

**Southwest Missouri Council of Governments**

**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, July 9, 2024**

**3:00 p.m.**

**Meyer Alumni Center Conference Room**

**ATTENDEES:** Cindy Stephens, Duane Lavery, Todd Wiesehan, J. Howard Fisk, Nathan Piche, Allen Kunkel, Bill Monday, Chris Coulter, and Jerry Harman

Staff: Jason Ray, Jane Hood, and Courtney Pinkham

**Open Meeting** – Cindy Stephens

1. **Approval of July 9, 2024, Agenda** - Cindy Stephens

Jason requested to add a 6a – To Appoint additional CEDS Members.

*Motion made by Jerry Harman and seconded by Bill Monday to approve the July 09, 2024, Amended Agenda. Motion carried.*

**2. Approval of June 11, 2024, Minutes** – Cindy Stephens

*Motion made by Duane Lavery and seconded by Todd Wiesehan to approve the June 11, 2024, Minutes. Motion carried.*

**3. Bank Transfers**– Included in meeting packet. Jason Ray

Transfer $40,349.32 from the SMCOG EDA PP account to the SMCOG General Account.

*Motion made by Allen Kunkel and seconded by Chris Coulter to approve bank transfer from EDA PP account of $40,349.32 to SMCOG General account. Motion carried.*

**4. MSU Administration Agreement**– Emailed prior to meeting. Jason Ray

Jason shared that the MSU Sponsored Program Agreement, which was sent out to the Executive Committee, is required by Financial Services in order to set up a new fund for them to manage SMCOG administration. Rather than renew the old expired contract, they have asked for us to sign a new contract. That template was sent to Jason today which did not appear to have anything new. They have not sent a finalized contract, however Jason is asking that the committee approve for Cindy to review the finalized contract when received and be authorized to sign it.

*Motion made by J. Howard Fisk and seconded by Jerry Harman to Cindy Stephens review the final MSU Administration Agreement and sign. Motion carried.*

**5. Pierce City LMI Survey Contract** – Included in the meeting packet. Jason Ray

Allen Kunkel asked what grants the city is looking at that they need to have this survey performed.

Jason stated that they are looking at grants for road and park improvements. Jason also mentioned that HUD is changing the threshold for LMI in August.

*Motion made by Duane Lavery and seconded by Allen Kunkel to recommend the approval of the Pierce City LMI Survey Contract. Motion carried.*

**6. Ozarks Film Commission Update** –Jason Ray

Jason recapped the previous interactions with the Ozarks Film Foundry (OFF) . It was tabled at the last SMCOG board meeting at the request of OFF. OFF had asked to have Greene County endorse it, prior to their meeting, OFF asked to be removed. Last week the OFF John Farmer de la Torre, Director resigned and a SBJ article was published reporting on this subject. Jason did have a voicemail from David Carr, founder of the Ozarks Film Foundry (OFF) since all of this has happened, however, Jason has not returned his call yet. He has also had communication with Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau to see if they want to continue the conversation of a regional film commission. It seems that most of the SMCOG board was interested but had concerns about who they wanted as the film commissioner.

Cindy stated that she has asked Jason to have CEDS look into this. Also, there is a city employee from our southern region who was a Film Commissioner from Colorado Springs, Colorado. Jason and Cindy will be having a conversation with her this week.

Jason did state that this brings up concerns about how we handle the intake of new requests such as this.

**6.a. New CEDS Member Appointments** –Jason Ray

Jason stated that Danny Perches (City of Springfield) had been left off of the previous CEDS Member appointment list. They had also tried to get in contact with David Taylor prior to the last board meeting but were not able to. He has retired from Cox Health, but he is still interested in serving on the CEDS committee as a citizen.

*Motion made by Chris Coulter and seconded by J. Howard Fisk to recommend the approval of new CEDS members as listed above. Motion carried.*

Howard offered to contact Dr Hal Higdon, who is President of the Cox Board of Directors, to see if he has any recommendations for the CEDS Committee.

Jason responded, yes that would be helpful.

**7. Program/Project Updates –** Jason Ray

-Jason started with an update on our office moving. The University has proposed to move us on campus temporarily to University Hall on 2 floors until Blunt Hall is ready for our move-in. There is another option, but he is waiting until it is more solid until he announces further.

-Jason stated that he spoke with the SMCOG insurance provider. We have had a community asking for professional liability coverage for up to $2 million. He has also reached out to our attorney, and they are looking further into this.

-Safe Streets and Routes for All grant from the Federal Highway Administration, we have been negotiating that contract since December when it was announced. In March they came back to us and said they sent us the wrong draft and it is a construction project. We had to redo the award as a construction project now. We are now waiting on them to finalize the award agreement.

-Jason stated they are asking for community input for the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant (CFI) for local EV charging. We have consulted OTO and so far, we have only had 5 communities contact us that they have interest. Olsson Engineering and Dynamic EV also have an interest in this and are doing preliminary work for developers and private property owners. Jason is concerned about SMCOG picking/choosing private entities using public funds, should we get this grant. Jason is also concerned about whether we have enough time to actually complete the application We will be getting back together with OTO and the Ozarks Clean Fuel Coalition regarding this issue.

Howard commented that he heard of a problem in California where people are parking their cars to charge them, for extended periods, and also having vandalism. They started charging a fee per hour for charging and that seemed to help with these issues.

Jason mentioned that we had applied for a RAISE state-wide Rural EV strategy, but it was not funded. He was hoping for this to help guide us in future opportunities like this. He will send out a reminder tomorrow to see if there are any additional communities interested in charging stations.

Jerry asked if there were issues with different charging stations having different apps.

Jason stated it depends on the brand we use. He further stated that one our Senators did not support the Rural EV strategy we proposed because they felt like it would favor one brand over another. This was not our proposal, instead it was to determine the locations. But this is similar to cities with metered parking using apps, which most communities use a different app.

-Broadband Breakthrough program funded through the Benton Institute. They selected 12 counties statewide to receive technical assistance Three are in our region, Dallas, Dade, and Polk. This links to the Broadband Gap Analysis we did last year.

-CEDS update is still in progress. We received 40 responses. We have recently sent a second survey for additional feedback. We have a meeting at the end of the month.

-Still seeking applications for the RLF. We still have $700,000 to loan out.

Howard asked if there was a limit to how much we would loan to one segment.

Jason responded it does state we need to have variety of NAICS codes but no limits or specific details.

-Aishwarya has met with all the counties in our region to determine their priorities for transportation needs. Tomorrow the CEDS will be meeting to prioritize Bike and Pedestrian projects. They will also be discussing the creation of a Multi-Modal Transportation Advisory Committee (MMTAC).

Cindy stated that we voted last month to have MMTAC be approved at the next board meeting.

Jason stated that he wants the TAC to review and approve it first and then take it to the full board.

Jason did meet and tour with the Springfield Branson airport. They discussed their plans and they stated they support the MMTAC.

Jason stated that we are working with the city of Monett for an Airport protection plan.

-Branson Wastewater Treatment Plant retaining wall is almost complete.

 The Elevate Branson Tiny Home Project is on pause. They went out for construction bids and only received one and it was double the cost. They are working with them to rebid the project. This project has received some poor press, mainly stating that the nonprofit received a lot of grant money, but nothing has been accomplished yet.

-Branson comp plan is moving forward, working with the city if they want to hire a 3rd party company for the public engagement.

-We submitted 6 grants for Branson for CDBG, we did have to do some revisions, but they have been submitted

-City of Billings park improvement is almost complete

-We are finishing several comp plans and starting some new ones, including the city of Buffalo.

-Chris asked for an update on Harry S. Truman Regional Planning Commission

Jason stated he has not heard much regarding this situation.

**8. Adjourn**