



**SEDA-Council of Governments
Board of Directors
Virtual Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday, August 26, 2020
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 Benthuisen	
Union	Commissioner Preston Boop	✓
	Ms. Char Gray	✓

STAFF

John Brown, Rose Orner, Doug Wilburn, Bo Hornberger, Kristen Moyer, Betsy Lockwood, Scott Kramer, Liz Herman, Teri Provost, Tina Showers, Betsy Kramer

GUESTS

Sue Goddard

CALL TO ORDER

The SEDA-COG Board of Directors virtual meeting was called to order at 1:02 p.m., by President Ridgway. A roll call was completed, indicating that a quorum present.

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Kodish moved for approval of the March 27, 2020 meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Snyder seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Partner moved for approval of the June 24, 2020 meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner Higgins seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

OPEN FORUM

Opportunity for Public Comments

There was no public comment offered.

Non-Agenda Items of General Interest to the Members

Commissioner Kodish asked whether any other County would be adding full-time staff to their election offices. Commissioner Higgins responded that Centre County would be reemploying staff that had been furloughed due to COVID-19 for the election office. Commissioner Snyder and Commissioner Kantz both stated that their counties added a part-time staff member to the election office.

Commissioner Kantz provided an update on elections legislation. Senate Bill 10, proposed for election reform, was released Tuesday, August 25th. The Elections Reform Committee will be holding an emergency meeting Thursday, August 27th to discuss the items in the bill.

OLD BUSINESS

There was nothing presented under “Old Business”.

NEW BUSINESS

Local Loan Review Committee Report

Hidden Castle Banquets, LLC dba The Springfield Banquet Hall and Catering

Mr. Doug Wilburn, Director of the Business Finance Program, presented the loan request on behalf of Hidden Castle Banquets LLC. The total project cost to acquire the land and construct a parking lot is \$158,787. Financing will consist of the proposed \$75,000 PIDA/CED loan and borrower cash.

Commissioner Ridgway moved to approve the submission of an application for a \$75,000 SEDA-COG PIDA/CED loan on behalf of Hidden Castle Banquets LLC, for a term of 15 years

at a rate of 0.75% fixed for the first seven years of the loan, then re-set to the then current PIDA interest rate, not to exceed 2.75%, for the remaining term of the loan. The loan will be contingent upon the availability of funds through DCED. This request received interim approval by the SEDA-COG Board of Directors Local Loan Review Committee on July 14, 2020. Commissioner Holdren seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

PENN Greenhouse, LLC dba Bright Farms

Mr. Wilburn presented the request on behalf of BrightFarms, LLC, for the submission of an application for a \$2,250,000 SEDA-COG PIDA loan to PENN Greenhouse, LLC for a term of 15 years at an interest rate of 0.75% fixed for the first seven years, then re-set to the then current PIDA rate, not to exceed 2.75%; a \$700,000 SEDA-COG MELF loan to PENN Greenhouse, LLC for a term of 10 years at an interest rate of 1.75% fixed for the life of the loan; and a \$250,000 SEDA-COG EDA RLF loan to PENN Greenhouse, LLC for a term of 10 years at an interest rate of 2.50% fixed for the life of the loan.

Commissioner Kantz moved to approve the submission of an application for a \$2,250,000 SEDA-COG PIDA loan to PENN Greenhouse, LLC for a term of 15 years at an interest rate of 0.75% fixed for the first seven years, then re-set to the then current PIDA rate, not to exceed 2.75%; a \$700,000 SEDA-COG MELF loan to PENN Greenhouse, LLC for a term of 10 years at an interest rate of 1.75% fixed for the life of the loan; and a \$250,000 SEDA-COG EDA RLF loan to PENN Greenhouse, LLC for a term of 10 years at an interest rate of 2.50% fixed for the life of the loan. This request received interim approval by the SEDA-COG Board of Directors Local Loan Review Committee on August 11, 2020. Ms. Strickland seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Gartek, Inc

Mr. Wilburn presented the request for Gartek, Inc. for a \$75,000 SEDA-COG EDA COVID-19 loan, for a term of 3 years at an interest rate of 2.5%, fixed for the life of the loan. No payments will be required for the first six months of the loan. The loan will continue to accrue interest during that time. Following the deferment, the loan will be amortized over three years, with a balloon at the final payment to include the deferred interest. A SEDA-COG EDA RLF loan will provide working capital for the borrower due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commissioner Kodish moved to approve the request for a \$75,000 SEDA-COG EDA COVID-19 loan on behalf of Gartek, Inc., for a term of 3 years at an interest rate of 2.5%, fixed for the life of the loan. No payments will be required for the first six months of the loan. The loan will continue to accrue interest during that time. Following the deferment, the loan will be amortized over three years, with a balloon at the final payment to include the deferred interest. This request received interim approval by the SEDA-COG Board of Directors Local Loan

Review on August 19, 2020. Commissioner Kantz seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mingles Auto Repair, LLC and Chad R. Mingle and Ellen M. Mingle

Mr. Wilburn presented the \$24,000 SEDA-COG ARC RLF loan request on behalf of Mingles Auto Repair LLC and Chad R. Mingle and Ellen M. Mingle, for a term of fifteen years with an interest rate of 3.25% fixed for the term.

Commissioner Holdren moved to approve the \$24,000 SEDA-COG ARC RLF loan request on behalf of Mingles Auto Repair LLC and Chad R. Mingle and Ellen M. Mingle, for a term of fifteen years with an interest rate of 3.25% fixed for the term. This request received interim approval by the SEDA-COG Board of Directors Local Loan Review on August 19, 2020. Commissioner Partner seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Collision Industries

Mr. Wilburn presented the request on behalf of Collision Industries, Inc., to change from a \$25,000 SEDA-COG EDA COVID-19 RLF loan to a \$25,000 SEDA-COG ARC RLF loan, for a term of three years at an interest rate of 3.25%, fixed for the life of the loan. No payments will be required for the first six months of the loan. The loan will continue to accrue interest during that time. Following the deferment, the loan will be amortized over three years, with a balloon at the final payment to include the deferred interest. Also, the SEDA-COG ARC RLF loan will be secured by a shared blanket lien on all business assets in the highest position possible, as well as a shared pro rata first lien on the air handling system with the \$25,000 Clinton County EDA RLF loan. On 6/3/20, a \$25,000 SEDA-COG EDA COVID-19 RLF loan was approved by the SEDA-COG Board. A \$25,000 Clinton County EDA RLF was also approved as part of the project. Due to availability of internal funds, the request is being changed to a \$25,000 SEDA-COG ARC RLF.

Mr. Stevenson moved to approve the request to change from a \$25,000 SEDA-COG EDA COVID-19 RLF loan to a \$25,000 SEDA-COG ARC RLF loan, on behalf of Collision Industries, Inc., for a term of three years, at an interest rate of 3.25%, fixed for the life of the loan. No payments will be required for the first six months of the loan. The loan will continue to accrue interest during that time. Following the deferment, the loan will be amortized over three years, with a balloon at the final payment to include the deferred interest. This request received interim approval by the SEDA-COG Board of Directors Local Loan Review Committee on August 4, 2020. Commissioner Ridgway seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

K & N Electric, Inc. and Kent W. Nunamaker

Mr. Wilburn presented the request on behalf of K & N Electric, Inc., and Kent W. Nunamaker, to withdraw the \$20,000 SEDA-COG EDA RLF loan. On 5/2/20, a \$20,000 SEDA-COG EDA RLF loan was approved by the SEDA-COG Board. The business has been doing well and the client stated that they no longer need financial assistance. Therefore, they are requesting the withdraw of the \$20,000 SEDA-COG EDA RLF request so another small business can use the funds.

Commissioner Kantz moved to approve the \$20,000 SEDA-COG EDA RLF loan withdrawal request on behalf of K & N Electric, Inc., and Kent W. Nunamaker. This request received interim approval by the SEDA-COG Board of Directors Local Loan Review Committee on August 11, 2020. Commissioner Partner seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Happy Holiday, LLC dba Holiday Inn Express & Suites

Mr. Wilburn presented the withdrawal request on behalf of Happy Holiday, LLC for a \$25,000 SEDA-COG EDA RLF loan. The hotel has been doing well and the client stated that they no longer need financial assistance. Therefore, they are requesting the withdraw of the \$25,000 SEDA-COG EDA RLF request so another small business can use the funds.

Commissioner Kodish moved to approve the withdrawal of the \$25,000 SEDA-COG EDA RLF loan to Happy Holiday, LLC. This request received interim approval by the SEDA-COG Board of Directors Local Loan Review Committee on July 14, 2020. Commissioner Holdren seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

RidgeCrest Home Sales, LLC

Mr. Wilburn presented the for the withdrawal of the \$35,000 SEDA-COG EDA RLF loan for RidgeCrest Home Sales, LLC and Curtis J. Willar and Karen S. Willar. On 5/08/20, a \$35,000 SEDA-COG EDA RLF loan was approved by the SEDA-COG Board. Within the last month, the client has experienced an increase in sales and no longer needs financial assistance. Therefore, they are requesting the withdraw of the \$35,000 SEDA-COG EDA RLF request so another small business can use the funds.

Ms. Gray moved to approve the withdrawal of the \$35,000 SEDA-COG EDA RLF loan to RidgeCrest Home Sales, LLC and Curtis J. Willar and Karen S. Willar. This request received interim approval by the SEDA-COG Board of Directors Local Loan Review Committee on July 14, 2020. Mr. Fry seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Committee and Staff Reports

Community Development Staff Report

Ms. Teri Provost, Director of the Housing Rehabilitation Department and Acting Director of the Community Development Department, presented an update on the activities of the Community Development Department. The Community Development Block Grant Program has seen an increase in funding through the Cares Act. Staff have been working with the counties to submit the application to DCED by the deadline of August 31st.

Staff are also working on the Entitlement applications, which are due October 28th. This involves twenty-eight grantees for a total of 14 contracts.

Ms. Provost shared that a \$16,000,000 flood protection project, located in the Town of Bloomsburg, is nearing completion. The project was shutdown briefly during the statewide closure due to COVID-19, but staff submitted for and received a waiver to continue construction. The formal dedication is scheduled for September 9th at 3:00pm.

Staff are currently working on 30 - 40 projects for the federal fiscal year of 2019-2020. The projects are mainly sewer and water with other public services being provided.

Information Technologies Group (ITG) Staff Report

Mr. Scott Kramer, Principal IT Specialist, presented an update on the activities of the Information Technologies Group. ITG performs a wide range of services for the internal SEDA-COG departments, as well as outside clients, such as local governments, non-profits, and private businesses.

- Internal Projects – these can range from in-house applications to ongoing technology improvements, such as workstation or server upgrades. The COVID-19 pandemic added an additional level of complexity to the day-to-day operations, to be able to accommodate staff working remotely. SEDA-COG had been working toward cloud-based computing for some time and was in a favorable position when the “work from home” order came in. Within a matter of a week, most staff were working remotely.
- External Projects - can include services that range from website tech support to broadband projects for counties, municipalities, non-profits, and businesses.
 - Website Hosting – SEDA-COG continues to host nearly 60 websites for municipalities and non-profits. The new shared hosting program, partnered with CCAP, was scheduled for implementation in early 2020, but due to COVID-19, this has been pushed back to end of 2020. Staff will be working with CCAP and our hosted municipalities with site migration and training on the new system once it comes online.

- New Website Projects – In FY 2019-2020, ITG completed a new website project for Lewis Township, Union County.
- Selinsgrove Borough – SEDA-COG is assisting and providing technical support to Selinsgrove Borough to migrate their internal email and servers to a cloud-based system. This migration includes a new host server, O365 email integration, and equipment purchasing assistance.
- Four-County Rural Broadband Project - as the next phase after the four-county Broadband Coverage and Feasibility Study, funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) POWER grant; staff, in cooperation with Clinton, Lycoming, Northumberland, and Union counties, have applied to ARC for \$2,500,000 in POWER 2020 funds. This would provide funding for reimbursable grants to incentivize Internet Service Providers (ISP's) in expanding their service areas into the unserved/underserved rural regions of the four counties.

During the PRE-COVID-19 planning process for this project, the four counties and staff worked with the state legislature to support the addition of a \$4,000,000 line item in the Capital Budget for Pennsylvania's Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP). Due to COVID-19, the potential RACP funds originally planned as cash match for this broadband project became questionable; however, the RACP funding did open up and an application for \$4,000,000 has been submitted to the state.

Mr. Kramer shared that a competitive procurement process will be utilized to select the internet services providers that can provide the best service at the most affordable rate. Request for Proposals will be reviewed and awarded based on selection criteria that will include but is not limited to the ability to provide a minimum of 100↓/100↑ symmetrical in the selected areas for businesses, affordable costs to the end user, area to be served, and the ability to invest a minimum of \$375,000 of their private sector investment; which may include assets already in place, in-kind services, and cash. Total project budget for each county will be roughly \$1,500,000.

The majority of the build-out must serve economic development interests, which can have a wide range of applications, from traditional commercial business enterprise and manufacturing, to agriculture businesses and cottage industries. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, working from home, distant learning, and telemedicine will also be targeted for this project. A secondary focus can include serving residential areas, which should ideally be in conjunction with servicing economic development activities.

Staff expect to hear from ARC regarding the application award status by the end of September.

- Juniata, Mifflin & Perry County Pilot Project – Since April of 2019, SEDA-COG has been engaged with Juniata, Mifflin, and Perry counties, by facilitating a round of meetings between local leadership, planning directors, emergency communications directors, and the local ISP's, to address the lack of adequate broadband in the rural regions of each county.

Utilizing state funding from the Pennsylvania Keystone Communities Program, SEDA-COG is offering low interest (1%) Revolving Loans Funds (RLF) totaling \$95,000 per county, to provide funding for ISP's who would offer a minimum of 25mb down and 3mb up service in the selected pilot project areas. In conjunction with the state funding, SEDA-COG has secured an additional \$150,000 from the ARC, to further incent ISP's as reimbursable grants of approximately \$47,000 per county. The combined funding for both the RLF and the reimbursable grant will be \$142,000 per county. SEDA-COG and the counties reviewed and scored each proposal and made their selections in late June:

- Mifflin County – Nittany Media
 - Juniata County – Centre WISP
 - Perry County – Nittany Media
- ARC PREP – Under the ARC PREP program, ITG is to increase the capacity of small, rural communities to implement and use basic technology tools necessary to improve operational sustainability in an affordable manner. During the fourth quarter of this program, ITG was able to respond to twenty requests for technical support from communities and one from private businesses. In total, for all four quarters of this fiscal year, we assisted sixty-five communities and ten private businesses.

Community Relations Director Report

Ms. Kristen Moyer, Community Relations Director, reported on activities that have taken place from June – August 2020. Ms. Moyer highlighted several items from her report:

- The Weatherization program received \$159,000 of CARES Act funds to repair or replace home heating units. These funds are available through August 31st or until the funds are spent. The service is available to income-qualifying residents in Columbia, Juniata, Mifflin, Montour, Perry, Snyder and Union counties. Ms. Moyer informed the state representatives, who highlighted the program in their e-newsletters.

- Met with Ms. Elizabeth Kishbaugh, Senator Casey's District Manager. After the introductory meeting, Ms. Kishbaugh met with the SEDA-COG Natural Gas Cooperative and the SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority. Additionally, staff provided Ms. Kishbaugh and Senator Casey with an overview of SEDA-COG's involvement in the revitalization efforts in the City of Shamokin. Senator Casey was very supportive of the effort.
- Staff have been contracted to assist six counties in the region with the administration of the County Relief Block Grant (CRBG) funds. Ms. Moyer has been contacting federal legislators to discuss an expenditure deadline extension for these funds.
- Secured \$1,500,000 from the Commonwealth for a sewer expansion project in both Delaware and Lewis Townships, Northumberland County.

Ms. Moyer share two upcoming events:

- On September 9th, there will be a dedication ceremony for the flood mitigation project in the Town of Bloomsburg. It will be held at 3:00 p.m. at the site of the flood wall. Federal and state legislators are invited to attend.
- On September 10th, Congressman Thompson will be touring several Centre County businesses. The tour will include Actuated Medical - a company that shifted their focus during the pandemic and began manufacturing face shields. Also, KCF Technologies, the Rivet/Maker Space, and a SEDA-COG Joint Rail Authority project. Commissioner Higgins noted that the face shields being produced by Actuated Medical ship with a week or two of ordering and are available to the counties for a discounted price.

Ms. Strickland shared that the Nittany Valley Sports Center would be offering a remote learning space for students from 4th grade to 12th grade. This will provide students with guidance from a certified teacher, while working through the remote learning process.

Executive Director Report

Mr. John A. Brown, Executive Director, offered his update to the Board of Directors:

- During the City of Shamokin visit with Senator Casey, the Senator recognized how this revitalization model could be replicated in other communities across the state. Senator Casey also mentioned trying to find additional COVID-19 related monies, to provide some relief to local governments. Staff offered that if additional funds were to become available that the expenditure deadline be extended. Additionally, staff reemphasized the need to extend the December 31st deadline for the current CRBG funds.
- Two new staff have been hired, in direct response to the COVID-19 impacts – one in Community Development and the other in Business Finance.

- Staff secured a \$5,750,000 Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant for a new RLF. These loan funds are to be lent within the next 24 months.
- Staff secured a \$400,000 Cares Act grant for planning purposes, some of which has been designated for IT equipment.
- The staff will continue to work remotely through November 1st. There have been preliminary discussions regarding any staff that might be able to work remotely on a permanent basis or a hybrid version, as this could be beneficial both financially for the organization and for those staff.

The building is available for use by the staff. It is being cleaned per CDC guidelines and masks are available upon entry.

Commissioner Kantz shared a concern regarding the length of time it takes to receive COVID-19 testing result. In some cases, it takes one week, during which time the individual is not under quarantine.

Ms. Betsy Lockwood shared that SEDA-COG was recently awarded \$84,000 in funding from the USDA Rural Business Development, to help fund a market study for the KeyState Natural Gas Synthesis plant, Clinton County. It is in an area designated as a Federal Opportunity Zone. Additionally, a grant was received from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration for just over \$471,000 to help with the engineering study. Both third-party studies are important in order to help obtain funding for both public infrastructure and investors.

The project is estimated to cost \$375,000,000 - \$400,000,000 and is expected to create 600 - 800 construction jobs and 150 - 200 full-time jobs for the plant.

Correspondence/Information Items

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

ADJOURN

There being no additional business to come before the SEDA-COG Board of Directors, Mr. Stevenson moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:04pm. Commissioner Kantz seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Larry Reisinger, Secretary
SEDA-COG Board of Directors