

**Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County
Approved
Wednesday, May 15, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

Name/Organization

Voting Members

Victoria Allen, RWJBarnabas Health
Anthony Tufaro, Ethicon Somerville
Scarlett Doyle, Bridgewater Planner
Chuck McMullin, Mayor, Raritan Borough
Angela Knowles, Raritan Borough Planner
Lisa Werner, Somerville Planning Board
Richard St. Pierre, Somerville
Brian Gallagher, Somerset County (SC) Board of Chosen Freeholders
Bernie Navatto, SC Planning Board
Walter Lane, SC Planning Division
Geoffrey Soriano, SC Park Commission
Cindie Sullivan, SC Park Commission (Alternate)
Michael Kerwin, SC Business Partnership

Non-voting County Support Staff

James Ruggieri, SC Planning Division

Non-Voting Guests

Kyle Clonan , NJ Water Supply Authority (NJWSA)
Rich Reitman, The Reitman Group

The meeting commenced at 5:00 PM

Business Items

Call to Order

Principal Planner and Regional Center Partnership Secretary James Ruggieri called the meeting to order.

Attendance Roll Call

Mr. Ruggieri read through the roll call and noted for the record the voting members that were in attendance.

Secretary's Remarks

Mr. Ruggieri noted that neither Chair Troy Fischer nor Vice-Chair Jason Dameo could attend the meeting and that Mr. Ruggieri will chair the meeting in their stead.

Adoption of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Ruggieri asked if there were any corrections to the meeting minutes; there being none, Mr. Ruggieri asked for a motion to approve the March 20, 2019 meeting minutes. Somerset County Planning Director Walter Lane moved and Somerset County Freeholder Brian Gallagher seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken resulting in the following voting record:

Ayes: 11
Nays: 0
Abstentions: 0

The motion to approve the minutes was approved.

Treasurer’s Report for May 15, 2019

Mr. Ruggieri noted that the Treasurer’s Report for May 15, 2019 was previously forwarded to the voting members as an attachment with the meeting reminder. Mr. Ruggieri asked if there were any questions regarding the Treasurer Report; there being no questions or comments, Mr. Ruggieri asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report for May 15, 2019. Somerset County Planning Board Chair Bernie Navatto moved and Mr. Lane seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken resulting in the following voting record:

Ayes: Vicky Allen, Tony Tufaro, Scarlett Doyle, Chuck McMullin, Angela Knowles, Rick St. Pierre, Brian Gallagher, Bernie Navatto, Walter Lane, Geoff Soriano, and Mike Kerwin.
Nays: none
Abstentions: none

The motion was approved.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comments concerning the Action items on the agenda.

Action Items

Potential Change to Raritan Borough Creative Placemaking Challenge Grant Project

Mr. Lane noted that he received an email from the Mayor of Raritan advising that the Borough’s Bench Art Creative Placemaking Challenge Grant project has experienced some unexpected difficulties involving the implementation of the bench art aspect of the project; in light of this, the Borough is requesting if it would be okay if they submitted a new creative placemaking project for consideration for funding and, if this is acceptable, are requesting conceptual approval to submit a substitute creative placemaking project while they continue to explore possible alternative projects. Everyone was in agreement with Raritan’s request.

Mr. Ruggieri asked for a voice vote to conceptually approve Raritan submitting a substitute Creative Placemaking Challenge Grant project proposal which resulted in the following voice vote record:

Ayes: 11
Nays: 0
Abstentions: 0

The request to conceptually approve the submission of a substitute Creative Placemaking Challenge Grant project proposal was approved.

Audit Report (non-action item)

At this point in the meeting Mr. Ruggieri reported that Suplee Clooney & Company had just submitted a draft of the audit report for the year ending December 31, 2018 and that the audit report indicates everything is in order. Mr. Ruggieri noted that no action is required. After staff has finished reviewing the draft audit report the final audit report will be made available to anyone interested in reviewing it.

Awarding of Contract for Website Design/Development and Implementation Services

(Marketing Consultant Rich Reitman excused himself from the meeting before any discussion commenced about the awarding of the contract to provide website design/development and implementation services.)

Mr. Ruggieri reported that on March 27 the Request For Proposal for website design/development and implementation services was released. Mr. Ruggieri summarized the six scope of work (SOW) tasks. An Addendum with Questions & Answers was subsequently posted due to the large volume of technical questions staff received which also required extending the proposal submission deadline from April 25 to April 30. Seven (7) proposals were received by the April 30 deadline. All 7 proposals were reviewed by County Purchasing and found to be technically complete for evaluation. All 7 proposals were then evaluated and ranked by a review team using weighted scoring criteria. With a possible maximum score of 450, one vendor -Park Circle Technologies of Short Hills, NJ - received the highest score (398 points) and was clearly ranked higher than the other proposals. Based on the results, Park Circle Technologies score of 398 was 23 points above the 2nd highest ranked proposal (375) and 59 points above the third-highest ranked proposal (339). Mr. Ruggieri noted that staff shared these results with the Marketing and Executive Committees.

Park Circle Technologies cost proposal to perform the six SOW tasks is \$13,499; the Not to Exceed amount per the RFP is \$15,000. Mr. Ruggieri noted they were neither the highest nor the lowest bidder.

Following some brief discussion, Mr. Ruggieri said that, if there are no objections, the recommendation is to award the contract to Park Circle Technologies to perform the website design/development and implementation SOW tasks for \$13,499.

Raritan Mayor Charles McMullin moved to award the website design/development and implementation services contract to Park Circle Technologies for \$13,499; Mr. Navatto seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken resulting in the following voting record:

- Ayes: Vicky Allen, Tony Tufaro, Scarlett Doyle, Chuck McMullin, Angela Knowles, Rick St. Pierre, Brian Gallagher, Bernie Navatto, Walter Lane, Geoff Soriano, and Mike Kerwin.
- Nays: none
- Abstentions: none

The motion was approved.

Information Items

Strategic Economic Development Activities (Suburban Disadvantage) Phase 2 Update

Somerset County Business Partnership President & CEO Mike Kerwin reported on the status of the Strategic Economic Development Activities Phase 2 in relation to the status of the state's Grow NJ economic development incentives program and the "Suburban Disadvantage" issue. Mr. Kerwin noted that there has been a lot of political drama among top state leaders in relation to the Grow NJ program which is scheduled to expire June 30. Mr. Kerwin described how we can best position ourselves to support Somerset County's interests. Mr. Kerwin noted that the Regional Center Partnership's (RCP) support with Somerset County to undertake the Grow NJ analysis work in 2018 and the subsequent strategic work by the Business Partnership to educate state legislators about the Suburban Disadvantage issue has resulted in Somerset County being promised a seat at the table for discussion with the legislature and that any future legislative hearings about Grow NJ will provide the opportunity to present Somerset County's perspective on this issue.

Mr. Kerwin also recommended we calmly and strategically articulate our case as has been done in the *Ensuring the Economic Competitiveness of New Jersey* report prepared by Somerset County Business Partnership Vice-President for Economic Development John Maddocks. The report makes a compelling case about why Governor Phil Murphy and the state legislature need to act quickly and come up with an agreement on the modification and extension of the State's current economic development incentives program. Mr. Kerwin also noted Mr. Mike McGuinness of the National Association of Industrial Office Parks (NAIOP) has tentatively agreed to work with the Business Partnership on this matter. Mr. Kerwin also noted that on May 14 North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) completed a study ("Accessibility to Major Employment Centers" by Together North Jersey) documenting where the jobs are located in New Jersey in terms of seven "industry clusters." The study shows that Somerset County leads the state in 3 of the 7 major industry clusters for job creation including Bridgewater and Raritan Borough. Mr. Kerwin also described how the NJTPA study underscores the need for one-seat ride service along the Raritan Valley line not just for direct access to the tri-state region's "Core" (New York City) but arguably to better connect the "Core" to Somerset County's clusters of industry jobs.

Discussion followed about the status of the Grow NJ program. Mr. Kerwin summarized the results of a meeting Somerset County leaders had with the Governor's staff and what might happen to Grow NJ if the legislature does not support the Governor's "five-pillar" economic plan for New Jersey. Mr. Lane shared that he just learned that a bill had just been introduced to extend Grow NJ and the other economic development incentive programs beyond the June 30, 2019 expiration date. Following the discussion, Mr. Kerwin distributed copies of the aforementioned report *Ensuring the Economic Competitiveness of New Jersey*.

Marketing Update

Mr. Reitman reported that he finished and distributed the March Newsletter and is working with staff to finalize the May newsletter. He also completed the draft Annual Achievements Report for 2018 which has been submitted for staff review. Mr. Reitman continues to provide weekly Analytics to staff and is provide routine website updates. He drafted a Regional Center version of the Grow NJ press release and prepared a rain barrel rebate press release. He has prepared an ad for Central Jersey Jazz Fest program and is working on a Regional Center ad for the Memorial Day Somerville bike race program.

Discussion followed about posting the aforementioned Business Partnership's *Ensuring the Economic Competitiveness of New Jersey* report on the RCP's website.

Municipal and Other Reports:

Raritan Mayor Chuck McMullin shared that the lack of clarity at the state level regarding regulatory control of the commercial production and/or distribution of medical and recreational marijuana has created a basic

dilemma for towns in New Jersey like Raritan Borough that have opted not to outright ban medical/recreational marijuana from within their respective municipal borders and as such need to process land development applications involving the commercial use of recreational marijuana amidst almost unanimous public opposition to recreational pot dispensaries putting Raritan in a difficult situation; in light of this, Mayor McMullin said he welcomes any input or advice on this matter.

Mayor McMullin reported that on May 14 the Borough approved the municipal budget with a flat tax. Mayor McMullin also reported there is a lot of utility –related construction work underway in much of Raritan Borough south of Route 202 while American Water and PSEG make improvements. LabCorp’s expansion project is progressing forward. The parking deck for the residential redevelopment project at First Avenue and Third Street is under construction. The Borough appointed local resident Eva Torres as a children’s ambassador for military families whose mother or father is away serving in the military; Mayor McMullin encouraged other towns to consider doing likewise. Raritan has entered into a joint venture with Manville Borough for solid waste disposal. Mayor McMullin thanked the County and surrounding towns for their support, advice and guidance to the Borough as Raritan experiences substantial growth activity.

Some discussion followed about the status of the current legislative effort to legalize recreational use of marijuana and the challenges this presents to towns.

Bridgewater Township Planner Scarlett Doyle reported the proposed Bridgewater Hills mixed-use land development application on Frontier Road will be reviewed in June; the project proposes two hotels, restaurant, banquet hall, and adult day-care center. Another development application is proposing a three-lot subdivision at 999 and 1001 Frontier Road which is in for review by the Zoning Board of Adjustment in June but may end up being reviewed by the Planning Board. The proposed Heritage Inn at Bridgewater project proposing two (2) new hotels at the former Days Inn on Route 22 East was approved with conditions and is moving forward. Nearby on Route 22 East at Morgan Lane the Bridgewater Choice/Goddard School application is proposing a hotel and child care center.

Following up to a discussion held during the July 18, 2018 RCP Business Meeting, Ms. Doyle reiterated the importance of marketing the Regional Center through use of promotional videos for use in the hotels in the Route 22 corridor to inform hotel patrons about where to eat and activities to pursue in the Regional Center especially in light of the number of hotels being proposed. Ms. Doyle noted during the land development application review process the hotel developers have indicated a willingness to include a community channel in their hotel rooms and, in light of this, recommended RCP consider allocating funding to develop such a video.

Ms. Doyle also reported that Trader Joe’s has announced they will be locating at Bridgewater Promenade; they made the announcement after receiving Township approval as the unnamed “specialty grocery store” at Bridgewater Promenade.

Somerville Local private/institutional sector representative Rick St. Pierre reported there is a lot going on in Somerville including the Village Brewery which celebrated a ribbon cutting on May 15. On May 16 about 1,400 people attended the Ladies Night Out. The Memorial Day bike race is coming up. Mr. St. Pierre concluded his report by reminding everyone not to forget about Main Street in Somerville.

Raritan (cont’d) At the request of Mayor McMullin, Raritan Borough Planner Angela Knowles reported that a day care center has been proposed as phase 2 of the Quick Chek development on the Somerville Circle. As an update to Raritan’s Phase 2 Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Challenge Grant project, Ms. Knowles also reported that a subcommittee meeting has been held. The next step is to divide the town into four quadrants and to conduct a neighborhood meeting in each quadrant to hear from residents about challenges and opportunities for biking and walking and for making connections all of which will be part of the initiative to update the Borough’s Circulation Plan Element of the Raritan Borough Master Plan.

Some discussion followed. Mr. Lane offered to share any feedback from the County's Walk/Bike/Hike study pertaining to Raritan. Ms. Knowles also reported that about 40 attended the February wayfinding workshop followed by the kickoff meeting with the engineers to implement the construction of the wayfinding improvements.

Somerset County Park Commission

Somerset County Park Commission Secretary/Director Geoffrey Soriano and Somerset County Park Commission Deputy Director/Leisure Services Cindie Sullivan reported that the next big County Park Commission project is construction of the bike pathway linking the Nevius Street bridge to Duke Farms; construction of the pathway will commence this summer.

New Jersey Water Supply Authority

New Jersey Water Supply Authority Assistant Watershed Protection Specialist Kyle Clonan reported that he attended the Earth Day events in Bridgewater and Raritan and is reaching out to Somerville in a similar effort. He added that the County Park Commission has been helpful supporting the Raritan River Rain Barrel Rebate Program and that there has been much activity involving the Raritan River Rain Barrel Rebate Program.

Somerset County Planning Board Mr. Lane reported that on May 22 at the next quarterly Planning Partners Forum two representatives from the US Census Bureau will speak about how towns can partner with the Census Bureau to make sure they have a complete count for the 2020 Census. The County Board of Chosen Freeholders recently adopted a resolution forming a Complete Count Committee who will be reaching out to the towns and non-profit organizations to ensure everyone who resides in Somerset County is counted since a lot of federal funding allocations are based on the census count results.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comments concerning regarding any items not on the agenda.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County

**Treasurer's Report for
March 20 thru April 30, 2019**

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Business Checking

3/20/19 thru 4/30/19

Starting Bal. as of 3/20/2019: \$66,858.27

less expenses:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
4/2/19	SC Business Partnership: 1st grant payment for Strategic Econ Dev Activities Phase 2	\$20,000.00
4/2/19	NJ Advance Media	\$85.25
4/2/19	NJ Press Media Solutions	\$34.40
4/5/19	Twp of Bridgewater	\$7,500.00
4/9/19	Boro of Somerville	\$7,500.00
4/10/19	Boro of Raritan	\$7,500.00
4/17/19	The Reitman Group	\$1,500.00

subtotal of expenses: **\$44,119.65**

Deposits 3/20/19 thru 4/30/19

subtotal of deposits **\$0.00**

**Ending Balance (checking)
after expenses and deposits: **\$22,738.62****

Sum of checking and money market
accounts: **\$189,739.55**

Less total Committed But Not Expend: **\$158,525.00**

Uncommitted Funds **\$31,214.55**

Money Market Account

3/20/19 thru 4/30/19

Starting Bal. as of 3/20/2019: \$156,100.41

<u>Date*</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
3/31/2019	interest	\$5.30
4/23/2019	dep-Bridgewater Twp	\$10,890.00
4/30/2019	interest	\$5.22
ending bal as of 4/30/19		\$167,000.93

**interest earned in the money
market account is not reported
by bank until after the end of
the previous month*

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Table Showing Amounts Committed but Not Expended

<u>Budget Year</u>	<u>Project Initiation Year</u>	<u>Munic or RC</u>	<u>Committed Account Name</u>	<u>Current Balance</u>
2017		BW	(reserved for Bridgewater Creative Placemakg Grant)	\$15,000.00
2017	2018	RT	For Creative Placemaking Challenge Grants	\$7,500.00
2017	2019	SV	For Creative Placemaking Challenge Grants	\$7,500.00
2017	2018	BW	Bridgewater Pedestrian Safety Challenge Grant	\$7,500.00
2017	2018	RT	Raritan Ped Safety Chall Grant StreetSmart Campaign	\$5,375.00
2017	2018	RT	Raritan Ped Safety Chall Grant Traffic Striping Imp	\$4,250.00
2018	2019	RC	Audit/tax services for year 2018 (contract Year 2)	\$3,400.00
2018		RC	Allocation for Website Upgrade	\$17,500.00
2018		RC	Strategic Marketing Plan & Implementation Activities	\$30,000.00
2018	2019	RC	Strategic Initiatives	\$20,000.00
2018		BW	Bridgewater Phase 2 Pedestrian Safety Enhan Chall Grant	\$7,500.00
2018		RT	Raritan Phase 2 Pedestrian Safety Enhan Chall Grant	\$7,500.00
2018	2019	SV	Somerville Phase 2 Pedestrian Safety Enhan Chall Grant	\$7,500.00
2019	2019	RC	Principal Marketing Services (contract Year 2)	\$18,000.00
TOTAL:				\$158,525.00

Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County

**Treasurer's Report for
March 20 thru April 30, 2019**

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Anticipated Revenue for 2019
(excluding interest payments from Money Mkt acct)

Somerset Co	\$65,792.25
Raritan	\$10,890.00
Somerville	\$10,890.00
Total Anticipated Revenue	\$87,572.25

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Raritan River Rain Barrel Rebate Program
3/20/19 thru 4/30/19

Starting Bal. as of 3/20/2019:

\$4,177.35

<u>Date</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount of Deductions</u>
		\$0.00

subtotal of deductions: \$0.00

ending balance after deductions **\$4,177.35**

Deposit (if any)

subtotal of any Deposits \$0.00

ending Balance after any Deposits: **\$4,177.35**

REGIONAL CENTER PARTNERSHIP OF SOMERSET COUNTY, INC.

Business Meeting of May 15, 2019

AGENDA

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Chair's Remarks
4. Adoption of Meeting Minutes: March 20 , 2019
5. Adoption of Treasurer's Report for May 15 , 2019

ACTION ITEMS

"Public comments will be entertained at this time regarding any action item. All comments shall be directed to the Chair and limited to three (3) minutes per speaker."

1. Potential Change to Raritan Borough Creative Placemaking Challenge Grant Project
2. Awarding of Contract for Website Upgrade

INFORMATION ITEMS

3. Strategic Economic Development Activities (Suburban Disadvantage) Phase 2 Update
4. Marketing Update
5. Municipal and Other Reports

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Public comments will be entertained at this time regarding any items not on the agenda. All comments shall be directed to the Chair and limited to three (3) minutes per speaker.

Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, July 17, 2019 at 5:00PM in County Engineering Conference Room

Ensuring the Economic Competiveness of New Jersey

Michael V. Kerwin, President & CEO, Somerset County Business Partnership

New Jersey is in a tough position. As with every other state throughout the country, we are consistently fighting for growth. This means fighting for new businesses, while at the same time trying to hold onto businesses currently operating in the State. Over the past few months, there has been an active debate regarding New Jersey's use of business attraction and retention incentives, specifically the Grow New Jersey Assistance Program (Grow NJ). While the current Grow NJ program is certainly far from perfect, with some minor changes, it can and should remain an important part of the State's economic development toolkit.

In a perfect world, New Jersey would be competitive without the need for business attraction and retention incentives. Doing business here would be economically efficient, the cost of living would not be as high, and it would be 70 degrees and sunny all year around. Imagine the possibilities—it would be easy to attract and retain businesses. New Jersey wouldn't have to fight tooth and nail, just hoping to get a shot at making a case for why New Jersey is a great place for a business to operate. In reality, that is not the case. In the real world, we are not only competing with our neighboring states, we are competing with states throughout the country. On a regular basis, we hear about companies growing operations in the Southeast or Midwest. While those states are selling the promise of reducing a businesses' overall operating costs, they are also offering aggressive business incentives.

Let's be clear – New Jersey is an amazing place to live and work. We possess many assets that companies desire, including a highly educated workforce, and incredible access to consumers, both domestically and internationally. The State is also home to amazing natural resources, including the Jersey Shore and the Kittatinny Mountains—to name a few.

However, unfortunately, by every significant economic metric, New Jersey ranks at or near the bottom of our peer states. While our skilled labor force and natural resources have allowed us to attract and retain businesses that may otherwise be lured away, simply put, these factors are often far outweighed by the otherwise costly, difficult, and inefficient nature of doing business in New Jersey.

Other states throughout the country have recognized the challenges businesses in New Jersey face. On a daily basis, representatives of other states are meeting with New Jersey-based businesses in an effort to recruit them – and the people they employ – to locations outside of New Jersey.

No one supports corporate welfare. We all expect our state government and private sector employers to act in the best interest of the citizens of New Jersey. However, we also recognize that we operate in a competitive environment, where customers – i.e., businesses which employ our residents – have choices.

New Jersey is selling a “service” to businesses and the people they employ; our school systems, educated workforce, transportation networks, environmental protections, parks, open space, and more. Our competitors are selling these same services, only at a much lower cost and with much greater efficiency.

The fact that New Jersey would offer to reduce the cost of doing business through a targeted incentive program – for a defined, limited period of time – is not an unreasonable proposition. When such a program is required, by statute, to generate a net economic benefit to the State, some would argue that it’s a no brainer.

The Grow NJ program is set to expire on June 30, 2019. It is up our Governor and the Legislature to act quickly to modify and extend the current program. New Jersey should not unilaterally disarm. To drastically scale back, or eliminate, business incentive programs would be an unnecessary unforced error.

As the Governor and the Legislature work to come up with an agreement on the modification and extension of the State’s current incentive program, we offer the following suggestions:

1. Business assistance programs should continue to be linked directly to job creation and/or retention, and private sector economic investment. These metrics reflect directly the goals of state business assistance programs. They are also specific, measurable, and relevant to the assistance offered while also producing indirect economic benefits.
2. Business assistance programs should be available in every community in New Jersey seeking a better economic environment for its residents. *Under the current program, nearly 500 of 565 New Jersey communities are greatly limited in their ability to utilize the Grow NJ program in efforts to attract new businesses.* This provision should be eliminated. Doing so will enable our state, our communities, and businesses of all sizes to all achieve their full potential.
3. Business assistance programs should be tied to state and local planning policies. The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan identifies areas where much of the new development and redevelopment should occur. Municipalities have the ability to designate areas in need of redevelopment or rehabilitation. Some of our communities have established business or special improvement districts. State policies and local planning and redevelopment efforts should be strongly supported in business assistance programs with a focus on smaller Main Street businesses and communities.
4. There should be rigorous oversight and efficient administration of business assistance programs. This can be partially achieved by focusing on job creation and/or retention, and private sector economic investment metrics, where performance and net benefit tests can be applied easily. Where performance has been documented, the transfer of benefits should be administered efficiently and without delay.

We look forward to continuing to be part of the discussion and working hard to make New Jersey an attractive place for businesses for years to come.