



**DRIVE Board Meeting Minutes**  
December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Denny Hummer, Greg Cole, Dan Knorr, Dean Girton, Lance Diehl, Trevor Finn, Joe Kantz, Susan McGarry, Al Neuner, Dave Park, Jeff Reber, Jeb Stotter, Sam Schiccatano, Leslie Temple, Chris Young, Jennifer Wakeman (Executive Director)

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**GUESTS PRESENT:** Harold Hurst (Director Emeritus), Bob Snyder, Tim Hippensteel (Office and Project Manager), Betsy Reichenbach (Business Outreach Manager), Aidan McDonald (Administrative Assistant)

The meeting was called to order by Denny Hummer at 8:34 a.m.

Denny Hummer announced that an executive session was held prior to the meeting to discuss personnel matters. No actions or votes were taken.

Denny Hummer and Jennifer Wakeman began the meeting by introducing DRIVE's newest employee, Betsy Reichenbach, the new Business Outreach Manager. She will be primarily focused on DRIVE's Business retention and expansion efforts as well as developing DRIVE's social media strategy so we remain in touch with businesses across our region. Betsy will begin conducting virtual meetings with businesses in December.

**MINUTES:**

- November 4<sup>th</sup> 2020 Board Meeting: Motion by Dean Girton to accept the September 2<sup>nd</sup> minutes, Lance Diehl seconded the motion; carried unanimously.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Dan Knorr presented the Treasurer's Report.

DRIVE received additional CARES Act broadband income of \$1.6 million in November, so checking balances are temporarily high. An additional county contribution was also made in November as well. On the P&L, Dan pointed out additional multimodal project expenses.

Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report made by Joe Kantz, seconded by Trevor Finn; carried unanimously.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Jennifer Wakeman presented the Executive Director's report. A number of projects are wrapping up this month, including the multimodal project. We expect to file the closeout paperwork for the multimodal project with DCED later this month. The rail siding and access road are now complete.

Buildout of the broadband network is continuing. DRIVE office and project manager Tim Hippensteel reported that Conxx has three tower crews currently working on the broadband buildout, and DRIVE is finalizing agreements for a few other locations. The installation at the Anthony township was delayed due to extra mouting hardware needed, but once that tower is finalized, other areas that link to it will have service become available.

The former Days Inn property is scheduled to go to a hearing with Judge James later this month. The attorneys anticipate a ruling in our favor, allowing us to sell the property free and clear to the Liberty Group. That transfer may not take place until 2021.

Briar Creek and North Centre townships in Columbia County are working on a strategic development plan. Jennifer reported she had a great conversation with the Hailstone Group, consultants on the project. She commended the townships for making the investment in smart development planning.

The Joint Rail Authority received an ARC grant for a stormwater study of the Bloomsburg-Lime Ridge Corridor along route 11. Columbia County, Bloomsburg, and several local companies provided match funding for the grant. Andy Keister from McTish Kunkel conducted the study and made his final report in November. It considered a number of factors contributing to flooding along the road and made a number of recommendations for improvements. There are a number of stakeholders involved and the JRA staff in conjunction with Betsy Lockwood at SEDA COG continue to work to pull those stakeholders together for a future grant application.

### **Nominating Committee**

Lance Diehl reported he communicated with each of the nominating committee members and they are unanimously recommending the appointment of Dan Knorr by Montour County for a second 3-year term.

*Motion to recommend Dan Knorr for appointment by Montour County Commissioners for a second three-year term made by Lance Diehl, seconded by Dean Girton; Dan Knorr abstaining, carried unanimously.*

### **Finance Committee**

Dan Knorr presented on behalf of the finance committee. Dan reported he hadn't received any comments or suggestions on the 2021 draft operating budget since it was presented at the last

meeting. Dan said he wanted to circle back to the discussion in executive committee before seeking approval for the 2021 operating budget, since a decision on that will be reflected in any budget the board passes.

Over the past few months, at the staff level changes were made in titles, compensation, and our new employee. Those changes are already reflected in the draft operating budget for 2021. The item that wasn't changed was the Executive Director's compensation for 2021. At this point, Dan Knorr made a motion based on the recommendations of the finance and executive committees to set the Executive Director's salary compensation at \$91,500 for 2021, reflecting just shy of a 9 percent increase from 2021. Dan Knorr cited three reasons for the raise. First, the board completed an evaluation of the Executive Director, as they do every year. Second, the nature of the job and the organization has changed dramatically over the past year as we have added three counties. Third, the board wanted to make sure they were remaining competitive on salary regionally.

*Motion to set the 2021 salary compensation for the Executive Director at \$91,500 made by Dan Knorr, seconded by Joe Kantz; Commissioner Chris Young opposed, motion carries.*

Dan Knorr then asked for someone to make a motion to approve the 2021 operating budget with the amendment to reflect the Executive Director's new compensation. In response to a question from emeritus director Harold Hurst, Jennifer Wakeman and Dan Knorr clarified that this vote only reflects the operating budget, and does not include project related expenses.

*Motion to approve the 2021 operating budget with the modification reflecting the new compensation for the Executive Director made by Dean Girton, seconded by Trevor Finn; Commissioner Chris Young opposed, motion carries.*

## **New Business**

The DRIVE board considered a request received from Meghan Beck from the board the Susquehanna Valley Community Education Project to submit a letter of support for the new community college initiative. The board discussed the lack of available county funding for such a project. The board also discussed the existing community college options, many of which offer online programs now. After a discussion, the board decided to respectfully decline the request for a letter of support.

## 2021 DRIVE Board Meeting Times

DRIVE board meetings will continue to be held on the first Wednesday of the month at 8:30 AM. Information sessions for the board will be held at 8:00 am preceding the board meeting. Denny Hummer pointed out that a full hour will be allotted for board meetings, though we will endeavor

to keep meetings shorter out of respect for everyone's time.

At 9:15 am, Dean Girton made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Denny Hummer. Denny hummer wished everyone a happy and safe holiday season.

**NEXT MEETING:** The DRIVE Board meets again on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dean Girton, Secretary