.** McCurdy discussed At-Large Members: Valline and Kohn. Straight moved to approve At-Large Members. Green seconded. The motion passed with all ayes.
- 7. Election of Officers.** Green moved to approve election of officers per the recommendation of the nominating committee. Robinson seconded. The motion passed with all ayes.
- 8. Discuss/Approve Minutes – January 26, 2023.** Arentson moved to approve the minutes. Kohn seconded. The motion passed with all ayes.
- 9. Financial Report.** Brown presented the financial report for information purposes only because not all payroll information is available due to the change to the Proliant payroll system and members discussed. Green moved to table the financial report. Garrett seconded. The motion passed with all ayes.
- 10. Payment of Bills.** Brown presented payment of bills and members discussed. Arentson moved to approve the payment of bills. Robinson seconded. The motion passed with all ayes.
- 11. Agency Expenditures.** McCurdy presented proposal to approve the purchase of an additional staff vehicle. SWITA currently has 3 staff vehicles, 2 Jeep Cherokees and a Chevy Malibu. McCurdy recommended purchasing one more. After research, McCurdy identified several 2023 Chevy Malibu's in the \$30,000-\$35,000 range and requested authority to spend up to \$35,000 to procure a new staff vehicle. Green moved to approve the purchase of an additional staff vehicle up to \$35,000. Straight seconded. The motion passed with all ayes.

12. Discuss/Approve Temporary Rental Agreement for Office Space during Construction. McCurdy discussed that during SWIPCO's construction project, there is a need to relocate the staff who currently work north of the reception desk because of noise, etc. from April 1 through November 30. McCurdy received 3 proposals: all very similar. McCurdy discussed the three proposals and shared that his recommendation was to approve the lease agreement with the Pellet's for 1401 Sunnyside Lane in Atlantic for \$2,750 per month including utilities. Green moved to approve temporary rental agreement for office space during construction with the Pellet's for 1401 Sunnyside Lane for \$2,750 per month including utilities. Shepherd seconded. The motion passed with all ayes.

13. Discuss/Approve Homes for Iowa Reservation of 6 Houses. McCurdy presented the Homes for Iowa program and asked that the board approve reserving 6 homes for the SWIPCO region for 2024 because 2023 orders are already full. Green moved to approve the reservation of 6 Homes for Iowa Houses. Ramsey seconded. The motion passed with all ayes.

14. Discuss/Approve Amendment to Administrative Policies to Increase Executive Director's Spending Authority to \$10,000 from current \$5,000. McCurdy presented that currently our administrative policies allow him to approve purchases up to \$5,000 without board approval. We last increased this 8 years ago when we went from \$2,500 to \$5,000 because it was never really the intent of the board to need to convene to approve normal bus repairs. McCurdy suggested that the time has come where \$5,000 is no longer enough to conduct normal business and he requested that the board increase the Executive Director's spending authority to \$10,000.

The actual policy change is below:

Chapter 5, Purchases, Subsection E(2): The Executive Director has the authority to approve purchases on behalf of SWIPCO for goods or services that do not exceed ~~\$5,000.00~~ \$10,000.00 when such expenditures are part of normal business operations. Example: Office furniture, equipment, and vehicle repairs.

Green moved to approve Amendment to Administrative Policies to Increase Executive Director's Spending Authority to \$10,000 from current amount of \$5,000. Garrett seconded. The motion passed with all ayes.

15. Transit Report. Lander reported: Rides 35,487; Miles 136,957; Hours 9,091. These numbers do not include FWD numbers. Lander reported that January came in very strong. We continue to see very strong Atlantic taxi numbers (3,354) and work route numbers passed 9,000 in a month for the first time (9,062). There was a weather day in January so these numbers would have been even higher. Our GRC numbers remained steady coming in at 1,431. Overall demand continues to remain strong with the only real soft spot in our service line up being GRC which is expected. Lander reported that we are still working to best utilize our resources (vehicles) and that recruitment of drivers is strong as we are hiring new drivers regularly.

16. Planning Report. McCurdy presented and welcomed Erin Hudson as Community Development Director and shared that she will be presenting this and the Housing and Southwest Iowa Housing Trust Fund Report in the near future. McCurdy shared that planning department is currently working on three comprehensive plans for Red Oak, Montgomery County, and Villisca. McCurdy shared that there have been some grant announcements recently including Neighborhood Revitalization Fund awarded to Sidney. McCurdy also shared that Glenwood was not approved for an upper story housing grant as it was noted that the conditions were deemed too nice to be approved. McCurdy shared that there are funds still available so the planning department will be working with the City of Glenwood on reapplying with different upper stories chosen for the application. McCurdy shared that Dani Briggs will be going on maternity leave in the next few weeks. McCurdy shared that he is still looking to continue with recruitment of an additional planner for our staff.

17. Housing and Southwest Iowa Housing Trust Fund Report. McCurdy presented and shared that at the Southwest Iowa Housing Trust Fund meeting in February, the board received eight applications for demolition all from Red Oak and the board approved 4 demos at the discretion of Red Oak for which of

the 8 they would choose. SWIHTF still has demo funds to use so will review any new applications for demo at the next scheduled meeting. McCurdy shared that Flood Recovery is pushing forward and we have now determined that the cities will need to contract with SWIPCO to do the inspections for these Flood Recovery projects. McCurdy shared that he is still hopeful to be presenting hiring a third inspector by next meeting. McCurdy also shared that there is an 11-unit complex that they are looking at for the Lead Abatement Grant. Housing has 9 applications in process, 3 in verification, has 2 inspections completed and has 5 homes ready for inspection under the Lead Abatement program. See attached report for other information presented by McCurdy.

18. Business RLF Report. McCurdy presented and shared that BNK Trucking is having a going out of business sale in March and hoping to payback remaining amount due. McCurdy shared that Business RLF fund has approximately \$850,000 available to lend and SWIPCO will be marketing for this soon. McCurdy also discussed a lien on a building in Griswold that SWIPCO currently has related to a past Business RLF and there is some discussion about a potential buyer for this building.

19. Director's Report. McCurdy shared that he completed board orientation prior to the meeting today but will be reaching out to meet up personally with anyone who was unable to attend this orientation. McCurdy shared that he attended the ISAC state meeting in February, representing ICOG as the Chair of the Iowa Association of Councils of Governments (ICOG). McCurdy shared that CDBG-CV (Covid Grants) that were approved last summer (June) must be completed by May but that these projects are waiting on materials such as windows that will not be available until July. McCurdy shared that HUD was approached for an extension to the deadline due to not enough time to get the materials needed. McCurdy shared that the way these grants work is that the project must be 100% completed by the deadline or no portion of the project will be approved. HUD did not approve this extension, stating that there was still plenty of time to complete these projects, but McCurdy will be talking to local congressmen to see if they can advocate for this extension at the federal level.

20. Public Comment Period. Abby Vanderwerf for Congressmen Feenstra stated that she would forward on the concerns shared by McCurdy about the CDBG-CV deadlines to Congressmen Feenstra.

21. Board Sharing. Miller thanked McCurdy for the board orientation prior to this meeting and the board orientation binder. Garrett thanked McCurdy for his recent work in Des Moines representing ICOG.

22. Other Business. Valline discussed his concerns regarding a property tax bill that is currently at the State Legislature. Valline asked the board to encourage McCurdy to bring up concerns about this bill with ICOG and share members of this board feelings of being against this bill. Green made a motion to express the opinion of the individual members of the board that the bill discussed would have negative impacts on local governments, Miller seconded and there was unanimous consent.

23. Adjourn. Chair Valline adjourned the meeting at 2:44 p.m.