



**Southwest Missouri Council of Governments
Annual Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 27, 2023
8:00 a.m.
eFactory 405 N. Jefferson 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
Andrew Novinger – Own, Inc
Carson Dake – Own, Inc
Robin Rees – OakStar Bank
Dean Thompson – Springfield Chamber
Matt Morrow – Springfield Chamber
Cindy Robbins – Nixa
Mac Manning – Reeds Spring
Martha Smartt – Strafford
Kyle Lee – Bolivar
Rick Davis – Polk County
Bob Senninger – Lawrence County
Ken McClure – Springfield
Jerry Harman – H2Ozarks
David Casaletto – H2Ozarks
Jesse Deets – H2Ozarks
Carin Love – H2Ozarks
John Crawford – Dallas County
Joe Kelley – Mt Vernon
Callie Linville – CU
Andy Thomason – CU Transit
Chris Tabor – Republic
Todd Wiesehan – Christian County
Steve Childers – Ozark
Cameron Smith – Ozark
Megan Bischof – Ozark
Chris Daugherty – Hurley
Kristen Haseltine – Show Me Christian County
Anna Evans – Show Me Christian County

Allen Kunkel – MSU
Mark Colussy – Branson
Alex Girard – Branson
Jennifer Luna-Thompson – Branson
Nikki Ashmore – Branson
Nathan Piche – Indian Point
Tina Didreckson – Crane
Wayne Blades – Stone County
Mark Maples – Stone County
Lynda Jochims – MSU
Emily Denniston – eFactory
Krishin Thadani – SBA/MSU
Tammy Jahnke – MSU
Hank Smythe – Stone County
Kathy Smith – N Form
Mark Webb – Greene County
Chris Coulter – Greene County
Scott Stennett – Taney County
Chris Berndt – Western Taney Co Fire District
Justin Orf – CJW Transportation
Casper J Wynn – CJW Transportation
John Forrester – Allgeier, Martin & Associates
Brad Erwin – Paragon Architecture
Tyler Barnes – Toth & Associates
Michael Nesbitt – Nesbitt Construction
John Russell – Greene County
Bob Dixon – Greene County
Danny Perches – Springfield
Amanda Ohlensehlen – Springfield
Cheri Hagler – Springfield
Steve Short – Fair Grove
Amanda Adams – SPS Choice

Partners and Guests:

Payton Ruddy – Congressman Alford’s Office
Jered Taylor – Congressman Burlison’s Office
Erin Engelmeyer – Senator Hawley’s Office
Tucker Jobs – Senator Schmitt’s Office
Mike Ussery – Senator Schmitt’s Office
Sandy Crawford – State Senator
John Black – State Representative
Stephanie Hein – State Representative
Bill Owen – State Representative
Bob Titus – State Representative
Debbie Parks - OTO
Randall Willoughby – MoDNR
Brandon Jenson - CDBG

Ashley Venolia – USDA RD
Logan McGhee – USDA RD
Alex Cobb – SeniorAge
Alice Wingo – CFO
Greg Chapman – MoDOT
Andrea Sitzes – Arvest Bank
Theresa Sampaio – DED
Tanya Turner - MoDNR
David Knaut – OTO
Stacy Burks – Red Cross
Lisa Robinson – University of Missouri
Jonas Arjes – Taney Co Partnership
Jessica Tate – MoDHEWD
Scott Tumlin – RLF

Staff:

Jason Ray
Jane Hood
Aishwarya Shrestha
Courtney Pinkham
Kelsi Burton

Jake Phillips
Thomas Cunningham
Christopher Lynn
Emma Horn
Michael Kohler

Open Meeting

1. Call to Order – Cindy Stephens
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Introductions and Announcements
4. Approval of September 27, 2023, Meeting Agenda – Cindy Stephens
Martha Smartt motioned, Todd Wiesehan seconded to approve the September 27, 2023, Agenda. Motion carried.
5. Approval of August 23, 2023, Meeting Minutes— Cindy Stephens
Steve Childers motioned, Chris Tabor seconded to approve the August 23, 2023, Minutes. Motion carried.

Legislative Reports

-Erin Engelmeyer – Senator Hawley’s Office

Senator Hawley is opposed to the potential government shutdown. He believes that the government should do their job and pass a budget.

-Tucker Jobs – Senator Schmitt’s Office

Senator Schmitt is focused on getting a budget passed. The final vote for the Senate Continuing Resolution (CR) is later this week. He also sponsored the Launch Communications Act, a bipartisan bill that would eliminate paperwork for commercial companies for research & exploration work in Space.

-Jered Taylor – Senator Burlison’s Office

Senator Burlison’s focus is on government funding. There is a possibility of a government shutdown. He would like to see budget cuts and funding for border wall security in the budget.

-Payton Ruddy – Congressman Alford’s Office

Congressman Alford has worked on a bill for farmers pertaining to the drought. He has introduced the CABO Act (Congressional Access to Bureaucratic Offices) which would allow Congressional members & their staff to visit government offices even during circumstances like COVID. There are 3 appropriation bills coming up. Congressman Alford is hopeful that they can avoid a government shut down.

State Legislative Reports

-Representative Owen

Representative Owen stated they are going to change the calendar in the House for the budget process. The Speaker wants to start having Hearings beginning the first of December. The goal is to have the budget sent to the Senate by February 29th, 2024.

-Representative Hein

Representative Hein has been working with constituents, particularly those that didn’t realize they had to re-enroll for Medicaid benefits.

-Representative Black

Representative Black thanked SMCOG for their work and support on the State Broadband efforts. He also mentioned that the State will have funding for matching grants for communities on Route 66 for tourism. Route 66 will be 100 years old in 2026. The Route 66 Commission will start having meetings shortly.

-Representative Titus

Representative Titus stated his focus is on constituent services. It has been calm currently. He also stated that he looks forward to working more with SMCOG.

-Representative Smith

Representative Smith thanked his commissioners and SMCOG for all that they do for the community.

-Senator Crawford

Senator Crawford also thanked SMCOG for all they do and mentioned it is always good to see them at the Capitol. It is good to have relationships with our representatives at the Capitol. She also mentioned she has had 12 bills passed this past year.

Business

1. Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report – Jason Ray; (presented prior to business meeting).
Wayne Blades motioned, and Martha Smartt seconded to approve the Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report. Motion carried.
2. SMCOG Dues Rate Proposal – Jason Ray; included in the meeting packet.
Chairperson Cindy Stephens explained that as SMCOG has worked and been able to receive more grants, there have been times when we did not have enough income from our dues to cover the match requirements and had to ask for donations from members. Much discussion has been held by the SMCOG Executive Committee regarding ways to adjust the dues, whether over a period of time or all at once. This rate proposal came from the SMCOG Executive Committee. Cindy asked for a motion and then wanted to hear comments and discussion to follow.
Steve Childers motioned, and Dawn Gardner seconded to approve the SMCOG Dues Rate Proposal.
Discussion - Steve Childers commented that he understands this dues increase will affect each community differently, however, he wants to make sure that everyone understands both the

importance that the grant funds SMCOG receives benefits membership, and the importance to be able to meet grant matches and keep this progress sustainable in the future.

There were no other comments. Motion carried with a no vote from Commissioner Crawford of Dallas County.

Other Business – Cindy Stephens

None

Partner Updates

-USDA – Ashley Venolia

Ashley shared that they have a new director, Logan McGhee who is housed in their West Plains office. He covers 26 counties. The previous Director, Mark Hultgren is now Deputy State Director. USDA open application process is currently open. They are currently implementing new income factors (using 2020 census data) which will impact communities in our region, starting 10/01/2023. Please reach out to see if this affects your community. Logan commented that he is excited to work with the communities in our region.

-MoDOT – Gregg Champman

Gregg stated that the inflation rate for work projects is more than 23% over budget. They are seeing a downward trend with lower bidders. They are currently updating budgets to work with this current inflation. MoDOT is working on the final mowing of the year. They will start in October. Striping projects will continue in the fall.

-Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO) – David Knaut

David commented that OTO's number 1 priority is the I44 corridor. They have received some funding for the I44/13 intersection. They are looking for additional funding for this project. Chadwick Flyer, at Kisse Ave to the Christian County line is moving forward. OTO has a webpage that tracks their grants and shows what grants are currently open.

-MO DNR - Tanya Turner

Tanya is the Regional Director for the SW Regional Office. She introduced Randall Willoughby who is their Water Pollution Section Chief. She thanked SMCOG for the invitation. They will be soon be doing a push about reminding people of open burning.

-MoDHEWD – Jessica Tate

Jessica reported that she is the Rapid Response Coordinator for this region. If anyone hears rumors of layoffs, please reach out to her. They are hosting several hiring events. If you would like to see one hosted in your community reach out to Jessica.

-SeniorAge – Alex Cobb

Alex mentioned that it is almost time for Medicare and Affordable Care Act enrollments. SeniorAge can help individuals enroll in either program.

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

Alice stated they have a partnership with Delta Dental and Children's Trust Fund. They will be awarding grants from both of these funds. They also currently have funding from Cassville fund and Nixa fund. You can find additional information at CFOzarks.org. A reminder that CFO is entering into the end of their year giving season.

-Red Cross – Stacy Burks

Stacy commented that September is National Preparedness Month and October is National Fire Protection Month.

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Brandon Jenson

Brandon reported that they have launched the Rebuild Downtown Revitalization Program. This program does not have the LMI restrictions, therefore it will be very competitive. If the US government does enter a shutdown, it will not affect the CDBG office.

Adjourn

Next SMCOG Annual Board Meeting will be held on December 6th, 2023, at the Library Center in Springfield.

Steve Childers, Secretary

Date Approve