

SOUTHWEST IOWA PLANNING COUNCIL

October 23, 2025, 1:30 p.m.
SWIPCO Office Conference Room
OR
Via Zoom

MINUTES

1. **Call to Order.** Vice Chair Joe George called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.
2. **Roll Call.** SWIPCO Policy Council members present: Fran Branan, Alex Burton, Grace Garrett, Joe George, Steve Green, Ross Hastert, Susan Miller, Charlie Parkhurst, Jenna Ramsey, Susan Shepherd, Tony Smith, Sherman Struble, Tood Valline. SWIPCO staff present: John McCurdy, Mark Lander, Daurine Petersen, Rhonda Brown, Chris Parks. Others present: Carlene Hall, Bluffs Country Radio.
3. **Approve Agenda.** McCurdy made an adjustment to the agenda. Item 9 needed to be split apart: Item 9 should be Approval of 2026 Health Reimbursement Arrangement. Item 10 should then be Approval of the 2026 Cafeteria Plan, with numbers being adjusted on down. Green moved to approve the amended agenda. Parkhurst seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
4. **Approve Minutes – August 28, 2025 and September 25, 2025.** Miller moved to approve the minutes of the August 28, 2025, and September 25, 2025, meetings. Hastert seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
5. **Approve Financial Report.** Brown talked about the August financials. She pointed out COG support for the year that came in and grant expenses for some HUD Lead and HRPP projects. Also, a line was added for the SWIPCO Annual Meeting that will be spread throughout the year's expenses. On the transit side some income was revenue was realized for some sold old buses and an ICAP payment for a totaled bus. Struble moved to approve the financials. Parkhurst seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
6. **Approve Payment of Bills.** Some payments pointed out were payment to Stamp Construction for the new gravel parking pad next to the Atlantic bus barn, an engine replacement, and a purchased new rear-entry van. Garrett moved to approve payment of bills. Shepherd seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
7. **Approve Agency Expenditures.** None.
8. **Discuss and Approve November/December Meeting Date.** McCurdy explained the November and December policy council meetings are always combined due to the holidays. Looking at the calendar first preferred date would be December 4th, second date December 11th. Miller said there is a conflict for supervisors on the 11th, so 4th is preferred. Struble moved to set December 4th as the Nov/Dec SWIPCO Policy Council Meeting date. Parkhurst seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
9. **Approval of the 2026 Health Reimbursement Arrangement.** McCurdy explained the health insurance benefits that are set up and want to continue. SWIPCO covers the difference beyond \$750 for the high \$2,500 deductible for full-time employees. Insurance rates actually went down a bit. Some discussion was held on how that is applied to family plans, and it was explained that is for each person on policy. The employee is on a 99-1 payment and it's 85-15 for family members. Green moved to approve the 2026 Health Reimbursement Arrangement. Parkhurst seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
10. **Approval of the 2026 Cafeteria Plan.** McCurdy and Petersen described the cafeteria plan and what is offered. Most extras are at employees' expense outside of a small life insurance policy and long-term disability which is covered by SWIPCO. Struble moved to approve the 2026 Cafeteria Plan. Shepherd seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
11. **Discuss and Approve Drug and Alcohol Policy Second Chance Language Update.** Lander described that at SWITA's triannual review the DOT said it was time to add Second Chance language to the drug and alcohol policy. The language lays out requirements for an employee terminated for a failed drug test or non-sample/refused test to be able to be eligible to be hired again. He said it was hoped more could be updated on the policy for saliva testing, but certified labs haven't developed for that yet. Parkhurst moved to approve the second chance language. Hastert seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
12. **Discuss and Approve Staff and Driver Appreciation.** McCurdy explained that HyVee gift cards have been approved in the past for all employees by the board. He asked for a \$50 gift card to be approved again this year. Hastert moved to approve the gift cards. Garrett seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.

- 13. Transit Report.** Lander discussed some ride numbers were a little down but not by much. A new project for medical trips in Pottawattamie and Mills County is planning for a soft launch before the end of 2025. We have applied for \$100,000 in state transit assistance funds that would be half in FY27 and half in FY28 and expect to hear back on that application in the next few weeks. He thanked Susan Miller and Richard Crouch for getting letters of support from their respective Boards of Supervisors for the application.
- 14. Planning Report.** McCurdy talked about the impact of the government shutdown. Closeouts of Malvern Childcare CDBG project and Essex CDBG project are held up by people not being there to receive items, could cause a rebid situation in Essex. It is also tougher to track down important project data with the census site and others being down. Malvern and Hamburg housing projects are moving forward.
- 15. Housing and Southwest Iowa Housing Trust Fund Report.** HUD Lead application is in limbo until shutdown ends. One of the mortgages held from the Fuller program in Shenandoah had a holder pass away. When the estate is settled the mortgage will be paid off and SWIPCO will realize that money for admin costs. CDBG housing project in Creston is proving a challenge with Build America, Buy America requirements. It will be a wait and see on contractors wanting to navigate that process.
- 16. Business RLF Report.** Payments being made monthly by closed B&K Trucking Company. Update visits coming up with Roberto's Pizza.
- 17. Director's Report.** Two recent staff departures, Community Development Specialist Holly Jackson and Building Permit Technician Allie Strauss. McCurdy wished them well and their positions and needs will be assessed for replacements. McCurdy said it will likely be one combined position that has an emphasis on local government experience. Meetings were recently held with Glen Smith of Atlantic who has been nominated to be the next director of USDA Rural Development and Senate candidate Zach Wahls. Both were productive discussions, and we welcome anyone that wants to hear more about what we do. McCurdy also discussed attendance at NADO fall conference and feeling that similar organizations are rolling with the changes and feel good about our rural and regional emphasis. McCurdy also talked about the success of the 50th Anniversary and Annual Meeting and the Fall Driver Meeting, thanking staff for their work on those positive events.
- 18. Public Comment Period.** Carlen Hall from Bluffs Country Radio stated that she was thankful to be in attendance and to get a better pulse on what's happening in the region. She wants her entity to be a good partner in regional progress.
- 19. Board Sharing.** Sheperd shared that after much fundraising and grant writing a splash pad and sidewalk project in the Tabor City Park is going to become a reality. A great grassroots project success story.
- 20. Other Business.** Todd Valline was recognized for his time as the SWIPCO Policy Council Chair. McCurdy thanked him for his guidance and extra work through the pandemic to lead the board and presented him with an honorary gavel plaque.
- 21. Adjourn.** Parkhurst moved to adjourn the meeting. Struble seconded. Vice Chair George adjourned the meeting at 2:27 p.m.

Transit Report 10-23-2025 Meeting

October

48,743 rides (-500) 173,340(-9,700) miles 9.696(-500) hours

Students—8,137-390

Taxi—5,698 +150

Workroutes—8,530 +480