



SEDA-Council of Governments
Board of Directors
Virtual Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 24, 2021
Start Time: 1:00 P.M.

MEMBERS

County	Member	Present
Centre	Commissioner Mark Higgins	✓
	Ms. Lisa Strickland	✓
Clinton	Commissioner Jeffrey Snyder	✓
	Mr. Steve Stevenson	✓
Columbia	Commissioner Richard Ridgway	✓
	Mr. George Forese	✓
Juniata	Commissioner Mark Partner	✓
	Mr. Scott Fritz	✓
Lycoming	Commissioner Scott Metzger	✓
	Mr. Howard Fry III	
Mifflin	Commissioner Kevin Kodish	✓
	Mr. Jim Shilling Jr.	✓
Montour	Commissioner Kenneth Holdren	✓
	Mr. Brian Wiktor	✓
Northumberland	Commissioner Samuel Schiccatano	✓
	Mr. Greg Klebon	
Perry	Commissioner Brenda Watson	✓
	Mr. Larry Reisinger	✓
Snyder	Commissioner Joseph Kantz	✓
	Mr. Dennis Van Benthuyzen	✓
Union	Commissioner Preston Boop	
	Mr. David Cooney	✓

STAFF

Kim Wheeler, Mike Fisher, Rose Orner, Amanda Owens, Betsy Lockwood, Doug Wilburn, Kristen Moyer, Jim Saylor, Bo Hornberger, Liz Herman, Tina Showers

GUESTS

Steve D’Ettorre, Deputy Secretary of Technology & Innovation, PA DCED, Neil Fowler, Executive Director, PA DCED Center for Strategic Partnerships

CALL TO ORDER

The SEDA-COG Board of Directors virtual meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m., by President Partner, followed by introductions of Mr. D’Ettorre, Mr. Fowler, and Mr. Cooney.

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Higgins moved for approval of the January 27, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Kodish seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

OPEN FORUM**Opportunity for Public Comments**

No public comment was offered.

Non-Agenda Items of General Interest to the Members

Commissioner Kantz shared that the first meeting of the Act 12 Election Reform Committee took place in late January. Commissioner Kantz was appointed as Vice-Chairman, with Commissioner Ken Lawrence appointed as Chairman.

OLD BUSINESS

Nothing was offered under Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS**Board Members Resignation/Certification**

President Partner shared the resignation of Ms. Char Gray, Union County Additional Representative.

Commissioner Holdren moved to accept the resignation of Ms. Gray as presented. Commissioner Snyder seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

President Partner stated that Mr. David Cooney has been appointed as the replacement for Ms. Gray, for Union County.

Commissioner Kantz moved to approve the certification of Mr. David Cooney as the Union County Additional Representative. Commissioner Metzger seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Local Loan Review Committee Report**Halfmoon Creek Farm, LLC**

Mr. Doug Wilburn, Director of the Business Finance Program, presented the request for a \$170,000 SEDA-COG PIDA/FIF Ag loan to Halfmoon Creek Farm, LLC, for a term of 15 years at an interest rate of 1.00% for the first seven years, then re-set to the current PIDA rate, not to exceed 3.00% for the remaining eight years. Halfmoon Creek Farm was formed in October 2019 as an equestrian boarding and training facility. The horse stable was built in 2005 and contains 12 horse stalls, a wash bay, heated tack room, feed room, an open hay loft and auto waterers in the stalls. There is also an indoor riding area and a

concrete manure pit/pad for manure storage. In addition to the equestrian business, Shannon and Cody will also grow organic fruits and vegetables on the farm.

Commissioner Higgins moved to approve the request on behalf of Halfmoon Creek Farm, LLC, a \$170,000 SEDA-COG PIDA/FIF Ag loan for a term of 15 years at an interest rate of 1.00% for the first seven years, then re-set to the current PIDA rate, not to exceed 3.00% for the remaining eight years. This request received interim approval by the SEDA-COG Board of Directors Local Loan Review on February 10, 2021. Mr. Shilling seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

M & J Industrial Supply, Inc.

Mr. Wilburn presented the request for a \$63,600 EDA COVID-19 loan to M&J Industrial Supply Company, Inc., for a term of 6 years at 3.25% fixed for the life of the loan. M&J Industrial Supply Company, Inc is primarily engaged in the merchant wholesale distribution of paper products, cleaning supplies, chemicals and related disposable plastics products and its primary customers are comprised of restaurants and taverns. The company does its business from an office, showroom and warehouse area at 309 East Main Street, Lock Haven, PA. The loan will be used to purchase the shelving, equipment and inventory needed to turn their office into a storefront/retail operation, as well as a new website in order to advertise their company and products on social media sites.

Commissioner Kodish moved to approve the \$63,600 EDA COVID-19 loan for M&J Industrial Supply Company, Inc., for a term of 6 years at 3.25% fixed for the life of the loan. This request received interim approval by the SEDA-COG Board of Directors Local Loan Review on February 16, 2021. Commissioner Holdren seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Committee and Staff Reports

DCED Update

Mr. Steve D’Ettorre, Deputy Secretary of Technology & Innovation, PA DCED, offered an update to the Board of Directors:

- The PREP budget received an increase.
- The Payroll Protection Program (PPP) will reopen for two weeks, for business with fewer than 20 employees.
- Through the Biden Administration COVID relief plan, roughly \$220.0M is expected for Pennsylvania for small businesses/start-ups, along with additional funding anticipated for the County’s.
- Governor Wolf released his Back To Work PA jobs program, through which a significant amount of funding will go toward broadband deployment and infrastructure.

Neil Fowler, Executive Director, PA DCED Center for Strategic Partnerships offer an update to the Board of Directors:

- The PREP program supports over one hundred economic development organizations, with SEDA-COG being one of those. Throughout the pandemic, the PREP partners have continued to offer exceptional service, which has been recognized by the Commonwealth budget showing an increase for this line item.
- SEDA-COG serves as the fiscal agent for the Engage! Program, which proactively calls on businesses which may not have taken advantage of government resources in the past.

- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Program – Mr. Fowler serves as the state Program Manager. SEDA-COG plays an important role in helping to identify good ARC projects, in areas such as broadband, technical assistance, or access roads. Additionally, it helps to support the core federally funded PREP activities for Business Finance, Procurement, and Export Assistance. Pennsylvania has seen an increase in funding for FY 2021. Given this, Mr. Fowler offered that if there are any projects that meet the requirements, to submit them now, prior to the normal cycle of submissions which occurs in August. Project amounts range from \$25,000 - \$300,000.

President Partner thanked both Mr. D’Ettorre and Mr. Fowler for their presentations.

Economic Development Program Activities Update

Ms. Betsy Lockwood, Project Development/Grants Manager for the Economic Development Program, provided an activity update to the Board of Directors. The Program consists of five major programs: the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Economic Development Administration (EDA), Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP), Engage!, and the Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ). Collectively these programs work to enhance the economic development potential of the region by promoting job creation and retention, as well as private sector investment. SEDA-COG is actively searching for new economic development projects, which will culminate with the Board prioritizing the projects during the June meeting.

Ms. Lockwood stated that there are two ARC Access Road projects recently awarded funding and are currently under development.

Internally, staff are also working on several projects including one with the Pennsylvania College of Technology Plastics Program, to assist with the purchase of injection molding equipment. Another project, brought forward by Commissioner Higgins, is with The Rivet, which is housed in The Discovery Space of Central Pennsylvania, to purchase equipment for their makerspace. Ms. Lockwood is also working with the Perry County Historical Society on developing a project to restore the Clarks Ferry Tavern, as a major stop along the Appalachian Trail.

SEDA-COG participated in four ARC POWER applications, which seeks to help coal-impacted communities diversify their economies. Three of the four projects have been funded; two of which involve broadband and one that partners with Central Pennsylvania Workforce Development Corporation and Geisinger to assist those in recovery to be back into the workforce. The ARC POWER 2021 program is open again, with the letter of intent to apply, due to ARC by March 5, 2021 and the online application due by April 16, 2021.

Ms. Lockwood stated that staff are currently working on several EDA projects within the region that have recently been funded:

- Juniata Business and Industry (JBI) – awarded \$1.8M to expand their industrial park, which is almost filled to capacity.
- Lycoming County Flood Resiliency project, which will impact the major economic center of Williamsport.

Regarding the state programs, the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) created the Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance (PREP). For the last ten years, SEDA-COG

has been playing a key coordination role in working with the ten partners in our region, to develop and submit applications, with Ms. Lockwood serving as the PREP Coordinator for the Central Region.

Ms. Lockwood reported on an accompanying program to PREP, known as Engage!. Currently, staff are working in Lycoming County on a tourism roundtable, to learn about the issues and opportunities available in the County.

Ms. Lockwood provided an overview of the region's Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ) program which provides the opportunity to waive local property and selected state taxes for companies that locate in these zones and create or retain jobs. SEDA-COG has been designated as the administrator of the Central Region Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ). KOZ designations are achieved through a series of partnerships between state and local taxing bodies, school districts, counties, local governments, and economic development agencies. At the end of 2020, over 2,000 acres expired and went back onto the tax rolls. During the 2020 year, roughly 60 businesses and property owners were located within the KOZ's, employing about 500 people. The next round of KOZ's will expire in 2022.

Ms. Lockwood stated that the Economic Development program focus will be on the development and expansion of high-speed internet access, along with aiding businesses recovering from the pandemic.

Fiscal Update

Mr. Bo Hornberger, Fiscal Controller, provided a fiscal update to the Board:

- SEDA-COG receives a number of state and federal reimbursable grants, which require the funds to be spent up-front, and then reimbursed following the submission of a quarterly invoice.
- The grants come from ARC, EDA, DCED, PennDOT, Department of Energy, Department of Health and Human Services, USDA, and Department of Defense.
- Fee for Service programs, such as Community Development and Housing Rehabilitation, are also billed on a quarterly basis.
- A line of credit is utilized to assist with cash flow between billing cycles.
- Currently there is a surplus of \$113,000, which is anticipated to continue given the influx of CARES Act funding.

Executive Director Report

Ms. Kim Wheeler, Executive Director, provided an update to the Board of Directors:

- County Commissioner Meetings – these annual meetings continue over the next several weeks. Staff will send a County-specific Activity Report ahead of the meeting, which offers an overview of the past 18 months. Additionally, Ms. Wheeler would like to know the top issues of each County along with how SEDA-COG can be of assistance in the coming year. Please feel free to invite other County staff to attend as appropriate, along with your SEDA-COG Board Additional Representative.
- Federal Stimulus Funds – Reconciliation Act, which offers the potential for additional county funding, up to \$31,000,000, within the SEDA-COG region. Staff will keep the Board apprised of any news related to these funds.

Ms. Wheeler provided an overview of the COVID-19 Hospitality Industry Recovery Program (CHIRP) Grant. The funds are currently being disbursed directly to the counties from DCED, based upon population. The amounts per county range from \$200,000 - \$1,500,000. In total, the SEDA-COG region will be receiving about \$78,000,000. The funds are to be awarded as grants to eligible businesses with less than 300 employees, that have experienced revenue losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. The grant amounts range from \$5,000 - \$50,000.

Per the Act, the counties are to contract with a Certified Economic Development Organization (CEDO) or a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) by March 1, 2021. The process of applications will begin on March 15, 2021. SEDA-COG is designated as a CEDO and will contract with ten of the eleven counties.

Mr. Mike Fisher, Assistant Executive Director, provided more detail on the CHIRP Grant to the Board:

- The program will be managed not only by SEDA-COG staff, along with assistance provided by Shawn McLaughlin, Union County Planning Director, but by an independent contractor, Mr. Harry Matheis, who handled the CRBG program for Columbia County.
- Assistance will also be provided by The Community Giving Foundation, who will provide the software needed to process the grant applications.
- Professional Service Agreements (PSA) have been sent to each of the ten counties, to be executed no later than March 1, 2021. An Amendment to this PSA will be sent this week, to reflect the additional service of handling the check disbursements for the counties.

The Board Members and staff discussed the Program fees and process for determining the awardees.

Correspondence/Information Items

President Partner noted the items listed under the Correspondence/Information Items section.

President Partner requested a motion to move the Board into Executive Session at 2:33pm, to discuss a personnel matter. Commissioner Kantz moved to approve the Board enter into an Executive Session, seconded by Commissioner Kodish, and carried unanimously. The Executive Session concluded at 2:41pm, on a motion by Commissioner Higgins, seconded by Commissioner Kantz, and carried unanimously.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Kodish moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:42pm. Commissioner Ridgway seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Larry Reisinger, Secretary
SEDA-COG Board of Directors