

SOUTHWEST IOWA PLANNING COUNCIL

January 22, 2026 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 1:33 p.m.
2. **Welcome New Members/Introductions.** New SWIPCO Policy Council Member Rob Clausen was welcomed. Clausen is the newly elected Mayor of Atlantic and was appointed to the board by the Cass County Board of Supervisors.
3. **Roll Call.** SWIPCO Policy Council Members present: Fran Branan, Alex Burton, Richard Crouch, Rob Clausen, Steve Green, Ross Hastert, Todd Maher, Susan Miller, Charlie Parkhurst, Jenna Ramsey, Jeff Shearer, Susan Shepherd. SWIPCO Staff present: John McCurdy, Mark Lander, Rhonda Brown, Daurine Petersen, Chris Parks. Others: Jonathan Blatt, Sen. Chuck Grassley Field Representative.
4. **Approve Agenda.** Parkhurst moved to approve the agenda. Hastert seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
5. **Approve Minutes – December 4, 2025.** Miller moved to approve the December 4, 2025 meeting minutes. Maher seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
6. **Approve Financial Report.** Brown discussed transit capital revenue showing up in October/November financials for replacement of bus 1705, FTA FY25 revenue carrying over. Bank interest was from IPATE account for transit. McCurdy explained there was no housing billing in November and RPA billing is behind. He is going to be sitting down with staff to work out getting billings to Brown in a regular and efficient manner. He expects community development expenses to fall due to staff changes that will start to reflect in the ledger. Parkhurst moved to approve the financial report. Shepherd seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
7. **Approve Payment of Bills.** Brown discussed a refund that was shown for Montgomery County because they had paid an invoice twice on accident. Hy-Vee payment was for staff gift cards during the holidays that board approved. A couple of other big payments were for an engine and transmission replacement on transit buses. Miller moved to approve payment of bills. Shepherd seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
8. **Approve Agency Expenditures.** None to request.
9. **Acceptance of Final Draft of Annual Audit.** Darren Welsh reviewed FY 25 audit with board at last meeting. It was a rough draft until they were sure on some guidance language at the federal level. That language did not change, and the final draft was dated for approval. Parkhurst moved to accept the final draft of the FY25 audit and place it on file. Hastert seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
10. **Approve Updated Procurement Language in Administrative Policies.** A section of the administrative policies was updated to include specific language regarding following federal guidelines for procurements involving federal funds. The DOT wanted specific language in the policy and approved what was presented to the board. Miller moved to approve the update. Shepherd seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.

- 11. Appoint Nominating Committee.** Nominating committee to select 2026 SWIPCO Policy Council Officers will consist of Steve Green, Susan Miller, Alex Burton, and Ross Hastert. McCurdy discussed the need for an At-Large Policy Council Member to be approved at the next meeting as well. This is due to the resignation of Todd Valline from the Shelby County Chamber of Commerce and his term ending.
- 12. Board Member Code of Conduct Acknowledgement.** Annual code of conduct documents were distributed to board members to sign and turn in for 2026.
- 13. Discuss/Approve New Member of SWIHTF Board.** The Southwest Iowa Housing Trust Fund operated by SWIPCO is a separate non-profit with its own board. The Policy Council always has a representative on the SWIHTF Board. That spot came open with the end of Grace Garrett's tenure on the board. New Atlantic Mayor Rob Clausen was suggested as that representative and he agreed that it is something he could do, with his construction background possibly being an added benefit. Parkhurst moved to appoint Rob Clausen to the SWIHTF Board. Shepherd seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
- 14. Transit Director's Report.** Lander discussed December ride numbers coming in positively and up from a year ago. He shared his concerns about engine issues with some bus model years in the 16-17 range. He's hoping newer model ranges have longer lasting power. He also discussed receiving a grant for a special project for medical transportation in cooperation with Methodist Jennie Ed and CHI Mercy hospitals. The project is working out details and hopes to get running early February.
- 15. Director's Report.** McCurdy discussed the creation of the SWIPCO Christmas Catalog, sharing a comprehensive look at SWIPCO services offered and helping cities think about a holistic plan for improvements and growth. He also discussed working on a new year for the Iowa Finance Authority grant, which opened homeownership assistance again. The repair waitlist has been reduced thanks to good work from staff. He also touched on housing rehab in Creston assisting SICOG, a new CDBG roof repair program starting, inspections rolling along, Homes for Iowa updates, flood recovery projects continuing in Malvern/Hamburg/Glenwood, and many types of plans in the works for counties and cities.
- 16. Public Comment Period.** None.
- 17. Board Sharing.** Shepherd asked if there are specific grants available for Radon and Mold mitigation. McCurdy said no specific grants currently for those things but sometimes can be addressed when other issues are addressed in rehab projects. He shared some ideas for how that could maybe be addressed in the future.
- 18. Other Business.** None.
- 19. Adjourn.** Hastert moved to adjourn the meeting Shepherd seconded. The motion carried with all ayes. Chair Green adjourned the meeting at 2:50 p.m.

Transit Director's Report 01-22-2026

Dec numbers

Please note that we are waiting for some additional R/M/H numbers to come in and are expecting those additional numbers to actually bump us to year over year R/M/H increases for the month of December.

31,752 rides (-10,897) 140,417 miles(-12,770) 8,473 hours(-721)

Student---5,951(-227)

Workroutes—7,074 (+366)

Taxi—4988 (-429)

Workroutes continue to stay strong as we continue to see our Enterprise vanpool numbers grow, this service provided 1,070 rides in December and we expect that number to increase to between 1,700-2,000 per month by the end of the fiscal year as two additional vanpools are added and existing vanpools fill up.

We have been awarded a \$50,000 grant for FY27 for our Swi-ride medical transportation pilot that we have been working with Jennie Edmunsen and Mercy hospital in Council Bluffs.

We are also expecting to have 4 new buses delivered by February and as of right now the 3 additional light duty buses and 1 medium duty buses we have ordered are expected by May of this year. I have not heard back on the 3 Ford Transit's we have on order but would expect to see them by the end of this FY as well.

January 22, 2026, Executive Director's Report

To start out with some excellent news, we were awarded in December a HUD lead mitigation grant for \$1.4 million. This grant pays for reducing lead-based paint hazards in homes, especially those with children under 6, and also has a component called Healthy Homes where we can do non-lead related repairs on the homes that do have lead. This is a continuation of a program that we previously had funded that ended back in the fall. We are in contract negotiations with HUD right now, but we anticipate a signed contract February 1, and will put more press out about that at that time. This is in partnership with the Housing Trust Fund, we are also seeking Iowa West funds to augment it.

Also in housing we have started a new year of IFA funding through the trust fund, so we currently have homeownership assistance funds available and have allocated most of the year's demolition funds. We currently have 80 people on our wait list for housing rehab, which may sound like a lot, but is probably the smallest number in 10 years (it's been as high as 300). So, you may start to see some advertising for those programs. We have three homes underway in Creston as part of our assistance to the SICOG area because they lack a housing staff. That is part of a special CDBG pilot program. CDBG has not done much housing rehab in recent years, but is rolling out a new program for roofs only, so when we get more information on this we will make that available to communities. Building inspections, rental inspections, zoning review, and all of our housing services continue at pace.

You may have seen the press that Massena has received and installed a Homes for Iowa house, and Anita has received 2 houses that will be put onto foundations soon. We receive \$2,500 per home for assisting with that. But, our relationship with HFI is changing, COGs were the sole distributors, but they are going to start doing direct sales, so our involvement will be limited, but we do get a small referral payment if we do refer folks to them. My understanding is that at this point they only have 12 homes committed for 2026 and have the capacity to build 40 or so, so I think they will be very responsive if anyone has a potential project.

Flood recovery housing construction continues in Malvern. Hamburg, whose housing project basically fell apart, is now being treated by IEDA as basically a new project, which is good, and we are working with the City to get the infrastructure at the housing site finished and a new developer selected. The Arbor Hills project in Glenwood, which should be basically in close out, may drag on for some time because infrastructure for the development was built outside the area of the environmental review—so now things like archeological surveys will need to be carried out after the fact. That project will then not actually close until all of that work is completed, and the City may be required to take certain actions to remediate any environmental impacts that the infrastructure may have had since it wasn't cleared beforehand.

Planning is very busy with plans, grant applications, and grant administration. We have newly awarded CDBG grants in Little Sioux, Hastings, Walnut, and Missouri Valley. We were unsuccessful with CDBG applications for Defiance, Elk Horn, and Oakland. We know we are resubmitting Elk Horn in May and waiting on local decisions on the status of the other two.

Staff are currently working on grant applications for water/sewer projects in Griswold, Logan, Persia, Henderson, Pisgah, Massena, and Panama. They're working on other grants in Corley,

Anita, Missouri Valley, Logan, and Atlantic. Some applications that are on the horizon (mostly water/sewer) are in Pony Creek, Silver City, Woodbine, Cumberland, Red Oak, Carson, and Mineola.

Comprehensive plans that are in the completion/adoption phase are Atlantic, Harrison County, and Missouri Valley. Other comprehensive plans in progress are Clarinda and Shenandoah. We have submitted a proposal to start a comprehensive plan in Malvern. Dunlap has also expressed interest in doing a new comprehensive plan. We are currently working on county hazard mitigation plans in Montgomery, Harrison, and Cass Counties. Throughout 2026 we will be working to update our region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plan. Expect some opportunities as the SWIPCO board to be involved with that and give your input as you are the adopting entity for that plan, which is funded by the US Economic Development Administration. We are currently working with 16 different cities/counties on updating codes of ordinances or zoning ordinances.

Some of you have been involved with Safe Streets for All (SS4A) planning that we are doing in conjunction with MAPA. Tammy has done some one on one meetings with communities but there will be a Zoom community meeting on February 10th at 1:30, and we can distribute info about that.

I met with a prospective loan applicant in Massena this month. We are also looking at defederalizing our USDA revolving loan fund and if we do that we'll discuss what we could use that money for, if we don't continue to use it for RLF.

We are currently working through the RFP process for both new transit software and a managed IT provider. Our transit software is being discontinued. Our IT provider we have had some issues lately with timeliness of responses, I'd say we're not horribly unhappy, but we also haven't put out an RFP for that service in almost 10 years, so its time. Those will be before the board at the March 26 meeting, so a quorum will be very important.

We have also been working with our ICAP insurance on a lawsuit file by the family of a rider who sustained an injury on our bus a couple years ago and subsequently passed away. Our insurance is defending us in that matter, but do not be surprised if in the next few months we have a closed session or two with our legal counsel on that.

An interesting development in the statehouse is that one of the many property tax proposals also includes language that would add to COGs roles that we would take the lead on coordinating and potentially consolidating local government services. On the one hand, I think that sounds great and is already something that we are doing. On the other, what does that mean? It was not put forward by our association. Likewise, I don't know the impacts of the tax portion of the bill, so we may remain agnostic on it, but it is intriguing. At the same time however, the Governor's budget zero's out financial assistance to COGs, even though IEDA recommends it in their budget. So on the one hand you have a legislator recommending that we be a major player in coordinating local government, and on the other the executive branch not recommending sending any money our way. It's early in the session.