

REAP Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Wichita Workforce Center

2021 N Amidon Ave, #1100

Wichita, KS 67203

June 1, 2023 ~ 11:30 am

1. Welcome and Introductions: Pete Meitzner, Chair

2. **Approval of Minutes from the Special Executive Committee Meeting from May 9, 2023**

Chip Westfall noted he was listed as representing Harvey County EDC and that he is now an individual member of REAP. This change will be noted on the minutes.

ACTION TAKEN: Mayor Tom Brown (McPherson) made a motion to approve the REAP Executive Committee Special Meeting Minutes with the change referenced above. Mayor Bryan Chapman (Sedgwick) seconded. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. **2023 Kansas Legislature Update:**

- Josh Svaty provided a summary of the 2023 Legislative Session and a plan to engage the South Central Kansas Legislative Delegation over the summer and into the fall.
- Svaty reported on some issues affecting REAP communities:
 - The legislature passed a large tax bill with implications for sales tax revenue particularly for those communities with STAR bond districts that was vetoed by the Governor. The legislature attempted to override the veto twice but failed.
 - Budget ended well for South Central Kansas and while the area did not receive all of the requested funding; however, some of the funding provided was for mental health and child care issues.
 - No action was taken on the Heartland Flyer. There has been some difficulties with gathering support.
 - \$35,000,000 a year for five years was appropriated with the largest amount to go to water plant fund, which may have some substantial implications for REAP communities possibly beginning in year two.
- Chairman Meitzner asked about the possible property tax cap. Svaty responded that this the number one priority of the chair of the senate tax committee. There will be more property tax bills next session, which makes it difficult for local governments to budget.
- Vice Mayor Hoheisel asked if there was information regarding what the state planned to do with opioid settlement funds, whether it would be disbursed amongst individuals or groups. Svaty responded that it would likely be managed in similar fashion as the tobacco settlement in years past, but no information has been announced.
- There was discussion regarding how to engage the South Central Kansas delegation over the summer. Lawing and Kimberly Svaty met with State Representatives KC Ohaebosim and Leah Howell. They have requested a series of tours for legislators to see some of the key things they have been investing in and are related to current and pending legislation. Tours will be planned around the following areas:

- Kansas University – WSU Health Science School, mental health, aviation industry, APEX funding (Integra Technologies), infrastructure and economic development impact (water plant) and transportation (air service, passenger rail, K254 Highway Corridor study).
- REAP members are encouraged to attend and participate as well as to take the time to invite legislators representing their areas to participate in the tours as reinforcement.
- The tours will culminate in an issue forum in the fall possibly as a revamped event of the regular issues forum that occurs during that time. More information will be provided.

Report was received and filed.

4. Heartland Flyer Update

- Cory Davis with the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) provided an update on efforts to expand Amtrak train service from Oklahoma City to Newton.
- Two months ago, KDOT submitted a grant application for funding support in partnership with the Oklahoma and Texas Departments of Transportation.
 - The funding would pay for the planning that needs to go into the project and possibly qualify for other federal funds to pay for environmental clearances, design and infrastructure improvement costs.
 - KDOT feels that the application is in a very favorable position and is working with a consulting team on a service development plan to provide information to the stakeholders and elected officials as to whether project should move forward in Kansas.
 - As part of the public engagement process, two public virtual meetings will be scheduled that will be led by the consultant group. The purpose of the first meeting will be to better describe some specifics about the service development plan to stakeholders and elected officials. The second meeting will discuss the numbers resulting from the plan including ridership estimates, revenue and cost.
 - There is a citizen activism movement to expand service to multiple stops not just to Newton. Officials have determined there is a need to insure the initial connection and then look at others later.
 - Satterthwaite asked if there is mapping available from KDOT that shows how routes and connections are to work. Existing and planned routes can be found at <https://www.amtrakconnectsus.com/>

Report was received and filed.

5. Wichita Transit Advisory Board Appointment

- REAP has a board member appointment to the Wichita Transit Advisory Board (WTAB). Troy Tabor of Andover, served as REAP's representative on the board, but recently vacated this position.

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- In order to obtain some clarity about what the role and responsibilities are for REAP on this board, Chairman Meitzner and staff would like to defer this item until the next meeting.
- There are employment issues related to public transit; there is no service to some major employers in the region. The City of Wichita is limited by federal rules to provide service only within the city's boundaries; changes and expansion of the current model is needed to meet the needs of employers and their employees and benefit the economic development of the entire region.
- There is a current study being done by WAMPO to connect the Wichita transit system to adjacent communities such as Derby and Haysville.
- Further discussion with the City of Wichita is needed to move forward. Michael Tann, Transit Director of the WTA will be invited to attend the July 6th meeting to provide more information on the Transit Advisory Board. REAP members interested in learning more about this position were asked to contact Keith Lawing.

ACTION TAKEN: Council Member Homer Henry (Andover) made a motion to table the appointment of a REAP member to the Wichita Transit Advisory Board until the July meeting. Mayor Ashley Velazquez (Kechi) seconded. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Small Community Air Service Development Grant Application

- Valerie Wise, Wichita Dwight D. Eisenhower National Airport, provided an update on expanding commercial air service. Every year, the US Dept. of Transportation offers a Small Community Air Service Development program.
 - The airport submitted an application in May for \$1,000,000 to attract non-stop service to an east coast hub with an emphasis on Washington DC. One-third of air traffic from Wichita goes to the east coast. Charlotte, NC is also a possibility; it is the 3rd largest airline hub in the world.
 - The \$1,000,000 would be used as a minimum revenue guarantee, which covers the cost of new service as well as a small profit. The airport raised \$528,000 in matching funds for which REAP pledged \$10,000; they also received \$327,000 in in-kind marketing support and 21 letters of support from cities in the REAP region. American Airlines has provided a letter of support.
 - Awarding of the grants is expected to be in October.
 - Airport officials have been meeting with state legislators regarding adopting a Statewide Air Service program; Wise encouraged REAP members to add to their legislative agenda.
 - This issue requires a deeper conversation regarding strategy and will be discussed at future meetings. Randy Frazer, Arkansas City is REAP's representative to the Airport Advisory Board.

Report was received and filed

7. Affordable Connectivity Program Outreach Strategy

- The Kansas Department of Commerce are working with communities to provide greater awareness and outreach on the Affordable Connectivity Program.

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- The program assists eligible households with discounts for broadband services in order to increase access.
- Barnes made a presentation to the Committee at its meeting in April. There are problems with messaging and outreach about the program and a need to address barriers to enrollment. There is a large amount of available funds in this program that are not being utilized; these funds are available until they run out.
- REAP staff are developing outreach plans to increase the number of people accessing this program in South Central Kansas. Staff will be presenting a plan on this issue to members at a future meeting and would like to ramp these efforts up toward the end of the summer.
- Members were asked to provide staff with ideas on how they can assist on this effort in their community, for example putting flyers in water bills, etc. Committee members offered suggestions.

8. Other Business - Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce City-to-City Trip

- The Wichita Regional Chamber's City-to-City trip is scheduled for July 12th through July 14th to Colorado Springs, Colorado.
- REAP usually sends a few members on these trips each year. Katie Dawes, REAP Executive Director will be attending. Mayor Velazquez and Mayor Brown expressed an interest in attending.
- Lawing will follow up on available funds and schedules to confirm the other attendee(s).

ACTION TAKEN: Council Member Homer Henry (Andover) made a motion to approve sending interested REAP members to the Chamber's City-to-City Trip to depending on availability and funding. Mayor Bryan Chapman (Sedgwick) seconded. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. Community Updates

- The Sedgwick County Election office needs more office and poll workers. Members located in the county were asked to promote opportunities.
- The Clearwater City Council lost Council Member Tex Titterington over the weekend; his funeral will be held tomorrow, June 2nd.
- Senator Kerschen has announced he will not seek reelection for his seat in western Kansas; Senator Blasi will run to replace him.
- The Andover YMCA continues to rebound from last year's tornado and a new water park has opened.

10. Adjourn

NEXT MEETING: The next REAP Executive Committee meeting will be Thursday, July 6, 2023, at 11:30 a.m.

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Attendees:

Name	City	In Person	Zoom
Will Black	Haysville		X
Tim Boese	GMD2		X
Mayor Tom Brown	McPherson	X	
Lauren Clary	Kansas Gas Service	X	
Mayor Bryan Chapman	Sedgwick	X	
Cory Davis	Kansas Department of Transportation		X
Council Member Nick Engel	Derby		X
Randy Frazier	Arkansas City	X	
Council Member Homer Henry	Andover	X	
Council Member Mike Hoheisel	Wichita		X
Council Member Charles Jennings	Arkansas City	X	
Mayor Russ Kessler	Haysville		X
Council Member Don Koci	Colwich/Burns & McDonnell		X
Kelly McElroy	Newton		X
Commissioner Pete Meitzner	Sedgwick County	X	
Kristi Northcutt	Lindsborg		X
Chad Parasa	WAMPO	X	
Rex Satterthwaite	Individual Member	X	
Council Member Justin Shore	Clearwater	X	
Josh Svaty	Gencur Svaty Public Affairs	X	
Mayor Ashley Velazquez	Kechi	X	
James Williams	Black Hills	X	
Valerie Wise	Wichita Airport	X	
Chip Westfall	Individual Member	X	