



**DRIVE Board Meeting Minutes**  
April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** 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:** Kim Wheeler (SEDA-Cog), Bob Snyder, Harold Hurst, Harry Mathias, Bill Risse (Conxx), Todd Tanner (Conxx), Greg Pawley (Conxx), Tim Hippensteel (Project Manager), Betsy Reichenbach (Business Outreach Manager), Aidan McDonald (Facilities Manager).

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am. Jeb Stotter announced that an information session was held prior to the meeting regarding a potential real estate transaction. No actions or votes were taken.

**MINUTES:**

- March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021 Board Meeting and March 15<sup>th</sup> 2021 Special Board Meeting: Motion by Dean Girton to accept the March 3<sup>rd</sup> and March 15<sup>th</sup> minutes, Jeff Reber seconded the motion; carried unanimously.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Dan Knorr presented the Treasurer's Report.

He noted the board packet included all the usual financial reports. On the P & L year to date, Dan noted DRIVE had received the final multimodal grant reimbursement of \$117,000. DRIVE also received some income for management of the Greater Susquehanna Keystone Innovation Zone program from funding partners.

Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report made by Dave Park, seconded by Lance Diehl; carried unanimously.

**Guest Kim Wheeler, SEDA-COG Executive Director**

Jennifer Wakeman introduced Kim Wheeler, the new Executive Director of SEDA-COG. Wheeler gave a brief overview of her background and SEDA-COG's core services and mission for the board. She expressed a hope that SEDA COG and DRIVE could find ways to work together for the benefit of the region. Jennifer Wakeman thanked Kim Wheeler for her presentation, and said DRIVE

looks forward to having further discussions with SEDA-Cog in the future.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Jennifer Wakeman presented a brief update to the board regarding the status of some current projects. In April, she reported we expect to close on project Homestead and on the sale of the Days Inn. The sales agreement for Project Watchdog was executed and is on track to close in July. The DRIVE team continues to make progress on many fronts. The staff is working to better measure the economic impacts of DRIVE's work. At a minimum, we expect to provide semiannual reports on job creation and capital investment in the region as well as quarterly reports on activities and outcomes.

On April 1 we secured a new business in South Centre Township. A lease has been executed for the project, and ribbon cutting will take place later this spring. The board will be invited to attend. DRIVE has been working with several municipalities, specifically Bloomsburg, Milton, and Sunbury as they are considering enacting LERTA ordinances to incentivize growth and redevelopment in commercial and industrial properties. Jennifer Wakeman made presentations to the town, borough, and city councils, school districts, etc. to help move that process forward.

March was a very busy month for grants, since RACP opened up on March 1st and closed March 31st. DRIVE applied for a \$5 million RACP for Benton Foundry. They are planning a \$40 million expansion that will allow them to significantly grow their operation.

Additionally, Jennifer Wakeman reported she is working with Jeff Stover and the Joint Rail Authority on a \$2 million RACP for a site in Point Township, and consulted with Derrick Backer on a RACP for the former Celotex site in Sunbury. Awards will likely be announced at the end of summer if the announcement schedule remains the same as prior years.

### **Staff Report**

Betsy Reichenbach reported she has been conducting outreach visits to businesses virtually and in person over the past month. A detailed report of all visits was included in the board packet. She has been working through PREP and ENGAGE to fulfill all the requirements of those programs and attend all the required meetings. She said a monthly report on visits made will appear in all future board packets. Additionally, she asked the board members to let her know if they had any particular companies in mind for a near term visit.

### **Broadband Committee**

Tim Hippensteel reported that numerous sites have come on line in the past month and have been serving test customers. A number of sites will be available for service to the general public within a few weeks. Speed and test results have been strong. Tim then asked guests Bill Risse, Todd Tanner, and Greg Pawley of ConxxNE to provide a project update.

Greg Pawley reported 8 new last mile sites 2 new microwave relay sites have come online this month. They completed phase one, the main east west corridor from Catawissa to Hosterman

silo. Testing is showing top speeds of 135mbps download 11mbps upload. Phase 2 is complete, with links from USG to Anthony silo to Muncy hill online. Phase 3 which includes New Berlin, Selinsgrove, Port Trevorton, Trevorton, and Boyer Trail should be complete in next month. We are still working through permission issues to get microwaves up on Columbia 02 so we can connect to Benton and eventually Orangeville.

Tests have verified that the speeds and propagations from active sites are matching or exceeding the original performance expectations. A team is working on ongoing optimization and adjustments to the radios to make sure the network is delivering the best service possible. In April, the Mayberry township site should come online as well.

With most sites ready to serve customers in the near future, the DRIVE team is working with the network ISP Skypacket to help get the word out about the service and coordinate marketing efforts.

Mr. Harry Mathias questioned Conxx regarding prior reports and the accuracy of their reports and project timeline estimates. He questioned the timelines previously given for completion of the Catawissa an Orangeville sites. The Catawissa site has been now operational for two weeks and is in testing. The Orangeville monopole is still in transit, with a delivery estimate in mid May. Supply chain issues have led to significant backlogs. While the pole was expected to arrive in April, its expected delivery was pushed into May. Conxx was able to avoid a delay with the Mayberry township installation by trading their pole on order with another company for an in-stock pole. Mr. Mathias also questioned Conxx regarding the delays in getting the Columbia 02 site on line. Conxx and the DRIVE team explained the delay was the result of the administrator for the tower site changing several times in the past year due to state police changes and corporate mergers and acquisitions.

After 20 minutes, Commissioner Trevor Finn pointed out that the East Central Emergency Network (Columbia-Montour 911) project for upgrading to P25 radios, that they promised first responders a tower would be up and in testing by the time leaves started showing up on trees. That tower is still not up, and they have faced some of the same challenges Conxx has had with the network build. Commissioner Finn suggested DRIVE add a spot for public comment on the agenda, and limit public comment to that spot.

Commissioner Joe Kantz pointed out that various local groups have been discussing the need for better broadband access for well over a decade, with no action. This project is the first significant internet infrastructure project of its kind in the region, and that despite the delays, to complain about a six-month delay on project completion takes a short view of history on the topic.

Jeb Stotter asked whether a grid could be emailed to the board every couple weeks with an update on the status of the project due to the demand for information and the amount of time spent on the topic. The board agreed and Jennifer Wakeman asked Tim Hippensteel and the

Conxx team to prepare such reports.

## **Property Committee**

Aidan McDonald reported an exciting month at the DRIVE Profession Building, beginning with Mark Burke graduating from the StartUp Danville Incubator and moving into a larger space leased from DRIVE. The entire current main StartUp Danville space will soon be leased to a new company beginning in May, leaving no space available for new StartUp Danville customers. The SBDC has proposed leasing an approximately 2400 square foot space in the front of the building to develop as an incubator expansion. The proposed terms include a 50/50 revenue share from the venture, with all renovation costs and responsibilities falling on the SBDC.

*Motion to approve a 50/50 revenue share lease with the Bucknell SBDC for expansion of the StartUp Danville Incubator made by Joe Kantz, seconded by Trevor Finn; carried unanimously.*

DRIVE also has an opportunity to lease a small space of approximately 600 square feet to Skypacket, the Internet Service Provider for the DRIVE Wireless Network, as a base of operations for their installation team.

*Motion to approve a lease with Skypacket/ConxxNE for \$400 per month with an annual CPI escalator for a five year term made by Dean Girton, seconded by Leslie Temple; carried unanimously.*

Aidan McDonald reported the DRIVE office expansion project is well underway, with work scheduled to be completed before the end of the month. DRIVE expects to move into the new space by early May.

## **Old Business**

### **Project Underground**

Jennifer Wakeman reported DRIVE has received an offer from a company for Project Underground. The company sent a sales agreement back with a few changes from the original version prepared by Karen Hackman. Jennifer said she was sending the sales agreement as written with changes highlighted to the board with a request for any comments. The property committee will meet Thursday April 8<sup>th</sup> to vet the document and review any comments received from the board. We may call a special meeting prior to the regular May meeting to address the agreement to keep Project Underground moving forward.

At 9:40 am, Jeb Stotter made a motion to adjourn.

**NEXT MEETING:** The DRIVE Board meets again on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dean Girton, Secretary