

## **SOUTHWEST IOWA PLANNING COUNCIL**

### **SWIPCO Policy Council Meeting**

May 22, 2025, 1:30 p.m.  
SWIPCO Conference Room (1501 SW 7th St., Atlantic, IA)  
OR via Zoom

### **MINUTES**

1. **Call to Order.** Chair Green called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.
2. **Roll Call.** SWIPCO Policy Council Members Present: Richard Crouch, Grace Garrett, Joe George, Steve Green, Ross Hastert, AJ Lyman, Susan Miller, Charlie Parkhurst, Jeff Shearer, Susan Shepherd, Sherman Struble. SWIPCO Staff Present: John McCurdy, Daurine Petersen, Mark Lander, Rhonda Brown, Brandie McFarland, Chris Parks. Others: Tracee Knapp, Congressman Zach Nunn's Office; Rachel Goetsch, MAPA.
3. **Discuss/Approve Agenda.** Parkhurst moved to approve the agenda. Crouch seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
4. **Discuss/Approve Minutes – April 24, 2025.** George moved to approve the agenda. Parkhurst seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
5. **Discuss/Approve Payment of Bills.** Parkhurst moved to pay the bills. Struble seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
6. **Discuss/Approve Agency Expenditures**
  - a. **Approval to purchase 3 minivans on DOT contract not to exceed \$314,500 (\$104,833 per vehicle).** Lander described the purchase of three minivans that are wheelchair accessible. Have been anticipating this contract and now need approval to order. He said the turnaround was expected to be around 5-6 months. Miller moved to approve the purchase. Crouch seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
  - b. **Approval to replace engine on bus 1706 for \$12,250.** Lander said the issue with the engine on this bus used for student transportation is a bad cam. They could just replace the cam but the second cam on the engine is just as old and could fail as well. More cost effective to replace engine altogether. Garrett moved to approve the repair. George seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
7. **Amend Agency Signatory Resolution.** Amendment of the signatory resolution would remove Erin Hudson and add Kristen Templeton to the approved signatories along with John McCurdy and Mark Lander. Crouch moved to approve the amended resolution. Hastert seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
8. **Discuss/Approve Benefits Eligibility Clarification.** For the purposes of SWIPCO benefits a domestic partner would not be eligible for SWIPCO insurance policies. Administrative issues have complicated allowing domestic partners to be insurance eligible and it can be difficult determining relationships so we are proposing to drop domestic partners from eligibility. Our benefits liaison

has advised that most companies have already done this. Struble moved to approve the eligibility changes. Miller seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.

9. **Set Date for Annual Meeting.** Annual meeting is typically in September and this will be our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. McCurdy proposed having the meeting this year in the evening to encourage more city and county representatives to attend. The proposed date is September 25, 2025, in Atlantic. Time to be set later. Struble moved to approve setting the date of the annual meeting as September 25, 2025. Crouch seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
10. **Transit Report.** Rides were down year over year in April. Main difference is loss of GRC ridership from last year, about 2,000 rides. It was a record month for student transportation and other services were right on par or slightly up.
11. **Planning Report.** McCurdy reported the happy news that Lead Planner Dani Briggs had a healthy baby girl at the beginning of the month. Also discussed was working with the City of Villisca on a bridge impact study and community capacity study. Good information came out of both to help the city advance their goals.
12. **Housing and Southwest Iowa Housing Trust Fund Report.** A new member was added to the SWIHTF Board: Jill Schaben with the Dunlap Development Corp. She has been a motivated participant and they welcome her in.
13. **Business RLF Report.** Griswold grocery building court case has been held up but hopes to be decided soon. SWIPCO has an interested buyer once the property issue is settled. B&K Trucking is working on selling their truck and has set up a payment plan for their remaining loan. Good news is the latest loans will return about \$32,000 in interest that can help other loans happen.
14. **Director's Report.** McCurdy reported that Erin Hudson is no longer with SWIPCO as of May 12<sup>th</sup>. He thanked her for her work. He stated that it is a transitional period for SWIPCO away from some larger scale projects to smaller ones and there is some uncertainty with funding for some programs. He said he is assessing how the Community Development Director role supports all housing and planning programs and will leave that position vacant for the time being. He said that there is a good diversity of programs under the SWIPCO roof, and he wants to make sure everyone understands project roles and can be ambassadors for what SWIPCO can do.
15. **Public Comment Period.** None.
16. **Board Sharing.** Struble asked if business would be down with larger projects wrapping up. McCurdy said not necessarily, there will just be more on a smaller scale.
17. **Other Business.** None
18. **Adjourn.** Miller moved to adjourn. Hastert seconded. The motion carried with all ayes. Chair Green adjourned the meeting at 2:04 p.m.

## **Transit Report 05-22-2025**

**April R/M/H came in lower compared to FY24 the biggest factors were GRC numbers (-1958) as well as Easter falling in April this year instead of May saw a couple days less of transportation for workroutes. We continue to see better than forecasted numbers for School routes and taxi ridership remains strong as well**

**Rides—48,430(-1900) Miles---170,526(-13,000) Hours—9673(-673)**

**Student transportation---8,808 (+1,284)**

**Taxi—5,845(+1,063)**

**Workroutes—7,439(-42)**

## **Combined Planning, Housing, RLF, and Director's Report: May 22, 2025**

Erin Hudson's last day with SWIPCO was May 12. Erin did a lot of good things in her time with SWIPCO. I sincerely wish her the best in any future endeavors.

We've talked a lot in the past year about it being a transition period here at SWIPCO—pivoting away from large Covid and Flood related projects back to more smaller projects. I've spent the last month meeting with community development staff individually and as planning and housing teams, talking about projects, and their interactions and support from the community development director position. The hard truth of the matter is that we are moving into a period of tighter budgets and there is not a lot of room to support the community development director position. Therefore, I have made the decision that for the foreseeable future that position will remain vacant.

I'm not taking steps at this time to write the position out of our organizational structure because I want to do a thorough review of our processes and how best in this more dynamic environment to support staff and provide efficient services to our members.

There is a high level of uncertainty, as everyone can see, at the federal level and to a different extent at the state level. Most of the programs that we work with have thus far been relatively safe from cuts, but that does not mean they will be in the long term. In our planning and housing programs our work is fairly evenly split into thirds—about a third is federally funded, a third state funded, and a third locally funded. That's good, in that we have a diversity of revenue streams and are not reliant on any single program. Likewise, most of the programs we work with have a broad general consensus that the work is important—but there are very differing views on how those outcomes should be reached. There have been a lot of conversations (and actions) regarding cuts to the federal workforce as a way of cutting bureaucracy. Those savings and efficiencies may be realized in the long term, in the short term what it has meant is that in many instances a skeleton crew is trying their best to keep things flowing out but either no longer have the capacity to keep to old schedules (which were slow then) or now actually have to run everything they do through Washington D.C. to be checked, actually increasing the bureaucratic delay that we see.

Over the last month two major things have come to the front of my attention. These are the need for staff to have a clearer understanding of the expectations of their time and efforts relative to the projects we have, and that our members need support but don't always know how to access it through us. I plan on spending the coming weeks working with staff to empower them to understand more about their project budgets and timelines to give them more tools to manage their time appropriately. Likewise, we need to be more present for our members. This involves not just more outreach from me specifically, but again empowering staff with the knowledge about programs beyond their specialty so that they have confidence to speak on behalf of not just what they work on, but SWIPCO as a whole.

I look for your help and support as the board during this time as well to not only represent your constituencies here at our board table, but to be ambassadors for what we do back home.