

## SOUTHWEST IOWA PLANNING COUNCIL

### SWIPCO Policy Council Meeting

March 26, 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 1:31 p.m.
2. **Roll Call.** SWIPCO Policy Council Members present: Alex Burton, Joe George, Steve Green, Ross Hastert, Todd Maher, Susan Miller, Charlie Parkhurst, Jenna Ramsey, Jeff Shearer, Susan Shepherd, Tony Smith, and Sherman Struble. SWIPCO staff present: John McCurdy, Mark Lander, Rhonda Brown, Daurine Petersen, Kristen Templeton, and Chris Parks. Others on zoom: Tracee Knapp, Rep. Zach Nunn Staffer; Josh Pitcher, Ecolane; Tommy Jack, Ecolane; Barry Strawder, Visual Edge IT.
3. **Approve Agenda.** Parkhurst moved to approve the agenda. Struble seconded. Hastert alerted that he will abstain from item number 8. The motion carried with all ayes.  
*\*If any board member has a conflict of interest with any agenda items, please state your conflict of interest now.*
4. **Approve Minutes – February 26, 2026.** Struble moved to approve the February 26<sup>th</sup> minutes. Miller seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
5. **Approve Financial Report.** Brown discussed the financials. She pointed out the sale of a 2016 Chevy Malibu staff vehicle, 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter economic development admin, transportation planning monthly, reimbursement for four transit vehicles, and two old buses sold. Burton moved to approve the financials. Hastert seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
6. **Approve Payment of Bills.** Brown pointed out a payment for vinyl wraps and signage for three new buses and one minivan that will be depreciated. Parkhurst moved to approve payment of bills. Struble seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.
7. **Approve Agency Expenditures.** None
8. **Approve Calendar Year 2026 Depository Resolution.** Depository resolution includes the following banks and maximum deposit amounts. First Interstate Bank - \$100,000; Houghton State Bank - \$100,000; Iowa Public Agency Investment Trust- \$10,000,000; Midstates Bank - \$5,000,000; PayPal - \$100,000; Rolling Hills Bank & Trust - \$10,000,000. Struble moved to approve the depository resolution for 2026. Parkhurst seconded. Hastert abstained. The motion carried with all ayes.
9. **Approve Calendar Year 2026 Signature Resolution.** Designated 2026 signatories are John McCurdy, Executive Director; Mark Lander, Transit Director; Kristen Templeton, Transit Coordinator.
10. **Discuss and Potentially Approve Transit Software RFP Recommendation.** McCurdy discussed the Transit Software RFP Process. SWITA received 6 proposals which were narrowed down to three finalists: Ecolane, Spare, and Via. Visits were made with current users and presentations heard from the companies. Following presentations all four staff involved felt that Ecolane was the best fit and is also the most affordable by a fairly wide margin. Lander and

Templeton both talked about how they feel Ecolane will meet the agency's needs. Green asked about price breakdowns and Hastert asked for reassurance that training will be covered over the life of the contract. Lander assured that training is expected to be very ample and previous users have raved about their customer service. Burton asked if a ridership boost may be expected with new tech available and McCurdy and Lander agreed that is very possible. Burton expressed his thoughts that it will be a great step forward in service and operations. Burton motioned to approve the recommendation of signing a five year contract with Ecolane. Hastert seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.

11. **Discuss and Potentially Approve Managed IT Services RFP Recommendation.** McCurdy discussed the Managed IT RFP process. SWIPCO has been with Anatomy IT for a long while but did recently see some issues with service response. We got proposals from three entities: Anatomy IT, Access Systems, and Visual Edge IT. Presentations were heard from all three and referrals were contacted. All involved felt Access Systems were a good fit with their service locations being in Waukee and Omaha; and their pricing was better than both other proposals. McCurdy expressed his comfort with Access already doing a great job with our phone system and copy/print services as well. Parkhurst moved to approve the recommendation of a 3-year contract with Access Systems. Burton seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.

12. **Set Public Hearing date and time for FY26 Iowa DOT Consolidated Funding Application.** Lander explained that this hearing takes place each year as part of the application process. The hearing date would be during the next policy council meeting on April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 1:30 p.m. Burton moved to set the public hearing date for April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 1:30 p.m. Struble seconded. The motion carried with all ayes.

13. **Transit Report.** Lander delivered ridership numbers for February, which overall are a bit up year over year. He continues to see strong ridership with vanpools and workroutes and that could very well increase with rising fuel prices. He also said the Jennie Ed and CHI Mercy medical trips have started and are slowly growing. He also talked about Parks, Ramsey, and himself attending the IPTA and CTAA DC Fly-In. Felt it was a very valuable trip with good discussion and would recommend IPTA working with CTAA moving forward as long as the Iowa legislative visit stays the same with all getting together at once.

17. **Director's Report.** McCurdy thanked everyone involved in the two big RFP's that were approved at the meeting. He is excited about the changes that are to come. He also discussed his advocacy trip to DC with NADO. He said meetings were okay but it was evident the amount of turnover that is coming in the Iowa delegation with many running for other offices. He also touched on the recent RPA-13 Planning Review from the Iowa DOT that went well. Housing repair projects are moving forward at a good pace. We will look to get more individuals on the waiting list as that has been knocked down to about 80 currently. More grant funding expected down the road to meet those needs. Code enforcement is moving along with updates in Red Oak and interest in some commercial inspection help in Harlan. He met with a developer about potential workforce housing credit project in Harlan. Disaster recovery continues with some houses complete in Malvern and getting close to a new developer selection in Hamburg which has had an extension of the project timeline. Lots of grant projects being worked on by Tammy DeBord and lots of plans being worked on by Dani Briggs. He also discussed the recent blizzard rescue of stranded motorists by SWITA and making sure our information is available to proper entities in those emergencies. April 1 will be his 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary as SWIPCO Director, making him the longest tenured director in the agency's history and proud of the work that has been done.

18. **Public Comment Period.** None
19. **Board Sharing.** None.
20. **Other Business.** None.
21. **Adjourn.** Parkhurst moved to adjourn. Hastert seconded. The motion carried with all ayes. Chair Green adjourned the meeting at 2:17 p.m.

## **Transit Director's Report 03-26-2026**

February 2026

41,494 Rides 152,027 Miles 8,571 Hours

Student---7,081 **+652**

Taxis—4,970 **-341**

Workroutes—7,704 **+601**

### **Notes:**

We have started our Jennie Ed/CHI medical trip transportation, our first few weeks started out slow, but we are now starting to see rides pick up.

Chris, Jenna, and I attended CTAA's DC Fly-in from March 4-6<sup>th</sup> in Washington DC. All in all, I thought the meetings were very productive and I did like having the ability to speak with folks from other transit agencies from around the country and CTAA had some beneficial speakers before and after the meetings, which was nice. I will be supportive of Iowa taking part again next year as long as we are still able to set up our own meeting as we see fit.

## March 26, 2026 Executive Director's Report

The managed IT and transit software selection processes were major endeavors and I want to make sure and thank all the staff involved, it was a significant amount of time but I feel that the time we spent on it was well worth the inconvenience because I think we're making very informed decisions. I was not very excited about either of these changes, but because of all the legwork we've done thus far I feel much more confident in the delivery of these new improvements than I had before we started the process.

Mark, Chris, and Jenna attended the Iowa Public Transit Association Washington DC fly-in earlier this month and advocated for public transit. Iowa has done a good job of getting some good capital investments from the Feds, and this type of advocacy helps. Our association is currently working with the Iowa legislature to see if Iowa can match some of the federal funds we have seen.

I was in DC as well the following week for our NADO board meeting as well as our meetings with our legislative delegation. These meetings were OK, but it is clear that its difficult to move things in DC at the moment, although the meetings were much better than they were at this time a year ago when agency staff were expressly not allowed to talk with us.

This month we had a planning review of our administration of RPA-13 by staff from the Iowa DOT. That went well with few recommendations. Iowa is one of the few states that run RPA's in this way and delegate some authority for spending federal transportation funds to the local level. One thing proposed in the new federal transportation bill would be to expand that process to the whole country and increase the planning funds to do it.

Housing projects move forward at a good pace. We actually have probably the smallest waiting list that we've had for housing repairs in probably 10 years (about 80 people). We are going to be doing some press, mostly revolving around the relaunch of our lead program but also to build back up our list. Although it can be frustrating for homeowners when they have to wait a while to make it to the top of the list, having a waiting list has benefited us significantly because we aren't scrambling to find people when we are ready to do work.

We did learn that we did not receive an Iowa West grant that I had put in to help match our HUD lead grant. That is disappointing but I had a very good de-brief with Iowa West and they are very supportive of us actually asking for more funds for our regular repair program, but the administrative hoops and uncertainty with the lead program, specifically that sometimes an individual project can be very high cost, caused them to decide to stay out of that program.

I met with a developer in Harlan and with the city administrator to discuss a potential workforce housing tax credit project as well as potentially a Homes for Iowa project.

In our building code enforcement program, we've seen a decent number of new permits come in with spring weather arriving. Red Oak is in the process of updating their ordinances and fees, and its by no means unanimous on the council so I've attended one of their meetings and will be

meeting with a council member again. Harlan has contacted us about doing building code enforcement on at least a temporary basis while their fire chief is on leave.

On our disaster recovery projects that are still active 4 homes are now complete in Malvern and I expect that project to move forward fairly well this summer. In Hamburg they are still working through some contracting issues to finish up the infrastructure, then the City will seek proposals for a developer to build the homes on that project, so I would anticipate actual construction of homes on that project to not start until the fall, in all reality.

Some grant projects of note Tammy has been working hard with Missouri Valley on a long running upper story housing grant and I hope that now the developer is on track and can complete the project. The Glenwood downtown façade project should be coming to a close, though we have been notified by the owner of an adjacent building that was damaged during the project that they may seek damages. Atlantic and Essex water projects are starting. Grant projects just getting underway include water/sewer projects in Hastings, Little Sioux and Missouri Valley. Atlantic has a grant for electric car chargers but AMU needs to move forward with actually ordering them. We've been working with Walnut to finalize some contracting issues on their childcare center grant to get that moving. I was contacted by Vision Atlantic about a potential CDBG grant for that childcare project, however, they plan on bidding the project in the next few months and that is not a reasonable timeline to pursue a CDBG grant.

Dani has been doing an incredible job on our planning projects. She is currently working with 20 different communities on plans, zoning ordinances, or other codes of ordinances—which is a lot. The biggest hurdle on these projects however is sometimes we can go a long time without feedback/contact from the local community, so we're looking to ways to keep towns engaged between meetings as this kind of lag has become common and turns into a time such for us. She's also working on multiple grant applications, I believe 12 currently, with 7 more potential in the pipeline.

I do also want to note that we had a blizzard last Sunday. The Cass County sheriff's department reached out and we were able to provide a SWITA bus to rescue 20 people, 2 cats, and 1 dog that were stranded on I-80 and take them to the YMCA as a shelter. We also then assisted with getting people discharged from the hospital since they were filling up and had no way to get people out of the hospital. Driver Steve Herrington did an amazing job.

April 1 will be my 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary as SWIPCO director, which officially puts me as the longest tenured director in the agency's history—for good or bad! We'll need to coordinate with the executive committee to do my annual review, probably over lunch prior to our April 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.