CALL TO ORDER:
Commissioner Walker, President, called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M.

At this time, discussion was held regarding the By-Laws and the ability of the alternate Board members to vote. Attorney George Gvozdich stated that the by-laws allow for an alternate Commissioner Board member to vote in place of either a Board member from their specific county who is not in attendance or any At-Large member who is not in attendance. For purposes of this meeting, it was determined that all three alternate members in attendance have the ability to vote.

Commissioner Walker announced that Ms Beth McGregor and Ms Deborah Shaffer were participating via Zoom.
MINUTES:
A motion was entered by Commissioner Sather to approve the May 26, 2021 Board of Directors and Finance Committee Meeting minutes and the May 17, 2021 and June 21, 2021 Personnel Committee Meeting minutes, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Erb and was unanimously approved.

FINANCE REPORT:
Mr. Daniel Bowers, SAP&DC Director of Finance, presented the Accounts Payable/General Fund Ending Balance, reviewed some of the larger expenses and reported no changes to the information submitted. He also provided a summary of available Commission funds and reported that SAP&DC remains in a good cash position.

Mr. Bowers further stated that SAP&DC ended the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 under budget by $23,000.

A motion was entered by Mrs. Clapper to approve the Accounts Payable/General Fund Ending Balance, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dallara and was unanimously approved.

CONFERENCE ROOM CHAIRS:
Mrs. Deborah Prosser, Director, Business Development, reported that after 20 years the chairs in the conference room have reached their useful life and need to be replaced. Three quotes were received in response to the Request for Quotes, and it is recommended that McCartney’s, the low bidder, be awarded the contract.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Thomas to approve awarding the contract for new conference room chairs to the low bidder, McCartney’s. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and was unanimously approved.

BUSINESS LENDING SERVICES:
Mrs. Trudy A. Mitchell, Director, Business Lending Services, presented and reviewed the actions taken by the Loan Review Committee.
The applications for Frederick’s Meat Market, LLC, Justin J. And Saralyn Martin, Shade Valley Farms, Inc. and Jason L. & Stephanie E. Shives were approved, as presented, and are now presented to the Board of Directors for concurrence.

Mrs. Mitchell then presented an application submitted under the Economic Development Administration’s (EDA) Cares from Groseclose Polygraph & Personnel Assessment, Inc. The application was approved, as presented, and is now presented to the Board of Directors for concurrence.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Tokar-Ickes to concur with the actions taken by the Loan Review Committee relative to the loan applications, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bunch and was unanimously approved.

**SOUTHERN ALLEGHENIES WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD REPORT:**

Mrs. Susan Whisler, SAWDB Director, provided an update on the SAWDB’s administrative and programmatic activities. She explained that every three years the workforce development boards must undertake an extensive workforce system planning process and develop both regional and local plans. In late June the SAWDB received notification that the plans submitted were approved and recognized as exemplary. Without approved plans, federal workforce funding would cease to flow into the Southern Alleghenies region.

The SAWDB staff also received notification of approval of its TANF Plan and the award of over $831,000 for use in PY 21. This funding is utilized to provide workforce services to in-school youth between the ages of 12 and 24 with significant barriers to employment.

Mrs. Whisler announced that the SAWDB received notification of the successful monitoring of the SAWDB and its staff. All four SAWDB staff completed all required monitoring functions including certification of the five comprehensive PA CareerLink sites and four affiliate sites or continued operations. No compliance issues were found. In October 2020 the SAWDB staff submitted all required documents in support of its system’s comprehensive OEO monitoring. This is a first for this type of monitoring. In June the SAWDB received largely positive results. Several small issues were noted, corrections made and resubmitted to OEO.
June 2021 marked the 1-year anniversary of the reopening of the one-stop career centers. As a result of the pandemic, the Governor had ordered the closure of the centers and charged the local boards with development of a pandemic service delivery plan. The SAWDB and its partners were able to provide virtual and in-person services and were credited with developing a system, later utilized throughout Pennsylvania, that enabled staff to directly assist hundreds of unemployed workers who were experiencing issues with their unemployment compensation claims.

Mrs. Whisler also reported that the SAWDB successfully completed its competitive Request for Proposal process to secure its One-Stop Operator, the YaZo Group. SAWDB’s OSO has been identified as a “best practice” during a recent US Department of Labor review.

The SAWDB, in conjunction with its WIOA Title 1 operators, applied for and received SLIP funding in the amount of $30,000. These funds are used to provide paid summer internships for eligible college students.

The SAWDB and Goodwill of the Southern Alleghenies are working together on the implementation of an innovative youth reentry program in Bedford, Blair and Cambria Counties. Competitive funding in excess of $490,000 was secured through the PA Department of Labor and Industry; the grant will conclude on June 30, 2022.

**EARN PROGRAM REPORT:**

Ms Regina Klevan, EARN Program Director, reported that the EARN Local Management Committee met on June 24, 2021 and approved the yearly budget, contract extensions, and yearly allocations for EARN subcontractors for Program Year 2021-2022. Monitoring was conducted on each contractor, with no deficiencies identified.

Ms Klevan explained that staffing in the EARN program has increased due to the increase in clients needing served. The Commonwealth recently recognize SAP&DC’s EARN program for serving the highest number of clients in the State. She further stated that during the pandemic the EARN program never shut down and never stopped serving clients.
START-UP ALLEGHENIES STATUS REPORT:

Mrs. Deborah Prosser, Director, Business Development Division, reported that four years ago the Start-Up Alleghenies Program began. This program was designed to assist in the development of a culture to encourage and support entrepreneurs. Over the last four years the program has proved to be extremely effective.

This program requires working with multiple partners all of whom are focused on assisting entrepreneurs on becoming successful. The Economic Development Agencies have embraced entrepreneurship as being extremely important to economic growth in the region. Over the past four years 738 entrepreneurs have registered, 253 new business have opened and 425 new jobs have been created. Mrs. Prosser reported on the Start-Up grants and stated that currently there is approximately $97,000 still available for Start-Up grants. Funding for this grant is scheduled to expire September 30, 2022.

Mrs. Prosser then reported on the status of the Angel Fund. Investments have been made to seven business totaling $3,128,058. Unfortunately, only one of these investments have been in our region and that is for Inspection GO. Hopefully, this will change going forward and more investments will be made in the region. Entrepreneurs in the region are not doing well with electronic commerce so SAP&DC has submitted an application to ARC for a grant that will allow assistance to entrepreneurs by creating the “Alleghenies Marketplace” an electronic commerce store front with each company having their own page. SAP&DC can then help with marketing, promotion, etc. which will assist them with selling their products. SAP&DC has also submitted an application to USDA for a grant under “Community Navigator” that will provide funds which will allow SAP&DC to continue to cover the salaries for the entrepreneur “coaches” and to assist with marketing and to provide information and training on financing a business.

Mrs. Clapper stated that she is putting together a schedule for next year and is focusing on entrepreneurship. She requested assistance from Mrs. Prosser and the “coaches” with providing presentations. Mrs. Prosser stated that she would be glad to provide any assistance necessary.

ENGAGE STATUS REPORT:

Mrs. Prosser reported that for Fiscal Year 20-21 all counties have now met their goals under the Engage program. Interviews were held with 180 companies and by far the most critical challenge to businesses is finding employees.
FY 2022 APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION (ARC) INVESTMENT PACKAGE:
Mr. Brandon Carson, Director, Planning & Community Development Division, reported that SAP&DC is required each year to submit its project recommendations for funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC).

Mr. Carson then presented and provided a detailed review of the list of the projects that were developed from requests received by SAP&DC staff.

Mr. Carson explained to members that additional projects may be added and/or removed later by the Board, as requested. He further stated that there is a limited amount of money allotted for projects submitted by all seven of Pennsylvania’s Local Development Districts (LDDS); therefore, all projects may not be funded.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Hunt to approve the FY 2022 ARC Investment Package, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sather and was unanimously approved.

ALLEGHENIES BROADBAND UPDATE AND NEXT STEPS:
Mr. Carson updated members on information regarding Alleghenies Broadband, Inc. (ABI). First and foremost is that ABI has received formal approval from the IRS for its status as a 501(c)3. ABI is now considered a public utility company and, as such under the PUC, is now allowed to provide wired service to consumers.

Mr. Carson reminded members of the Request for Proposals discussion at the May SAP&DC Board of Directors meeting. The RFP was issued and proposals were due by July 7, 2021. Eight proposals were received representing a mix of good projects. Providers showed interest in accessing county American Rescue Funds and other funds that may be available for providing wired internet service. Proposals received, requested over $80 million in funding. There was interest by private companies in accessing funds to provide wired internet service in all six counties.

The ABI Technical Committee met on July 20th to begin reviewing proposals and addressing any issues with the proposals submitted. Moving ahead, ABI will coordinate with the counties and other potential funders to
evaluate and prioritize the proposals in order to align the resources needed to complete the projects that are ultimately selected for funding.

Mr. Carson then presented and discussed the draft Cooperation Agreement and Project Supplement that was developed to allow ABI to administer funding available through the American Rescue Plan (ARP). Attorney Gvozdich then provided additional information on how both the Master Cooperation Agreement and Project specific Supplement agreements would work. The draft agreements have been sent to each of the county solicitors and Board of Commissioners for comment.

Questions regarding the bidding process for purchasing and owning of equipment were discussed in detail. Attorney Gvozdich stated that the questions regarding equipment purchasing and ownership has been submitted to the PA Department of Community and Economic Development and he is awaiting a response as to the final determination. In response to a statement from Commissioner Dallara, lengthy discussion was held regarding any possible audit findings regarding equipment purchasing and ownership utilizing CARES and ARP funding.

**BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT AWARD:**

Mr. Carson reported that in collaboration with ABI a Request for Proposal was issued soliciting for broadband deployments in targeted areas as part of a pilot project funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). Two proposals were received that detailed a plan to provide reliable, high-speed internet service in portions of Huntingdon, Fulton and Bedford Counties. The proposals were submitted by Upward Broadband, a wireless internet service provider that has been actively working to develop additional coverage areas in the region. Collectively, the two proposals anticipate that 660 residents and businesses will be served by the effort.

A total of $153,177 is available for one-time equipment, consumable supply and contractual costs associated with the proposed projects. In addition, the proposals outline $65,000 in recurring costs that would be reimbursed to Upward Broadband through June 30, 2022. These recurring costs are available through the EDA CARES funding.
As a requirement of the federal funding, all equipment will be owned by ABI and leased to Upward Broadband. As part of the lease agreement, Upward Broadband will make monthly payments to ABI with the understanding that ABI will make funds and resources available to assist with marketing and outreach efforts.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Bunch to approve awarding the Pilot Broadband Deployment Award to Upward Broadband, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dallara and was unanimously approved.

**EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROJECTS:**
Mr. Brandon Carson explained that SAP&DC is designated by the Federal Office of Management and Budget (under E.O. 12372) to review requests for Federal financial assistance within its six-county service area for concurrence with relevant regional planning documents. Two projects requesting federal financial assistance were presented as consistent with the Commission’s overall Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Tokar-Ickes to approve the Projects Under Executive Order 12372, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Thomas and was unanimously approved.

At this time, Commissioner Walker called for an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT:**
Following the Executive Session, the SAP&DC Board of Directors meeting was called back to order.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Walls to approve one time staff increases based on years of service retroactive to July 1, 2021, and an ongoing increase in match to SAP&DC’s pension plan up to a maximum of 8% based on years of service, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Erb. Commissioners Hunt, Dawson, Smith, Baughman, Tokar-Ickes and Mrs. Clapper voted against the motion. Commissioners Erb, Thomas, Sather, Walls, Bunch, Burke, Dallara and Frederick and Mr. Cessna, Ms McGregor and Mr. Rhodes voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 11 to 6.

A motion was entered by Commissioner Thomas to authorize a market study on compensation being completed. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Tokar-Ickes and was unanimously approved.
A motion as entered by Commissioner Baughman to schedule a Personnel Committee meeting to modify the Personnel Manual Policies to allow for counties and other entities to directly compensate SAP&DC employees at the director level for work done outside their normal duties. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Thomas and was unanimously approved.

**OTHER BUSINESS & INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

The next SAP&DC Board of Commissioners meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 15, 2021.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott Hunt
Secretary