



**Southwest Missouri Council of Governments
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 28, 2024
9:00 a.m.
Library Center, 4653 S. Campbell Ave., Springfield, MO**

Attendance:

Zoom Attendees: Members

Debi Mace – Forsyth
Olivia Hough – City Utilities
Edwina Foreman – Taneyville

Devin Sonnenfelt – SMCC
Wesley Young – Willard
Nathan Piche – Indian Point

Zoom Attendees: Guests

Lisa Robinson – MU Extension
Brittany Crawford – Simmons Bank
Jessica Tate – DHEWD
Sherri Rhuems – Workforce Investment Board

Monett Chamber
Rene Frazier – OATS
Payton Ruddy – Congressman Alford’s Office
Theresa Sampaio – MoDED

Members:

Dawne Gardner – Kimberling City
Troy Smith – Willard
Andrew Romano – Springfield COC
Callie Linville – CU
Cheri Hagler - Springfield
Andrew Novinger – Own, Inc
Commissioner Bob Senninger – Lawrence County
Neil Brady – Bartlett West
Tonia Castaneda – Springfield CVB
Mark Colussy – Branson
Kathy Smith – N Form Architecture
Kevin Kelly – Bolivar
Steve Dalton – Branson West
Commissioner Randy Owens – Webster County
Cameron Smith – Ozark
Commissioner John Crawford – Dallas County
Duane Lavery – GRO Marshfield
Joe Kelley – Mt Vernon
Tina Didreckson – Crane
Summer Rascall – Nixa

Todd Wiesehan – Christian County
Chris Daugherty – Hurley
Mark Crabtree – Battlefield
Nancy Edson – Esterly, Schneider & Associates
Cindy Robbins – Nixa
Cindy Stephens – OTC
Sam Rost – Marshfield
Chris Tabor – Republic
Anna Evans – SMCC
Stan Whitehurst – Webster County
Kyle Lee – Bolivar
Allen Kunkel – MSU
Brad Testerman – EDP Bolivar
Mark Webb – Greene County
J. Howard Fisk – Fisk Limousine
Hollie Elliott – Dallas County
Dennis Wiggins – TCP
Richard Asbill – Cassville

Partners and Guests:

Jacob Wimsatt – MoDOT
David Carr – Ozarks Film Foundry
David Knaut – OTO
Tanner Wallace – Senator Hawley’s Office
Tanya Turner – MoDNR
Randall Willoughby - MoDNR
Michelle Garand – CPO
Tucker Jobes -Senator Schmitt’s Office
B Scott - Olsson

Monty Dobson – Ozarks Film Foundry
Ronda Burnett – MDC
Jered Taylor – Congressman Burlison’s Office
Sarah Moody - MFFH
Bill Owen – State Representative
Stacy Burks – American Red Cross
Nick Curl – Mid-Missouri Bank
Mike Ussery – Senator Schmitt’s Office

Staff:

Jason Ray
Jane Hood
Aishwarya Shrestha
Michael Kohler
Kelsi Burton

Garrett Colony
Jake Phillips
Courtney Pinkham
Krissy Dickens
Pratika Banjara

Open Meeting

1. Call to Order – Cindy Stephens
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Introductions and Announcements
4. Approval of August 28, 2024, Meeting Agenda – Cindy Stephens
Sam Rost motioned, Chris Weiner seconded to approve the August 28, 2024 Agenda. Motion carried.
5. Approval of June 26, 2024, Meeting Minutes— Cindy Stephens
Chris Daugherty motioned, Nancy Edson seconded to approve the June 26, 2024 Minutes. Motion carried.

Legislative Reports

-Tanner Wallace – Senator Hawley’s Office

Senator Hawley introduced a Bipartisan Mental Health Bill for First Responders.

-Mike Ussery – Senator Schmitt’s Office

Senator Schmitt visited Fort Leonard Wood and for the Sustainable Ozarks Project (SOP) Summit.

-Jered Taylor – Congressman Burlison’s Office

Congressman Burlison visited rail partners and toured MoDOT Projects in Taney County

-Payton Ruddy – Congressman Alford’s Office

Congressman Alford attended the Sustainable Ozarks Project Summit in Fort Leonard Wood. He has also traveled to 14 counties and has met with 16 businesses in his region.

State Legislative Reports

Representative Bill Owen, District 131, stated that Governor Parson vetoed \$150 million out of \$727 million which was for 3 areas along I-44 between Joplin & Rolla. Areas in Jasper and Greene County will be funded. Six lane I-44 from Highway 125 to Highway 160. This expansion will include a flyover at I-44 and Kansas Expressway and a tunnel for Norton Road. Timeframe to be determined.

Guests

SW MO Film Office Update – David Carr, Ozarks Film Foundry (OFF)

David Carr introduced himself, their board president Monty Dobson, and Ken Childers, Public Relations and Outreach (not in attendance). Since John Farmer de la Torre left the organization, they have met with Jason with SMCOG, Leslie Forrester with SRAC, Andrea Sporcic the MO Film Commission, and other organizations. The Ozark Film Foundry is still hosting mixers and events. Ken Childers joined the Film in MO board. Instead of a certified Film Commission, they decided to establish a Southwest Missouri Film Office, still working with the State of Missouri Film Commission. They will still offer similar outreach and assistance as the Film Office, just working under the MO Film Commission. They are now on the 3rd floor of the Gillioz with other non-profits which is being supported by the Hatch Foundation. They met with Jason yesterday and discussed how to get film permits from the counties in our region.

Chris Daugherty asked if they would do the film commission in the future.

David responded that they would watch and decide to shift when they felt it was appropriate.

Business

1. Approval of 2024 Transportation Priority Needs – Included in meeting packet. Jason Ray & Aishwarya Shrestha

Aishwarya explained that they reached out to each county commissioner to decide their top 3 needs, and then took those to the TAC for priorities. This helps with State Transportation Improvement Program(STIP) development for future years and the high priority needs list.

Aishwarya read the annual updated list of road and bridge needs and the bicycle and pedestrian needs.

Jason added that this is for the Rural portion of our area. Ozarks Transportation Organization(OTO) handles the metro region. The point is to identify needs, not the solution that is handled by engineers

Howard Fisk motioned and Nancy Edson seconded the motion to accept the 2024 Transportation Priority Needs list as presented. Motion carried.

2. Update of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) – Included in meeting packet. Jason Ray & Michael Kohler

Jason stated that this is a 5-year strategy, last updated in 2023, but we are required to update in 2024 to align across the state and hopefully with the new Statewide CEDS. This is part of our role as an Economic Development District (EDD). The CEDS was put out for public comment after multiple surveys. SMCOG tried to make this cover as many goals and objectives as possible for the entire region. This not the SMCOG plan but instead a plan for the entire region.

Allen Kunkel motioned, and Holly Elliott seconded the motion to accept the CEDS as included in meeting packet. Motion carried.

-Holly Elliott thanked the SMCOG staff for all of the hard work to complete this process.

3. Program Updates – Included in meeting packet. Jason Ray

- Jason stated the next meeting in September is the Annual meeting, which starts at 8 am, breakfast will be served, at Kentwood Hall at MSU. Please RSVP to Courtney

-Jason stated that Michael left for Graduate school and that Krissy is also leaving for grad school and her business. We are taking applications for her position.

-The RFQ for the city of Aurora Comp Plan is closing.

-We are performing a Rural Greene County Housing study. The organization we hired was in town last week and met with stakeholders in the area. Should have a draft plan by the first of October.

-Aishwarya commented that MoDOT is accepting Traffic Engineering Assistance Program (TEAP) applications. The deadline to apply is September 13th. Some projects that qualify for this program are corner safety or operational analysis, parking issues, and other traffic studies. There is \$120,000 available, with 20% match minimum. SMCOG is in the planning process for our regional safety plan and working on the Multi-Modal Advisory Committee

-Kelsi stated they have been working with Branson on 6 applications for CDBG, totaling over \$16million. They have gone through several rounds of revisions and should hear the final decision soon.

- Working on several applications for CDBG annual competitive cycle and are currently in the public hearing phase.
- Two MoDNR section 604(b) grant application were recommended for funding
- Branson flood wall for the wastewater treatment plant is completed
- Elevate Branson Tiny Home project has gone out to bid
- Rockaway Beach Road CDBG roadway project is underway
- Billings had a ribbon-cutting ceremony for their park funded by Land Water Conservation Fund(LWCF)
- MoDNR has their annual LWCF cycle open. It is a 50/50 grant with maximum grant amount of \$500k. Deadline is 11/15/24.

Jason mentioned that Kelsi was promoted to Grants & Environmental Manager.

-Jake stated they are making great progress on several comprehensive plans. Seymour has adopted their new comp plan. Finalizing on a consultant for Branson Comprehensive plan. Walnut Grove, Ash Grove & Fair Grove plans are moving forward. We are beginning comp plan process for Village of Indian Point and Buffalo. If you are interested in more information regarding comprehensive plans, please contact him.

Other Business – Cindy Stephens

None

Partner Updates

-MoDOT – Jacob Wimsatt

Jacob stated that he is the new transportation planner. MoDOT held two high priority unfunded needs meetings in Springfield & Joplin this month.

-Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO) – David Knaut

David commented that the I44 expansion project received partial funding, as mentioned earlier. OTO requested that the James River North Loop study be removed from MoDOT's unfunded needs list. OTO has awarded a few sidewalk & trail projects. MoDOT is open for feedback as they start the search for a new Director.

-Jason Ray clarified regarding the James River North Loop study. MoDOT hosted public comment sessions on having a possible study which they received a lot of feedback. Greene County Commission and OTO have asked MoDOT to remove the project from the high priority list.

-Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MoDNR) – Tonya Turner

Tonya mentioned that they will be hosting a Free Pesticide Collection in Mt. Vernon on 9/7/24 at the MO Southwest Research Center. Go to dnr.mo.gov for more information. The Missouri Air Conservation Commission is still meeting regularly.

-Missouri Department Conversation (MDC) – Ronda Burnett

Ronda started by telling a story that she met with Steve Childers 6 years ago after a meeting, and he stated that Ozark was interested in a Public Community Forest and that Ozark had 10 acres available for a public community forest. At that time MDC was not interested in this project, but they kept working on it. Last week they had the ribbon cutting for the new Garrison Springs Community Forest in Ozark. Next, they plan to extend trails to connect to this new Community Forest. Ronda stated this shows the importance of planning. MDC was allocated several signs for parks for suicide and crisis intervention. They have 10 extras if any community would like one for their parks.

-Missouri Department of Economic Development (MoDED) – Theresa Sampaio

Theresa stated they have a lot going on with their Broadband projects. Neighborhood Assistance Program(NAP) is open, and applications are due by October 2, 2024. Theresa also thanked everyone who attended the State CEDS meeting.

-Springfield CVB – Tonia Castaneda

Tonia shared that in July the City of Springfield hosted 16 member groups with over 21,615 attendees with an estimated economic impact of \$28million. Springfield CVB and the Springfield Sports Commission signed a 4-year contract with BMX Nationals to be held in Springfield. They have a new Trip Assistant live on their website to help tourists plan trips, www.springfieldmo.org. The CVB is working to finish its annual report.

-Red Cross – Stacy Burks

Stacy stated that they are holding a day training program for Disaster Action Team(DAT). If you are interested in holding a training program in your community, please reach out.

-MU Extension – Lisa Robinson

Lisa mentioned that MU Extension will be hosting a Regional Economic Development Summit for Barry, Dade, and Lawrence Counties on September 3rd.

Member Updates

-Dawne Gardner stated that their Fall Festival will be on September 14th, 2024.

-Chris Weiner mentioned that the Republic's industrial park will be adding a Walmart Pharmaceutical Fulfillment Center. This will be a large investment with 200 jobs. This is only the 2nd one in the nation.

-Howard Fisk commented that the CEDS is a wonderful program, and especially for smaller communities there is a lot of good information that will help with local planning.

-Cindy Stephens followed up with that OTC uses information from the CEDS when writing grants.

-John Crawford shared that Bennett Springs State Park will be hosting its 100th anniversary on October 5th, 2024.

-Randy Owens mentioned that Seymour's Apple Festival is the weekend of September 13th, 2024.

Adjourn

Next SMOG Annual Breakfast & Board Meeting will be held on September 25th, 2024, at the Kentwood Hall, Crystal Room, 700 E. St. Louis, Springfield, MO

Steve Childers, Secretary

Date Approve