



June 23, 2011 Minutes

CALL TO ORDER – Chair Joseph Hauryski called the meeting to order at 4:50 PM in the STC Conference Room.

ATTENDANCE:

Chemung County: Ted Bennett; John Burin; Ernie Hartman; G. Thomas Tranter, Jr.

Schuyler County: Dennis Fagan; Danielle Hautaniemi; Timothy O’Hearn

Steuben County: Don Creath; Amy Dlugos; Joseph Hauryski; Robert Nichols; Scott Van Etten

STC Staff: Marcia Weber; Victoria Ehlen; Chelsea Robertson; Dan Wilhelm

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – On a motion duly made (Robert Nichols/Scott Van Etten) and carried, the minutes of the May 19, 2011 meeting were approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. **Audit Committee**
 - a) **Abstract of Claims** – Thomas Tranter reported that four abstracts were reviewed and approved totaling \$35,283.54. On a motion duly made (Tranter/Creath) and carried, the abstracts were approved.
2. **Approval of 2012 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)** – Tom Tranter reported that prior to tonight’s STC Board meeting, the CEDS Committee met and reviewed the 2012 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and recommended that it be submitted to the STC Board for approval. The CEDS was updated and revised on June 15, 2011 by the Economic Development Policy Committee based on input from a variety of individuals and community organizations. Copies and CDs of the CEDS will be available at the next board meeting. On a motion duly made (Timothy O’Hearn/John Burin), and carried, the CEDS was approved as presented for submission to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) no later than June 30, 2011.
3. **Budget and Personnel Committee**
 - a) **Health Insurance Buyout Discussion Continued** – The committee discussed the health insurance buyout for STC employees who elected not to participate in the health insurance program.

- b) **Possible Accounting Assistance to Steuben Soil and Water Conservation District** –Dan Wilhelm might provide accounting assistance to the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District.
 - c) **Update of Accounting Operations Manual** –Dan Wilhelm is updating the Accounting Operations Manual for STC.
4. **Regional Leadership Conference Update** – Chelsea Robertson reported that the conference was well attended, with 76 out of 77 municipalities participating. Eight additional classes were added this year for a total of 32 classes. Chelsea is working on ways to improve the conference for next year. Ted Bennett thanked the STC staff for an excellent job.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. **Economic Development Administration Reauthorization** –The Senate failed to pass a cloture motion on the Economic Development Administration's (EDA's) five year reauthorization measure. As a result, the EDA reauthorization bill will not move forward for formal consideration and a final vote at this time. EDA will continue to operate as normal through the annual appropriations process. The US House of Representatives has yet to address the EDA reauthorization issue this year. In fact, EDA has not been reauthorized since 2008 and has continued to receive funding through the appropriations process. Economic Development Districts (EDDs—of which STC is one) are urged to continue outreach efforts with Senators and Representatives on the importance of EDA's budget, recommending increased funding for the EDD planning program and maintaining support for the public works account.

The EDA bill started as a bipartisan measure that passed easily out of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee but faced a political battle on the Senate floor. Organizations fought very hard to kill the bill with claims that EDA programs are an unnecessary federal subsidy of state and local government and businesses, which has not been the case in the STC region; the EDA projects here have been extremely valuable.

2. **Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)** –ARC has been recommended for a lower appropriation in 2011 than in 2010, lower than what the President's budget requested. In spite of the cut, ARC has chosen to maintain level funding to the Local Development Districts (LDD—of which STC is one). STC will receive \$218,000 in 2011.

Appalachian Regional Commission Applications - STC has received several applications for fiscal year 2012 ARC funding. The cut off date is July 1, 2011.

The NYS ARC Strategic Plan is being prepared, and STC staff has already contributed to it. Board input will also be sought.

3. **NYS Association of Regional Councils Meeting** –At the next meeting on June 24, there will be a report on the STC telecommunications project.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. **Letter from DEC Regarding Flood Control Levees** –STC received a letter from DEC in response to the resolution that STC passed regarding levees. The Board discussed this at length. Janet Thigpen has requested a meeting with the Department of

Environmental Conservation, FEMA, and the Corps of Engineers so they could explain their position to the municipalities. She has not received a reply yet. As information becomes available, she will report to the Board.

REGIONAL PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

1. **Marcellus Shale Tourism Report** – This report was e-mailed to board members to review before the meeting. STC received Appalachian Regional Commission funds to study the possible effects of Marcellus Shale natural gas drilling on tourism in the Southern Tier Central region.

STC engaged a consultant, Andrew Rumbach, Ph.D. student at Cornell University, who has just completed a final draft of the study. He concludes that one well would not be a problem, but the cumulative impact of drilling could affect tourism in several ways. He makes recommendations, including proceeding slowly with the addition of new wells. The importance of tourism for the STC economy is significant and growing, and the report provides to municipalities options in relation to noise pollution, traffic, and other possible issues.

Meghan Jacquet, the STC Planner who worked with natural gas drilling issues in the state of Wyoming, had input into the report, particularly regarding possible actions that would improve the process.

The board concluded that the report was not negative and that carrying out the drilling in moderation was a fair conclusion. The report was considered quite thorough with good data, and on a motion duly made (Scott Van Etten, Tom Tranter) and carried, the board approved the Marcellus Shale Tourism Report.

2. **Telecommunications Update** – Construction will begin by mid to late August. Engineering studies are being done; potential customers are being contacted; and discussions are underway with service providers. The Southern Tier Network (STN) Board of Directors is considering contracting for a CEO to handle the coordination and business aspects of the project.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. **Next Board Meeting** – the next meeting of the Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board of Directors will be on July 21, 2011. The time has been changed for this meeting only: the Budget and Personnel Committee will meet at 3:30, and the regular board meeting will be at 4:00 PM. This is a very important meeting as the Board will review and approve the Appalachian Regional Commission applications.
2. **Other** – there was no other business.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:50 on a motion by Bob Nichols, seconded by Don Creath, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Cratsley
Recording Secretary