

**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING
May 22, 2024
Commission Office**

Convened: 10:00 A.M.

Adjourned: 10:45 A.M.

Members In Attendance:

Mr. Jim Foster
Hon. Randy Bunch (via Zoom)
Hon. Laura Burke
Hon. Patrick Reeder
Mrs. Sharon Clapper
Hon. JR Winck (via Zoom)
Hon. Scott Hunt

Ms. Beth McGregor
Hon. Brian Fochtman
Hon. Keith Rager
Mr. Rick Strait
Hon. Dave Kessler
Hon. Scott Walls

Others In Attendance:

Mrs. Renee Best
Mrs. Rebecca Canavan
Mr. George Gvozdoch, Jr.
Mr. Steven Howsare
Ms. Regina Klevan
Mr. Lee Slusser

Mr. Zack Lee
Ms. Tina Taylor
Mrs. Debbi Prosser
Mrs. Michele Uveges
Mrs. Jennifer Sklodowski
Mrs. Sherry Socie

CALL TO ORDER:

Commissioner Walls, President, called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Commissioner Walls asked if there were any public comments. Hearing none, the meeting continued without comment.

MINUTES, March 20, 2024

A motion was entered by Mrs. Clapper to approve the March 20, 2024, Board of Directors' meeting minutes, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster and was unanimously approved.

SAP&DC FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 OPERATIONAL BUDGET:

Commissioner Walls introduced Mrs. Rebecca Canavan who is the new SAP&DC Director of Finance, and introductions were made.

Mrs. Canavan referred to the 2024-2025 Operational Budget Report and the Summary Comparison Report of the 2024-2025 budget that was included in the meeting packet. The overall change in the budget of approximately \$1.2 million is an 11% increase over the 2024 budget. The budget includes a 4% salary increase with 12% budgeted for health insurance. The direct costs for these items are reflective of a 2% increase in salary for direct costs and 10% for fringes. The other percentage is included in the indirect costs.

Mrs. Canavan reviewed the projected program expenses in detail. The overall change for the workforce expense is due to additional income received from those programs. There are a few changes in the Planning and Business Development programs: four grant programs are ending in 2024 and there is a new Smart Grant for 2025. The overall change from the 2024 to 2025 budget is \$1.2 million with the majority being from the new Smart Grant.

Mr. Steve Howsare, SAP&DC Executive Director, reported that the Board had authorized a salary study that was implemented two years ago. The recommendation of the study was for a 4% salary increase in year two, but SAP&DC did not have the available funds so a 3% salary increase was submitted. Due to several staff changes, the budget is balanced with a 4% salary increase this year.

Commissioner Hunt stated that a recommendation was made by the Finance Committee that met prior to approve SAP&DC's Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Operational Budget, as presented, with a 4% salary increase. There was an analysis made between the 3% and 4% salary increase and the difference was \$25,000.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Hunt to approve SAP&DC's Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Operational Budget, as presented, with a 4% salary increase. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Reeder and was unanimously approved.

FINANCE REPORT:

Mrs. Canavan presented the Accounts Payable/General Fund Ending Balance and reviewed some of the larger expenses by category. She also reviewed account balances in detail.

Mr. Howsare noted that the difference in the healthcare amount is due to the replacement of the Finance Director.

A motion was entered by Mr. Foster to approve the Accounts Payable and Bank Account Summaries, as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. McGregor and was unanimously approved.

SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD REPORT:

Mrs. Jennifer Sklodowski, SAWDB Director, reported that the Southern Alleghenies Workforce Development Board (SAWDB) held their quarterly meeting on May 14, 2024 at the Somerset Country Club. The current budget and expenditures were reviewed at the meeting. Mrs. Sklodowski shared that SAWDB is in a strong position overall for the remainder of PY'23 while meeting and in some cases exceeding current state requirements. Discussion at the meeting was centered around youth mental health with a presentation by Croyle Nielsen Therapeutic Associates. Elections for the Executive Committee also took place with Mr. Corey Sisto elected as Chair, and Mr. Brock Kull elected as Vice-Chair with all other members remaining on the committee.

Mrs. Sklodowski reported that allocations for the WIOA Title I and TANF Programs have been received. SAWDB is to receive \$4,109,698 for PY'24 WIOA Title I and \$789,711 for TANF Youth Development Funds.

Mrs. Sklodowski shared some concern around the proposed TANF regulatory changes. If these changes would go into full effect as drafted by the Biden Administration, \$25 million in youth development funding will be eliminated. Despite ongoing discussions with the Shapiro Administration and the key state agencies, it has been made clear that an administrative budget solution and any administrative support around the proposed rule for TANF YDP in Pennsylvania is not anticipated past June 30, 2024. Therefore, there will not be TANF funding for FY'25. Mrs. Sklodowski is in the process of providing legislators with a summary of the impact these actions will have on the Southern Alleghenies region. She asked the Board to do what they can to make our legislators aware of the need to continue this funding for the youth in our region.

Mrs. Sklodowski shared that a new Business Education Partnership Grant (BEP Grant) is set to be issued in September which will be the eighth one received in the Southern Alleghenies region.

Mrs. Sklodowski reported that a few weeks ago the commonwealth was notified that they were conditionally awarded an Opioid Grant. They have received approximately one third of their total request with the remaining amount pending successful expenditures of the initial increment. As a part of this, Southern Alleghenies will receive \$32,984 to provide employment and training services to those dislocated

workers impacted by opioid use and addiction. They are in the early stages of planning, and she will keep the Board informed when moving forward.

Mrs. Sklodowski spoke of the idea of incorporating PA CareerLink® kiosks in all of the school districts that would include an array of helpful information for students. She will be reaching out to the superintendents with the hopes of incorporating these kiosks in the schools.

Mrs. Clapper spoke of the BEP Grant and how fortunate the Southern Alleghenies region is to receive those dollars. For one quarter, there were 2,300 youth served through this grant. Large-scale job fairs, job shadowing, and STEM activities are some of the activities offered through this grant.

Mrs. Clapper stated that she is very concerned about the potential loss of TANF funding. This funding is used to help jump start the summer program. In Somerset County there is already a waiting list for youth summer employment in addition to three projects taking place. Without these dollars, a lot of young people will not be able to obtain summer employment.

2025 - 2029 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDDS) UPDATE:

Mr. Lee Slusser, Director of Planning and Community Development, explained that the CEDDS is an economic development strategy for the six-county area that is required to receive EDA funding. SAP&DC is required to update this plan every five years, and they are currently in the process of updating it. The CEDDS Committee meeting was held on May 20, 2024 where background studies were reviewed, information currently in place was reviewed in addition to any items that might be missing. The CEDDS Resolution is a requirement of EDA for the Board to approve SAP&DC's status on the CEDDS plan update.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Kessler to approve the CEDDS Resolution, as presented, in support of SAP&DC's activities to date in updating the CEDDS plan. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jim Foster and was unanimously approved.

BUSINESS LENDING SERVICES REPORT:

Ms. Tina Taylor, Business Lending Program Manager, presented and reviewed the actions taken by the Loan Review Committee. Ms. Taylor reported that there were six projects approved since the last Board of Directors meeting.

Ms. Taylor then presented and reviewed the list of applications and projects in detail: All applications were approved unanimously by the Loan Review Committee, as presented, and are now presented to the Board of Directors for concurrence. Mr. Howsare noted that dairy farms are now looking for other ways to generate income and are adding poultry barns or swine barns for additional income.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Bunch to concur with the actions taken by the Loan Review Committee, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Clapper and was unanimously approved.

PA OUTDOOR RECREATION ALLIANCE CONSULTING CONTRACT AWARD:

Mrs. Deborah Prosser, Director of Business Development Services, stated that Mr. Nathan Reigner, Director of the PA Office of Outdoor Recreation, is interested in exploring an outdoor business alliance to organize and advocate for Pennsylvania's outdoor related businesses. This alliance will become the lead advocate for Pennsylvania's outdoor industry and a primary private sector partner of Pennsylvania's Office of Outdoor Recreation. DCED asked SAP&DC to facilitate the grant management for this project in which a \$100,000 grant was secured from ARC and a \$100,000 grant was secured from DCNR. SAP&DC requested proposals from qualified consultants which have been reviewed by Mr. Reigner's Steering Committee. The recommendation is to award Fourth Economy the contract to assess the current outdoor industry in Pennsylvania and suggest strategies to establish an outdoor business alliance.

A motion was entered by Mr. Foster to award the PA Outdoor Recreation Alliance Consulting Contract to Fourth Economy, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kessler and was unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Howsare referred to the Resolution handout and stated that it is to authorize either SAP&DC's Director of Business Lending or the Executive Director to sign loan documentation.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Hunt to approve the Resolution in support of authorizing either SAP&DC's Director of Business Lending or the Executive Director to sign loan documents. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Reeder and was unanimously approved.

Mr. Howsare shared that Mrs. Debbi Prosser will be retiring June 30th and this will be her last Board meeting. There will be an open house reception held in her honor on June 21st from 11:00 to 3:30 if anyone would like to attend. He recognized Mrs. Prosser for her many years of service to the commission. Mrs. Prosser shared that she has enjoyed her time at SAP&DC and appreciates the Board's support over the years and thanked Mr. Howsare for his leadership. Commissioner Walls thanked Mrs. Prosser for all that she has done for the commission over the years.

Mrs. Clapper congratulated Mrs. Prosser for being recognized in Pennsylvania Business Central as one of the top Women in Business Non-Profit Female Leaders.

Mr. Howsare introduced Mr. Zack Lee, currently Community and Economic Development Program Manager, who will be replacing Mrs. Prosser effective July 1, 2024.

Mr. Howsare reminded members that the next SAP&DC Board of Directors meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 17, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was entered by Commissioner Rager to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kessler and was unanimously approved.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Randy Bunch

Secretary