



**Southwest Missouri Council of Governments  
Board Meeting  
Wednesday, January 22, 2025  
9:00 a.m.  
The Library Center  
4653 S. Campbell Ave.  
Springfield, MO**

**Attendance:**

**Members:**

Jonas Arjes – Springfield COC	Chris Daugherty – Hurley
Sam Rost – Marshfield	Duane Lavery – GRO Marshfield
Andrew Romano – Springfield Chamber	Scott Godbey – Nixa
Neil Brady – Bartlett West	Brittany Crawford - Urbana
Tracy Slagle – Liberty	Nikki Ashmore - Branson
Cindy Stephens – OTC	Sam Rost – Marshfield
Andrew Novinger – Shaffer & Hines	Brenda Justin – Nixa
Mark Colussy – Branson	Dawne Gardner – Kimberling City
Kelly Petty – Fair Grove	Cheri Hagler – Springfield
J Howard Fisk – Greene County	Dennis Wiggins – TCP
Allen Kunkel – MSU	Christy Beshore – Mt Vernon EDC
Christy Beshore – Mt. Vernon EDC	Stacy Burks – Olsson
Commissioner Randy Owens – Webster County	Brad Testerman – EDP Bolivar
Cameron Smith – Ozark	Troy Smith – Willard
Mayor Ken McClure – Springfield	Dick Scott – Olsson
Joe Kelley – Mt Vernon	Richard Asbill – Cassville
Todd Wiesehan – Christian County	Commissioner Bradley Jackson – Christian County
Pres. Commissioner Bob Senninger – Lawrence County	

**Members on Zoom:**

Jeremy Dean – State Representative	Matt Overcast – State Representative
Olivia Hough – CU	Nathan Piche – Indian Point
Mary Kromrey – Own, Inc	Kyle Lee – Bolivar
Guest – Taneyville	Tommy VanHorn – Battlefield
Andy S – MGS WRC	Hollie Elliott – Dallas County
Commissioner Ken Gaspar – Monett	John Forrester – Allgeier, Martin, & Associates
Carrie Howlett – Aurora	Jeff Hancock – Monett
Wes Young – Willard	

**Partners and Guests:**

Tina White - MoDNR	Randy Willoughby - MoDNR
Joe Kammerer – CFO	Mike Ussery – Senator Schmitt’s Office

Beth Schaller – MoDOT  
David Knaut – OTO  
Andrea Sitzes – Arvest Bank  
Jered Taylor – Congressman Burlison’s Office  
Anna Evans – SMCC

Jacob Wimsatt – MoDOT  
Brian Schwarz - MoDED  
Logan McGhee – USDA-RD  
Cody Green – USDA-RD  
Isaac Garris – USDA-RD

**Partners and Guests on Zoom:**

Ronda Burnett – MDC  
Sherri Rhuems – SW WIB  
Jessica Daugherty – MFFH

Nicole Spoon - Fordland  
Sydney Allen – Greene County  
Lisa Robinson – MU Extension

**Staff:**

Jason Ray  
Aishwarya Shrestha  
Kelsi Burton  
Thomas Cunningham

Garrett Colony  
Courtney Pinkham  
Pratika Banjara  
Garrett Jackson

**Open Meeting**

1. Call to Order – Cindy Stephens
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Introductions and Announcements
4. Approval of January 22, 2025, Meeting Agenda – Cindy Stephens  
*Sam Rost motioned, Bob Senninger seconded to approve the January 22, 2025 Agenda. Motion carried.*
5. Approval of September 25, 2024, Meeting Minutes - Cindy Stephens  
*Chris Daugherty motioned, Howard Fisk seconded to approve the corrected September 25, 2024 Minutes. Motion carried.*

**Legislative Reports**

**-Mike Ussery** – Senator Schmitt’s Office

Mike stated that Senator Schmitt will also be serving on the Judiciary committee. President Biden signed into law the Think Differently Act that Senator Schmitt sponsored. Senator Schmitt has introduced several bills pertaining to, border legislation, and against the Chinese Communist Party.

**-Jered Taylor** – Congressman Burlison’s Office

Jered commented that Congressman Burlison will serve on the Oversight and Accountability Committee, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and Education and the Workforce Committee. He will also serve as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs. As well he will also serve on the DOGE Subcommittee. President Biden signed the Words Matter Act of 2024 which Congressman Burlison had language in regarding the issues some are having with regards to the Army Corp of Engineers and easements on Table Rock Lake.

## **Other Business** – Cindy Stephens

### **1. Call for Nominations: SMCOG Multi-Modal TAC (MMTAC)** – Jason Ray, Executive Director & Aishwarya Shrestha, Associate Planner

Jason discussed that in our Regional Transit Plan, it was identified the need for a new subcommittee, the Multi-Modal Transportation Committee (MMTAC). The new MMTAC had its kickoff meeting a few months back and it went well. We are taking nominations for individuals that would bring knowledge to this group. We do have individuals from OATS Transit and Springfield Regional Airport serving on this subcommittee. The subcommittee will meet 4 times a year, one of those meetings will be the Super TAC meeting, where TAC and MMTAC will meet together.

### **2. Program Updates** – Jason Ray, Executive Director & Staff

Jason announced that membership dues invoices have been sent out, our dues are for the calendar year, if you have not received yours, please contact us. Jane Hood retired in November; we held a retirement celebration at JVIC. Jake Phillips one of our associate planners took a position at Christian Co. We are looking at hiring an Associate and Senior Planner. We have completed round 1 of our relocation onto campus, and we are located just off of National Ave. on the MSU campus in University Hall, The renovation of Blunt Hall is on track and we should be able to move to our final home in April. Being on campus has proven well working with other centers. We are working on having some parking available to our members if they need to meet at our office.

The CEDS was completed last year, and has proven beneficial, we will be shifting to see how our CEDS Committee can help find ways to implement and utilize the CEDS in our region. Jason has been working on the State CEDS, he had the final working meeting in December, and Governor-elect Kehoe stated he supported and planned to utilize the state CEDS, Jason worked on the community infrastructure working group which covered a lot of subjects, he is excited to see the final State CEDS

The Loan Review Committee met last year and approved the Sisters Mill loan request, a restaurant near the corner of National and Chestnut in Springfield, the Executive Committee approved. We have a few more loan requests that we are working on getting approved, unfortunately, we will most likely have to de-obligate part of the funds since we have not loaned out the full \$1 million. Initially, we asked for half or a million, but they gave us the full \$1 million.

-Aishwarya updated the board with transportation grant opportunities, and the Federal PROTECT program, for making roads and bridges resilient to natural concerns, the deadline is 2/24/2025. The annual transportation prioritization process will start soon, and a needs list survey will be sent to each county for them to update, this will be sent out at the end of the month, and it will also be available online, the end of April is the deadline. In May & June Aishwarya will meet with each county's commissioners to prioritize their needs, then the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) will meet to prioritize transportation needs for the region, and then Aishwarya will meet with MoDOT to prioritize the next level.

-Kelsi stated that SMCOG Grants Team has stayed busy on current projects, Branson's tiny homes have broken ground and should be constructed within a year. They have been working with Greenfield on a Downtown Revitalization project. They are actively working on grant applications; they have submitted 15 applications since the September board meeting. They have been working with Kimberling City to perform an income study to help them qualify for CDBG funds, they did qualify. The upcoming CDBG cycle will be starting soon.

-Garrett commented that the MoDNR Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is open currently for trail restoration or construction and does require a 20% match.

-Dawne Gardner thanked Kelsi and Garrett for their work on Kimberling City's LMI survey.

-Thomas started with an update regarding hazard mitigation, he stated we would have normally started on these plans, but we are still waiting for funding from FEMA. He is working with the City of

Aurora to update their emergency management plan; they are working with a consultant out of Oklahoma. RHSOC, Regional Homeland Security Oversight Committee, this is a 14-county region, we have a contract to administer this program. The FY21 program is still active, we still have funds to spend down. FY22 & FY23 are still open, both years received around \$500,000. FY24, we received \$450,000, and the board approved projects last year. As a reminder, Thomas stated if you received funding, please coordinate with him to ensure reimbursement. The next RHSOC meeting will be in person in April.

-Comprehensive Plans, Thomas and Aishwarya have taken over Jake's workload. They recently met with Branson to start their plan and have a second meeting scheduled. The Village of Indian Point has had its first meeting, and for the City of Buffalo, we are working on the community survey. We have a few more in the pipeline. We are wrapping up Fair Grove and they should be adopting the plan soon. Ash Grove is almost at the same point.

-Jason asked Thomas if we had any open positions on the RHOSC.

-Thomas stated we do, he sent an email, and they have a set list of positions they need to be covered, this committee is required to attend meetings and vote on the projects that will be funded.

### **Partner Updates**

#### **- USDA – Rural Development – Logan McGhee**

Logan introduced himself, Cody Green, and Isaac Garris. They have community facilities and water programs that are open year-round, reach out if you are interested in more information on these programs. USDA-RD also has single-family housing programs.

#### **-MoDOT – Jacob Wimsatt and Beth Schaller**

Jacob Wimsatt stated they are working on the 2026 statewide plan.

Beth stated they do put a construction guide on the MoDOT website each year, and this should be coming out soon. The Regional Bridge Committee met recently to award projects, but it has not been finalized yet. Route A and 60 in Webster County went to bid, just under \$40 million, and this project will get rid of several rail crossings. Improvements to I44 will be starting soon. Route 65, north of Buffalo will be starting soon. Rt 160- 39 improvements coming soon. CC and main in Nixa just approved, Reeds Spring Junction funded, and I-44 from 13 to 65 funded. Finishing up sidewalk improvements in Springfield. Long Creek bridge on Highway 86 in Taney County will be finishing up.

#### **-Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO) – David Knaut**

David stated the board had just approved their Safe Streets for all Plan.

#### **-MoDNR – Tina White**

Tina stated MoDNR has a new director, Kurt Shaeffer, he has worked with the department before. He appointed Jake Buxton as Assisted Director. The new Missouri State Parks Interim Director was announced, Laura Hendrickson and Melanie Smith was announced as Deputy Director

#### **-MDC – Ronda Burnett**

Ronda commented that each January MDC publishes notable news, in the SMCOG region they welcomed a new conversation area in Dade County. MDC is offering its Bradford Pear tree buyback program, cut down a Bradford Pear tree, and receive a native tree. They celebrated the Garrison Community Forrest in Ozark. A Buffalo resident got the largest Black Buffalo fish this year at Stockton Lake. MDC opened the new conversation center at Sheppard of the Hills hatchery site. Branson received an arborist of the year. They have their operating budget available for the public to review on their website.

**-Ozark Region Workforce Development Board** – Andrea Sitzes and Sherri Rhuems

Andrea Sitze stated they have been continuing their work from their board retreats on efficiency and identifying funding opportunities. They will be sending a RFP to CLEO.

**-Southwest Workforce Investment Board** – Sherrie Rhuems stated the YouthBuild grant is almost 1.3 million to help youth ages 16- 23 get a GED and they are working on a homeless village in Joplin.

**-MoDED** – Brian Schwartz

Brian thanked everyone for all the partnerships and referrals in his region since he took on this position. MoDED has several grants open for retaining or expanding staff.

**-Community Foundation of the Ozarks** – Joe Kammerer

Joe stated that they are renovating the 4th floor of the Meyer Alumni Center, it should be ready to move in late 2025. The Musgrave grant cycle for low-income housing is open.

**- Springfield City Utilities** – Olivia Hough

Olivia brought up the Lake Springfield Plan, she thanked SMCOG for its help in getting the funding for the plan. CMT has been selected for the next phase. They are accepting proposals, the contact is Steve Prange with CMT, [sprange@cmtengr.com](mailto:sprange@cmtengr.com)

**-Show Me Christian County** – Anna Evans

Anna shared that they continue to work with Highlandville on the city’s planning project.

**-Springfield Chamber of Commerce** – Jonas Arjes

Jonas stated they have rebranded SREP to OREP, and plan to use the model with regional champions which will help with funding. This group is working with the SMCOG region, if you do not have an economic development person, please reach out for assistance. They understand that there might be some overlap with LORE, but it is all about regionalism and working together.

**Adjourn**

*Next SMCOG Board Meeting will be held on Friday, March 28, 2025.*

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Steve Childers, Secretary

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Date Approve