



**Southwest Missouri Council of Governments**

**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, December 6, 2023**

**9:00 a.m.**

**The Library Center 4653 S Campbell Ave., Springfield, MO**

**Attendance:**

**Members:**

Dawne Gardner – Kimberling City  
Dennis Wiggins – Taney County Partnership  
Cindy Stephens – OTC  
Stan Whitehurst – Webster County  
Neil Brady – Bartlett & West  
Cindy Robbins – Nixa  
Martha Smartt – Strafford  
Bob Senninger – Lawrence County  
Jerry Harman – H2Ozarks  
Bill Monday – Dallas County  
Joe Kelley – Mt Vernon  
Callie Linville – CU  
Andy Novinger – Own, Inc  
Sheila Wyatt – Taney County  
Megan Gandy – Greenfield  
Kim Kinder – Dade County  
Randy Owens – Webster County  
David Engroff – Greenfield  
J. Howard Fisk – Fisk Limousine

Chris Tabor – Republic  
Todd Wiesehan – Christian County  
Steve Childers – Ozark  
Ken McClure – Springfield  
Chris Daugherty – Hurley  
Jennifer Luna-Thompson – Branson  
Nikki Ashmore – Branson  
Wayne Blades – Stone County  
Kathy Smith – N Form  
Chris Berndt – Western Taney Co Fire District  
Danny Perches – Springfield  
Nancy Edson – Esterly, Schneider & Associates  
John Gardner - Saddlebrooke  
Mark Crabtree – Battlefield  
Missy Netzer – Greenfield  
Sam Baird – Willard  
Sam Rost – Marshfield  
Jon Holmes – Aurora

**Partners and Guests:**

Payton Ruddy – Congressman Alford’s Office  
Brad Keller – MoDOT  
Jered Taylor – Congressman Burlison’s Office  
Frank Miller – MoDOT  
Tucker Jobes – Senator Schmidt’s Office  
Noah Snelson – Congressman Burlison’s Office  
Mike Ussery – Senator Schmidt’s Office  
Jonas Tavares – Taney Co Partnership  
Lisa Robinson – MU Extension  
Ashley Venolia – USDA RD

Stacy Burks – Red Cross  
Alice Wingo – CFO  
Theresa Sampaio – DED  
Jonas Arjes – Taney Co Partnership  
Anna Evans – Show Me Christian County  
David Knaut – OTO  
Bill Owen – State Representative  
Janice Piper – SeniorAge  
Cynthia Collins – Springfield Workforce Dev  
Logan McGhee – USDA RD

**Staff:**

Jason Ray  
Jane Hood  
Aishwarya Shrestha  
Courtney Pinkham

Kelsi Burton  
Jake Phillips  
Thomas Cunningham  
Emma Horn  
Michael Kohler

**Open Meeting**

1. Call to Order – Cindy Stephens
  
2. Pledge of Allegiance
  
3. Introductions and Announcements
  
4. Approval of December 6, 2023, Meeting Agenda – Cindy Stephens  
*J. Howard Fisk motioned, Randy Owens seconded to approve the December 6, 2023 Agenda. Motion carried.*
  
5. Approval of September 27, 2023, Meeting Minutes— Cindy Stephens  
*Bill Monday motioned, Steve Childers seconded to approve the September 27, 2023 Minutes. Motion carried.*

**Legislative Reports****-Tucker Jobs – Senator Schmitt’s Office**

Senator Schmitt is focused on the Supplemental Defense Spending bill. Disagreements on securing the border are in discussion. No agreements have been reached. In addition, the National Defense Authorization Act is being worked on and has key elements pertaining to Fort Leonard Wood and Whiteman Airforce Base.

**-Noah Snelson – Congressman Burlison’s Office**

The Congressman’s office is interested in meeting with you to find out your issues and needs. The Congressman has proposed the Propane Accessibility & Regulatory Relief Act which makes it easier for farmers to not be under federal regulations for keeping propane on their property. Working on a bill regarding the Corp of Engineers along with a trucking bill and a couple workforce & education bills. The budget is one of the biggest issues currently. The Congressman voted against the new FBI headquarters property.

**-Payton Ruddy – Congressman Alford’s Office**

Congressman Alford introduced the SERV Act, which has made it out of the House unanimously. It will make it easier for access to capital for veterans to get into a small business Alford also introduced the Holding Agencies Accountable Act. This bill aims to enhance transparency and accountability in federal rulemaking.

**State Legislative Reports****-Representative Owen**

Representative Owen stated they are moving forward with early budget hearings; these are viewable online at [house.mo.gov](http://house.mo.gov).

## **Local Elected Officials**

### **-Mayor McClure**

Mayor McClure reminded everyone that Buc-ee's Grand Opening will be Monday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. He encouraged everyone to attend.

## **Business**

1. 2023 Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan – Jason Ray & Aishwarya Shrestha gave an overview. Aishwarya had 30 public meetings this past year on this Plan. Jason noted that Aishwarya worked hard to track in-kind match for this project which saved SMCOG roughly \$8,000 in cash match.

*Nancy Edson motioned, and Jerry Harmon seconded to approve the 2023 Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan as presented. Motion carried.*

2. Program Updates – Jason Ray & Staff

Jason stated they have had the kickoff meeting for the Missouri Technology Corporation (MTC) Regional Node Planning Grant. SMCOG is contracting with the Springfield Chamber of Commerce to perform an assessment & audit of local and regional plans including economic development strategies and comprehensive plans. We will be identifying gaps in strategies, addressing entrepreneurship and innovation. Final report is due in April. Our area includes over 20 counties. We will be reaching out to economic development organizations in these areas. Aishwarya announced the RAISE Grant is open for applications with 2/28/2024 as the deadline. Other staff reviewed the Program Updates handout.

## **Other Business** – Cindy Stephens

None

## **Partner Updates**

### **-MoDOT – Frank Miller/Brad Kelly**

Frank introduced Brad Kelly, a Transportation Planner with MoDOT. The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) awards were announced with all being funded and money left over. There will be another round of funding in the Spring. Continued construction on HWY 60/125 is causing traffic delays. They are adding warning signage. I-44 Bridge Design Build is a 3- year project and should be completed by the end of the year. The Long Creek Bridge in Taney County is on schedule. The work on Hwy 86 near Big Cedar Lodge should be completed by the end of the year.

Nancy Edson asked if there are plans for HWY 125/186. Frank responded that there is nothing specific on 186 yet but it continues to be shown as a need.

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

David commented OTO's Safe Streets for All meetings will start in January. They have finished their portion of the Chadwick Flyer Trail.

### **-USDA – Ashley Venolia**

Ashley shared that the applications are open for Rural USDA grants.

### **-MoDED – Theresa Sampaio**

Theresa stated they have information on their website for the Missouri Qualified Research Expense Tax Credits Program that will begin 01/2024. BEAD proposal volume 2 is out for public comment.

### **-Community Foundation of the Ozarks (CFO) – Alice Wingo**

Alice shared that Winter Kinne has been announced as the new president of CFO. On their website they have a holiday giving guide for local charities. Also, you can find many grant and funding opportunities on their website.

**-Red Cross – Stacy Burks**

Stacy commented that they are working to update and identify churches and community centers that can be used for overnight lodging in emergency situations. They will be working with local fire departments on education and training for when these might be utilized. She reminded everyone that they do offer free smoke detectors, also over 50 fire departments in the region offer free smoke detectors and will help to install them.

**Member Updates**

Jon Holmes stated that the city of Aurora’s council 2 weeks ago approved all the funding for and broken ground on a \$12 million recreation center.

**Adjourn**

*Next SMCOG Board Meeting will be held on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at the Library Center in Springfield.*

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Steve Childers, Secretary

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Date Approve