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**Southwest Missouri Council of Governments**

**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, May 14, 2024**

**3:00 p.m.**

**Meyer Alumni Center Conference Room**

**ATTENDEES:** Cindy Stephens, Duane Lavery, Todd Wiesehan, Steve Childers, Allen Kunkel, Jerry Harman, and Chris Coulter

Staff: Jason Ray, Jane Hood, and Courtney Pinkham

**Open Meeting** – Cindy Stephens

1. **Approval of May 14, 2024, Agenda** - Cindy Stephens

*Motion made by Allen Kunkel and seconded by Steve Childers to approve the May 14, 2024, Amended Agenda. Motion carried.*

**2. Approval of April 9, 2024, Minutes** – Cindy Stephens

*Motion made by Duane Lavery and seconded by Steve Childers to approve the April 9, 2024, Minutes. Motion carried.*

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

Transfer $14,442.68 from the SMCOG EDA RLF account to the SMCOG General Account.

These are administrative expenses.

*Motion made by Jerry Harman and seconded by Allen Kunkel to approve bank transfer from EDA RLF account of $14,442.68 to SMCOG General account. Motion carried.*

Transfer $12,659.63 from the SMCOG EDA PP account to the SMCOG General Account.

This is to close out the funds from the past 3-year Partnership Planning Grant which has ended. It will leave 1 cent in the account which was used to open the account.

*Motion made by Steve Childers and seconded by Todd Wiesehan to approve bank transfer from PP RLF account of $12,659.63 to SMCOG General account. Motion carried.*

**4. Approval Branson CDBG-DR Contracts** – Emailed prior to meeting. Jason Ray

This request for approval is for 6 CDBG-DR contracts for Branson, for SMCOG to administer the grants. The grant applications are due this Friday, May 17th, 2024. Jason stated that he does not know if we will get all 6 grant applications funded, but this will help them to get extra points. Each one is for about $2.5 Million for grant funding, each contract has $50,000 for grant administration costs for reimbursement and $25,000 for fixed fee for each grant.

*Motion made by Duane Lavery and seconded by Steve Childers to approve the Branson CDBG-DR Contracts. Motion carried.*

**5. Approval Battlefield 604(b) Contract** – Emailed prior to meeting. Jason Ray

This service contract will be handled more like a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the city will pay us for administrative services. The total is $5,050 for non-federal match, it is in the contract that the city will cover any expenses over the total in the contract, $3,500 for cash payment for admin services, and $1,500 for supplies. A total of $5,050 is built into the grant for our fees. Battlefield will cover any cost overruns with the contractor.

*Motion made by Steve Childers and seconded by Allen Kunkel to Approve Battlefield 604(b) Contract. Motion carried.*

**6. Approval Toth Engineering Contract** – Emailed prior to meeting. Jason Ray

This is for Toth to perform the work on the Battlefield 604(b) project. Jason stated that we have a few minor requests for amendments in this contract. Jason is asking the committee to authorize him to sign the contract with Toth Engineering for a fixed fee of $45,000. SMCOG will not be responsible for any cost overruns, city of Battlefield will be responsible.

*Motion made by Todd Wiesehan and seconded by Chris Coulter to Approve Jason Ray as the authorized signer on the Toth Engineering Contract once the amendment requests have been submitted. Motion carried.*

**7. Authorize 604(b) Applications** – Emailed prior to meeting. Jason Ray

We are working on finalizing an application for $50,000 for an Assumptions and Requirement Attainment Plan (ARAP) for Christian County. We will work with the county to solicit the RFP and work the county to select the firm. We are still working on getting cost estimates.

*Motion made by Duane Lavery and seconded by Jerry Harman to Authorize the 604(b) Christian County applications. Motion carried.*

Jason stated that SMCOG is applying for a 604(b) grant for funding for staff to attend floodplain management training and become certified in flood plain management and then host floodplain management workshops in the region. We are asking for the minimum amount of $25,000.

*Motion made by Steve Childers and seconded by Chris Coulter to Approve the 604(b) SMCOG application for staff to attend and hold floodplain management workshops. Motion carried.*

**8. FY25 Budget Discussion** – Included in the meeting packet. Jason Ray

Jason explained that they are still working on finalizing the budget. SMCOG is supposed to submit the budget to the board at least 30 days in advance. SMCOG is working on finalizing the FY25 budget and will present it to the board by 06/01/2024. SMCOG is expected to have the budget exceed 1 million dollars for the next fiscal year. Due to this influx, we are looking at contracting out more work than normal. Missouri General Assembly has passed the budget with $24,923 going to each RPC. Our fiscal officer is working on how to properly account for the RLF deposits since this program has started accepting applications and loaning out funds. We do still have staff working on CRPM projects, so we will receive some indirect funds, and the staff working on those projects will not be paid for those hours out of the SMCOG budget. The supplies and equipment section of the budget has increased, and we plan on getting radar equipment and speed signs for the Regional Transportation Safety Action Plan project. The staff had requested a new copier; however, it was not in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year, but we will need to address this in the near future. Jason mentioned that other RPCs have a separate organization that purchases equipment, such as copiers, and leases them back to the organization. Jason is looking into how SMCOG can emulate this by utilizing CRPM. The printing budget has increased due to SMCOG utilizing outside printing for our comprehensive plans. This increase might be on the low side since we expect an increase in requests for comprehensive plans. There is an increase in membership fees because we paid for 2 years of GMS and LightCast. We had to increase the Fidelity bond due to the RLF.

-Cindy asked if CRPM would cover moving expenses.

Jason answered that yes CRPM will cover the cost of moving and cover the cost of the first 50 boxes, however, we will exceed 50 boxes. We are collecting boxes in anticipation of the move. Courtney is working to surplus unneeded items.

-Jerry asked if benefits were covered or if there was a cost share.

Jason responded that the employee does pay a portion of their healthcare benefits and pays for family members. Jason also mentioned that the fringe rate has increased for FY25.

-Duane asked how much the cost of the audit is. He also stated that he felt it should be a separate line item on the budget.

Jason stated $11,000.

Jason remarked that we are waiting for the April financials to close out so he can finalize the budget and that he is not requesting action to be taken on this at this time. At our next Executive Committee meeting, we will go over the next steps and ask for a recommendation to accept the FY25 budget and to take it for full SMCOG board approval at the June board meeting.

**9. Ozarks Film Commission Discussion** – Included in the meeting packet. Jason Ray

Ozarks Film Foundry, 501(c)3, has reached out to Greene County Commission to get approval to form a Film Commission. Greene County Commissioners felt that their region was too small and referred them to SMCOG, since our region includes 10 counties. The Ozarks Film Foundry has until this August to get certified as a Film Commission, if they get this approved, they will be able to start putting bids out in 2025.

-Steve asked if there are tax credits for the film industry in Missouri.

Cindy stated that there are production credits.

Jason stated the credits were approved by Missouri legislation last year.

Jason clarified that they are not asking for funding, they are just requesting support from SMCOG as they have to have either a Governmental or Regional-Governmental organization’s endorsement to become an official Film Commission. We will have someone from the Ozarks Film Foundry give a presentation at the next SMCOG board meeting, at that point we will call for a vote.

**10. 2024 – 2025 Nominations Updates** – Jason Ray

Jason updated the committee that most of the committee members have accepted to serve for next year. Jane has been reaching out to all members of the Executive Committee, Non-Governmental members, CEDS, and RLF Committees to confirm if members are able to commit for the next fiscal year. Jason has reached out to his contact at CPO to see if they had an individual who would like to join the CEDS for housing, he is waiting for a response.

-Cindy stated that she felt that the CEDS seemed well rounded but was lacking a representative from the IT sector.

Jason responded that we do have Mark Wallace, with Codefi, a partner who does attend.

-Cindy also pointed out that for the CEDS committee, a distribution/logistic representative and a county representative would be helpful. Then followed up with possibly asking for a representative from the Multicultural Business Association. She said, in the future years we might think about expanding the Executive Committee. We currently have 9 on the committee, but we serve 10 counties. She asked if we should rethink the structure to ensure all feel that they are represented.

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

-Jason stated that SMCOG is wrapping up on several comprehensive plans.

-Buffalo has approved SMCOG to complete a comprehensive plan update and Monett has reached out to us for a comprehensive plan and economic development work.

-We have run into some difficulties with the payment release portion of the RLF and are working with EDA to resolve the confusion.

-The CEDS update is going well, we are looking into getting more data, especially regarding childcare, and incorporating some hospitality studies into the plan that have been performed in our region. Also, we are looking at collecting some film production data and seeing if the CEDS Committee wants to include that as a CEDS strategy, depending on how the vote goes for support of the Film Commission,

-Office update, per Jason’s contact on campus, they are still behind on this project. SMCOG has to be moved out of our current office by 12/13/2024 and the office has to be vacated by 12/20/2024. We are still waiting to find out where our temporary office will be. We are not sure if we will have office furniture supplied at the temporary office or the permanent office, so we will be keeping most things. There is a possibility that we will have storage space on campus. We were able to clean out 50 tires from the basement through Clean Green SGF. We have kept some tires to donate to Better Block SGF.

**12. Discussion of Regional Concern** – Jason Ray

Jason stated that Cindy went with him to Jefferson City to the MACOG meeting earlier this month so that she could observe how the meetings ran. This stems from Harry S. Truman Coordinating Council (HSTCC) having their attorney send a letter to MACOG withdrawing from the organization. The letter stated that they did not agree with the expectations set by MACOG. One County has stated that they did not want HSTCC to work on their Hazard Mitigation plan. SMCOG has been approached by communities within their region asking for help. Jason stated that he is bringing this up because SMCOG members might hear about some of this, and he felt the Executive committee should be aware.

-Chris Coulter stated he would reach out to some of the county commissioners in that region to see if he can get a better understanding of the concerns.

**13. Adjourn**