



**Southwest Missouri Council of Governments
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 27, 2024
9:00 a.m.**

Missouri Job Center, 2900 E. Sunshine St., Springfield, MO

Attendance:

Zoom Attendees:

Martha Smartt – Strafford
Megan Bischof – Ozark
Cody Green – USDA
Kathy Carnahan – Fordland
Olivia Hough – City Utilities

Sheila Wyatt – Taney County
Zeke Hall – MoDOT
Dawne Gardner – Kimberling City
Andy Schiller – MoDNR
Tracy Slagle – Liberty Utilities

Members:

Joe Kelley – Mt Vernon
Donna Stewart – Willard
Bob Senninger – Lawrence County
Jerry Harman – H2Ozarks
Callie Linville – CU
Chris Tabor – Republic
Andy Novinger – Own, Inc
Rick Davis – Polk County
Sam Rost – Marshfield
John Crawford – Dallas County
Duane Lavery – GRO Marshfield
Hollie Elliott – Dallas County
Kyle Cook – Table Rock COC
Mark Colussy – Branson

Todd Wiesehan – Christian County
Chris Daugherty – Hurley
Chris Weiner – Monett
Mark Crabtree – Battlefield
Nancy Edson – Esterly, Schneider & Associates
Cindy Robbins – Nixa
Allen Kunkel – MSU
Randy Owens – Webster County
Jon Holmes – Aurora
Cameron Smith – Ozark
Neil Brady – Bartlett West
Dennis Wiggins – TCP
Stan Whitehurst – Webster County

Partners and Guests:

Payton Ruddy – Congressman Alford’s Office
Tucker Jobs – Senator Schmidt’s Office
Brian Schwarz – MoDED
David Knaut – OTO
Stacy Burks – American Red Cross
Tanner Wallace – Senator Hawley’s Office
Ashley Venolia – USDA RD
Janice Piper – SeniorAge

Brad Kelley – MoDOT
Erin Engelmeyer – Senator Hawley’s Office
Jessica Tate – Mo Job Center
Beth Schaller – MoDOT
Doug Needigh – MSU
Randall Willoughby – MoDNR
Cynthia Collins – Workforce Development
Allen Brandes

Staff:

Jason Ray
Jane Hood
Aishwarya Shrestha
Michael Kohler
Kelsi Burton

Evan Cook
Jake Phillips
Courtney Pinkham
Krissy Dickens
Garrett Colony

Open Meeting

1. Call to Order – Allen Kunkel

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Introductions and Announcements

4. Approval of March 27, 2024, Meeting Agenda – Allen Kunkel
Sam Rost motioned, Jerry Harman seconded to approve the March 27, 2024. Motion carried.

5. Approval of January 24, 2024, Meeting Minutes— Allen Kunkel
Nancy Edson motioned, Todd Wiesehan seconded to approve the January 24, 2024 Minutes. Motion carried.

6. Guest Speaker –
Ozarks Clean Fuel Coalition (OCFC) Presentation – Doug Neidigh, OCFC Director

Legislative Reports**-Tanner Wallace** – Senator Hawley’s Office

Senator Hawley has introduced legislation in the Senate that would force the Chinese business that owns TikTok to either sell or it would be banned in the United States. This has been passed in the House. He also introduced a new bill, Protecting American Autoworkers from China Act

-Tucker Jobs – Senator Schmitt’s Office

Senator Schmitt voted for the FAA Reauthorization Act. This would increase airline safety standards and increase better customer service by the airlines. In addition, he and Senator Sinema from Arizona have introduced the Commercial Standards Paramount to Accelerating Cosmic Exploration (SPACE) Leadership Act. This would ensure businesses in the commercial space industry can continue to develop their methods of going in to space while pausing onerous government regulations for 5 years. Senator Schmitt and Senator Rubio from Florida have introduced the Defense Remobilization Act which would identify our industrial capacity to remobilize our defense production.

-Payton Ruddy – Congressman Alford’s Office

Congressman Alford sponsored the American Land and Property Protection Act that would prevent entities associated with certain foreign countries from purchasing land in the US. He also introduced the Small Business Administration (SBA) Rural Performance Report Act which has passed the House. He is now the Chair of the Small Business Caucus.

State Legislative Reports

Stacy Burks shared information regarding House Bill 115, requiring blood donations to be labeled if the donor had a COVID-19 vaccine or mRNA vaccine. Stacy stated this was troublesome and wanted to make the board aware of it.

Business

1. Title VI Plan – Included in meeting packet. Jason Ray & Aishwarya Shrestha
Approval of Title VI Plan

Jason stated that every 3 years we have to update our Title VI Plan, which mainly affects our transportation planning.

Aishwarya shared that we had a public comment period and sent out details to media outlets as well. We received response regarding corrections to the German translation and error in population projections. Aishwarya has made these corrections. The new requirements were the safe harbor provision, which means that by census demographics we are required to have the plan translated per criteria. For the SMOG region, we did have the plan translated into German, Spanish, and Tagalog.

Mark Colussy motioned, and Nancy Edson seconded approval of the Title VI Plan as presented. Motion carried.

2. Program Updates – Jason Ray & Staff

Jason introduced our new Grants Administrator, Garrett Colony, an MSU graduate, who worked at the COG in Dallas/Ft Worth. He is working with Kelsi on 8 housing projects in Taney County. Additional CDBG funds are opening up. MoDNR 604b program will be released potentially by 4/1/24. THE RLF had our first loan approved and we are working on closing on the loan. We still have funds available for gap funding with this program.

Aishwarya stated Transportation Needs Prioritization Survey was sent out at the end of January and due by 4/26. She will be reaching out to County Commissioners to schedule needs meetings. TAP application information was sent out in early March and the deadline is 4/26. If utilizing MoDOT right away, a letter of request must be sent out to MoDOT District Engineers by 4/5. We are not able to complete applications, but we can review applications. Those requests for review need to be received by 4/8. Applications must have a SMOG letter of support. Please request letter of support by 4/17. One staff member has to be LPA Certified. Watch the LPA video and note that you did watch in TAP application.

Kelsi is actively working on 10 CDBG applications. Construction of the Branson Flood wall for the Compton wastewater treatment plant is at 99% complete. Environmental Review (ER) amendments approved for the Elevate Branson Tiny Homes project. The Crane demolition project was approved for closeout by CDBG (Community Development Block Grant). Rockaway Beach received a CDBG award for road Improvements. Five CDBG grants were received recently for capacity building plans for Aurora, Branson, Bull Creek, and Indian Point and a DNR Recreational Trails Program for Marionville.

Mark Colussy thanked Kelsi and Jason for all their hard work.

Nancy Edson asked if the 604b would help with 319 Nonpoint Source.
Jason stated yes it would.

Other Business – Allen Kunkel

None

Partner Updates

-MoDOT – Beth Schaller/Brad Kelly

Brad mentioned that the TAP deadline is 4/26.

Beth commented that MoDOT is involved in statewide eclipse planning. They will avoid having workers out on anticipated heavy traffic roads. Check out their website for details on public comment meetings in our region. MoDOT crews will start trash pick-up soon.

-Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO) – David Knaut

David commented that they have a call for projects out for engineering of trail and sidewalk projects, with application due 4/1. The House has passed the budget for improvements on I44, from Rolla to Joplin to expand to 6 lanes. This still has to go to the Senate.

-USDA RD – Ashley Venolia

Ashley shared that their budget has passed. All completed applications should be moving forward soon. They do have open program applications on their website.

-MoDNR – Randall Willoughby

Randall stated that they have seen a trend that people are retiring from water & wastewater positions in small communities and the communities are struggling to find replacements. If this is something happening in your community, please reach out MoDNR. They can provide training for new operators.

-MoDED – Brian Schwartz

Theresa was not able to attend today's meeting. If you have any need of assistance, please reach out to them.

-MO Job Center – Ozarks – Cynthia Collins

Cynthia mentioned that they have 3 grants open: the Apprenticeship America Program Grant, EDA Good Job Challenge Grant, and EPA Certification for Environmental Grant.

-MoDHEWD – Jessica Tate

Jessica announced that they have an employment transition meeting in Pleasant Hope for employees who have been laid off which is open to the public. They have a hiring event at the Fairbanks, in Springfield, on 4/16 from 2 – 4 PM, and will have 29 employers at this event. MoDHEWD is planning a hiring event in Taney County with the Taney County Partnership.

-SeniorAge – Janice Piper

Janice shared that SeniorAge Tax Counseling Program is going successfully. The Patient Companion program is going well in Greene County and are working on expanding to Taney and Stone County next. They also have navigators that can assist with signing up for the Affordable Care Act.

-Red Cross – Stacy Burks

Stacy reminded everyone that they do respond to large disasters but also to local fires. To be able to do all this they depend on a lot of volunteers. They are also shifting and working on targeting communities that have needs.

Member Updates

N/A

Adjourn

Duane Lavery motioned, Nancy Edson seconded to adjourn. Motion carried.

Next SMCOG Board Meeting will be held on May 22nd, 2024, at the Library Center, 4653 S. Campbell, Springfield, MO

Steve Childers, Secretary

Date Approve