

**Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County
Approved
Thursday, November 12, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

The meeting was convened by means of video conference.

Name/Organization

Voting Members

Jason Dameo, Vice-Chair, RCP
Victoria Allen, RWJBarnabas Health
Matt Moench, Mayor, Bridgewater
Filipe Pedroso, Bridgewater Twp. Council
Michael Pappas, Bridgewater Administrator
Andrew Fresco, Bridgewater
Zachary Bray, Mayor, Raritan Borough
Michael Patente, Raritan Borough Council
Angela Knowles, Raritan Borough Planner
Dennis Sullivan, Mayor, Somerville
Deirdre Rosinski, Somerville Planning Board
Brian Gallagher, Somerset County (SC) Board of Chosen Freeholders
Walter Lane, SC Planning Division
Cindie Sullivan, SC Park Commission (Alternate)
Chris Edwards, SC Business Partnership

Non-voting County Support Staff

James Ruggieri, SC Planning Division

Non-Voting Guests

Barry Ableman, NJ Office for Planning Advocacy
Phil Decker, Somerville Resident
Chrys Harttraft, Somerset County Vocational & Technical Schools
Rich Reitman, The Reitman Group
Kevin Sluka, Borough of Somerville

The meeting commenced at 5:00 PM.

Business Items

Call to Order

RCP Vice-Chair Jason Dameo called the meeting to order.

Attendance Roll Call

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

Chair's Remarks

Vice-Chair Jason Dameo welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Adoption of Meeting Minutes

Vice-Chair Dameo asked if there were any corrections to the meeting minutes. There being no comments, Vice-Chair Dameo asked for a motion to approve the September 16, 2020 meeting minutes; Somerset County Planning Director Walter Lane moved and Bridgewater Mayor Matt Moench seconded the motion.

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

Ayes: 12
Nays: 0
Abstentions: 0

The motion to approve the minutes was approved.

Treasurer's Report for September-October 2020

Mr. Ruggieri asked if there were any questions or comments concerning the Treasurer's Report. There being no questions or comments, Vice-Chair Dameo moved to approve the Treasurer's Report for September-October 2020 and Somerville Mayor Dennis Sullivan seconded the motion.

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

Ayes: Jason Dameo, Vicky Allen, Matt Moench, Andrew Fresco, Zachary Bray, Angela Knowles, Dennis Sullivan, Deirdre Rosinski, Brian Gallagher, Walter Lane, Cindie Sullivan, and Chris Edwards.
Nays: none
Abstentions: none

The motion was approved.

Public Comment Period

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

Action Item

Award Year 2 of Competitive Contract for Auditing and Tax-Related Services

Mr. Ruggieri reported that, following a public bidding process to procure professional services, in November 2019, RCP awarded a competitive contract to Suplee Clooney & Company for \$3,400 per year to prepare the annual audit report and provide tax-related services for the years ending December 31, 2019 and December 31, 2020. Suplee Clooney completed these tasks for the year ending December 31, 2019. Mr. Ruggieri noted that County Purchasing has advised that we still must go through the formal procedure of awarding the contract for Year 2. The recommendation from staff is to award the Year 2 contract to Suplee Clooney & Company. The adopted budget currently has \$4,981.05 available under the Non-Profit Legal/Accounting line item so there is ample funding available to allocate the \$3,400.00 necessary for the Year 2 contract. Staff shared this information with the Executive Committee and there were no objections.

There being no discussion, Vice-Chair Dameo asked for a motion to award the Year 2 Competitive Contract to Suplee Clooney & Company to prepare the annual audit report and provide tax-related services for the year ending December 31, 2020 for a not to exceed amount of \$3,400.00. The motion was made by Bridgewater Mayor Matt Moench and seconded by Somerset County Freeholder Brian Gallagher.

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

Ayes: Jason Dameo, Vicky Allen, Matt Moench, Filipe Pedroso, Andrew Fresco, Zachary Bray, Angela Knowles, Dennis Sullivan, Deirdre Rosinski, Brian Gallagher, Walter Lane, Cindie Sullivan, and Chris Edwards.

Nays: none

Abstentions: none

Presentation

Draft Preliminary 2021 Budget & Workplan

Mr. Ruggieri presented the Preliminary 2021 Budget and Workplan which was shared on the screen. The preliminary budget figures were prepared in anticipation that action would be taken regarding the funding allocation for the 2nd year of the audit contract listed in the meeting agenda. The total estimated budget is approximately \$148,000.00 including an estimated \$49,000.00 in carry-over funds from the current budget. Of the total budget for 2021, \$25,000 is proposed for Public & Business Education (marketing) which is the same amount that was allocated in 2020 for this line item. \$5,000.00 is proposed for Non-Profit Legal/Accounting which is the same amount budgeted in 2020 for this line item. The balance of the budget representing approximately \$118,000.00 is for Plan Implementation initiatives representing approximately \$45,000.00 less than what was budgeted in 2020 for this line item.

Mr. Ruggieri noted that funding under Plan Implementation could be utilized to pursue activities related to Plan Endorsement necessary to retain the Regional Center's center designation which is set to expire in October 2023. This would allow us to jump-start the Plan Endorsement process now. Activities could include fulfilling any outstanding Plan Implementation Agreement (PIA) obligations and/or new requirements for Plan Endorsement. Mr. Lane noted the good news is the State Planning Commission has been reviewing the current rules governing the Plan Endorsement administrative process to see if there are ways to streamline the process for designated centers that have already achieved most of their PIA requirements such that it would be more of an administrative process versus starting all over again as presently required under the current rules.

Mr. Ruggieri will send out the preliminary budget to everyone to review before the next meeting. Mr. Ruggieri noted that these are interim figures which will need to be adjusted to reflect interest earned and any one-time expenses between now and the January 20, 2021 meeting.

Information Items

Preliminary Meeting Dates

Mr. Ruggieri presented the preliminary schedule of meeting dates for 2021 which was shared on the screen. For 2021, meetings will continue to be held at 5:00 PM on the third Wednesday of every other month with the exception of September and November. For September's meeting, to avoid a conflict with Yom Kippur, staff proposes meeting on Thursday September 9. For November's meeting, based on past practice, we typically would meet on the second Thursday of November to avoid the annual League of Municipalities convention; however, that will not be possible because the second Thursday in November is Veterans Day; therefore, staff

proposes meeting on Wednesday November 10 provided this can be coordinated with the Somerset County Open Space Advisory Committee which typically meets on the same day. Mr. Ruggieri added that this is only a draft and action to adopt the meeting dates will be taken at January's meeting. In the interim, Mr. Ruggieri will forward the meeting dates to everyone for review. Mr. Lane noted that March's meeting falls on St. Patrick's Day (March 17), however, staff anticipates being able get through the meeting agenda in an expeditious manner.

Marketing Update

Marketing consultant Rich Reitman reported he has been researching daily local news sources for possible items of interest to include in upcoming newsletters. Mr. Reitman finalized a generalized advertisement designed for possible publication in the Courier News who no longer runs ads for free. Mr. Reitman finished and distributed the November newsletter and continues to provide weekly Analytics data to staff. Mr. Reitman noted that the trend suggests there is generally more website visitation activity with the new website versus with the old website and there are spikes in activity which are attributed to whenever a press release or newsletter is issued. As requested at the September meeting, Mr. Ruggieri summarized some observations made based on a review of the Analytics data for the past two months including the "bounce rate" and number of website visitors in September and October which ranged from approximately 23 to 46 visitors per month. As a follow-up to the July RCP meeting, Mr. Ruggieri summarized some of the findings from the Analytics for February 1 thru July 1, 2020 when the old website was in use. Mr. Ruggieri noted there is no Analytics data for the months of July and August while Analytics access issues were being resolved involving the new website. Mr. Ruggieri will continue to report on any relevant findings based on the Analytics information provided by Mr. Reitman.

Much discussion followed about how to possibly make better utilization of the website and to help drive more traffic to the website. The discussion concluded with Mr. Lane welcoming anyone to join the Marketing Committee to discuss possible ways to enhance the website and that anyone wishing to join the Marketing Committee to be sure to let Mr. Ruggieri know.

Municipal and Other Reports:

Somerville Mayor Dennis Sullivan reported The Davenport residential project on Davenport Street has opened and is leasing apartments. Borough officials were given a walking tour of the Somerset Station transit-oriented development (TOD) under construction next to the Somerville train station. The developer hopes to have new models ready for inspection by late March or early April. Regarding the residential redevelopment project off Fairview Avenue, the westerly building is being leased; however, the easterly building will have to be demolished due to the damage caused by the August fire. The developer hopes to have the building rebuilt within a year. Regarding downtown, Mayor Sullivan noted ribbon-cutting ceremonies continue to be held on Main Street.

Raritan Mayor Zachary Bray reported a new CityMD Urgent Care opened on Route 202 and is providing COVID-19 testing. A new phone and tablet repair business has opened on West Somerset Street. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held to celebrate the opening of a new law firm on Route 206. On November 3 Borough officials were given a tour of the tower section of the Raritan Crossing TOD project on Block 81. The developer is hoping to have an opening ceremony in December.

Raritan Planner Angela Knowles reported on the status of the Borough's Comprehensive Economic Development Plan funded by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority. The consultant has created a virtual workshop to obtain community input to help create a vision for downtown Raritan. Ms. Knowles encouraged everyone to participate in the workshop; the website link to the virtual workshop is posted on the Borough's website. Ms. Knowles described how workshop participants can earn points towards gift certificates from local businesses.

Ms. Knowles also noted that the Borough has applied for a Transportation Alternatives Set Aside Program (TASAP) grant from the New Jersey Department of Transportation to make improvements to the Raritan Train Station parking lot to add bicycle racks, a pedestrian waiting area, electrical vehicle charging stations, and lighting

and wayfinding signage. The Borough has received Somerset County Planning Board's support letter for the grant application with RCP's support letter to follow.

Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders Freeholder Brian Gallagher shared that this will be his last Regional Center Partnership meeting. Freeholder Gallagher noted that, after serving with the RCP for over 20 years, the achievements of the RCP have been phenomenal, adding that the dedication of the members along with the support of an exceptional planning staff have not only benefitted the Regional Center communities but also touched every member of Somerset County. Freeholder Gallagher highlighted RCP's collaborative spirit and commitment to get things done while always having a view in mind of how projects and initiatives will benefit not only the Regional Center but how they may impact the surrounding communities. Freeholder Gallagher wished everyone well and expressed a word of congratulations for all that has been achieved to date and wished the RCP great success on future endeavors. Vice-Chair Dameo thanked Freeholder Gallagher for his service and all he has done for our communities.

Bridgewater Mayor Matt Moench reported the Somerset Patriots announced they will become a Double-A affiliate of the New York Yankees as part of the American Minor League Baseball league. The Township is considering how to maximize the tourism opportunities this offers in hopes that this will help the Township regain some of the lost revenue in the Township stemming from the economic impact of COVID-19. Regarding the New Jersey Center of Excellence (NJCOE), Mayor Moench reported that the outcome of certain litigation between the Township and NJCOE has resulted in a court ruling requiring the developer to return to the Township Planning Board regarding the supermarket portion of the NJCOE redevelopment project. The Township has applied for over \$544,000 in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding assistance. Township Administrator Michael Pappas reported the Township is in the process of selling a liquor license; additional information may be found on the Township's website.

Public Comment Period

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

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County

September 1 thru October 31, 2020

page 1 of 4

| Business Checking | | | Money Market Account | | |
|---|---|----------------------------|--|----------------------|---------------------|
| 9/1/20 thru 10/31/20 | | | 9/1/20 thru 10/31/20 | | |
| Starting Bal. as of 9/1/2020: | | \$38,431.35 | Starting Bal. as of 9/1/2020: | | \$253,582.80 |
| less expenses: | | | | | |
| <u>Date</u> | <u>Item</u> | <u>Amount</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Item</u> | <u>Amount</u> |
| 9/9/20 | The Reitman Group | \$1,583.33 | | | |
| 10/1/20 | The Reitman Group | \$1,583.33 | 9/30/20 | interest | \$10.39 |
| 10/29/20 | Township of Bridgewater Resiliency & Economic Recovery Challenge Grant half grant paymt | \$20,000.00 | 10/29/20 | transfer to Checking | -\$60,000.00 |
| 10/29/20 | Borough of Raritan Resiliency & Economic Recovery Challenge Grant half grant paymt | \$20,000.00 | 10/31/20 | interest | \$10.49 |
| 10/29/20 | Borough of Somerville Resiliency & Economic Recovery Challenge Grant half grant paymt | \$20,000.00 | ending bal as of 10/31/20: \$193,603.68 | | |
| 10/29/20 | The Reitman Group | \$1,583.33 | | | |
| <i>subtotal of expenses:</i> | | \$64,749.99 | | | |
| Deposits 9/1/20 thru 10/31/20 | | | | | |
| 10/29/20 | Dep from Money Market acct | \$60,000.00 | | | |
| <i>subtotal of deposits:</i> | | \$60,000.00 | | | |
| Ending Balance (checking) after expenses and deposits: | | \$33,681.36 | | | |
| Sum of checking and money market accounts: | | \$227,285.04 | | | |
| Less total Committed But Not Expend: | | <u>\$174,709.35</u> | | | |
| Uncommitted Funds | | \$52,575.69 | | | |

Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County

**Treasurer's Report for
September 1 thru October 31, 2020**

page 2 of 4

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 | 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 | Allocation for Website Upgrade | \$4,001.00 |
| 2018 | | RC | Strategic Marketing Plan & Implementation Activities | \$30,000.00 |
| 2018 | 2019 | RC | Strategic Initiatives | \$30,000.00 |
| 2018 | 2019 | RT | Phase 2 Pedestrian Safety Enhancmt Challenge Grants | \$7,500.00 |
| 2018 | 2019 | SV | Phase 2 Pedestrian Safety Enhancmt Challenge Grants | \$7,500.00 |
| 2020 | 2020 | RC | Principal Marketing Services (contract Year 1) | \$11,083.35 |
| 2020 | | BW | Resiliency & Econ Recov Challge Grant "Shop Bridgewtr" | \$20,000.00 |
| 2020 | | RT | Resiliency & Econ Recov Challge Grant "Raritan Pop-up" | \$20,000.00 |
| 2020 | | SV | Resiliency & Econ Recov Challge Grant "Som-Pop" | \$20,000.00 |
| TOTAL: | | | | \$174,709.35 |

Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County

**Treasurer's Report for
September 1 thru October 31, 2020**

page 3 of 4

Anticipated Revenue for 2020
(excluding interest payments from Money Mkt acct)

| | |
|---------------------------|--------|
| Total Anticipated Revenue | \$0.00 |
|---------------------------|--------|

Regional Center Partnership of Somerset County
Treasurer's Report for
September 1 thru October 31, 2020
 page 4 of 4

Raritan River Rain Barrel Rebate Program
 9/1/20 thru 10/31/20

Starting Bal. as of 9/1/2020:

\$3,727.35

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Item</u> | <u>Amount of Deductions</u> |
|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------|
| 10/29/20 | rebate | \$50.00 |

subtotal of deductions: \$50.00

ending balance after deductions \$3,677.35

Deposit (if any) | |

subtotal of any Deposits \$0.00

ending Balance after any Deposits: \$3,677.35

REGIONAL CENTER PARTNERSHIP OF SOMERSET COUNTY

Business Meeting of November 12, 2020

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86706351718>

Meeting ID: 867 0635 1718

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,86706351718# US (New York)

AGENDA

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Chair's Remarks:
4. Adoption of Meeting Minutes: September 16, 2020
5. Adoption of Treasurer's Report for September-October 2020

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."

6. Award Year 2 of Competitive Contract for Auditing and Tax-Related Services

PRESENTATION

7. Draft Preliminary 2021 Budget & Workplan

INFORMATION ITEMS

8. Preliminary Meeting Dates
9. Marketing Update
10. 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, January 20, 2021 at 5:00PM

**REGIONAL CENTER PARTNERSHIP OF SOMERSET COUNTY, INC.
2021 BUDGET & WORK PROGRAM**

PRELIMINARY DRAFT

WORK PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

The major objective of the Regional Center Partnership (RCP) in 2021 is to build upon past successes and to continue making the Regional Center of Somerset County a premier location in the state favorable for business investment and to live, work, shop, play and learn. The means to achieve this objective is shaped by the recommendations from the adopted Regional Center Strategic Plan. RCP will continue to work with Somerset County towards advancing the goals and objectives of the Regional Center as a Priority Growth Investment Area through the Supporting Priority Investment in Somerset County Phase III, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs), and as an important Regional Center endorsed by the State Planning Commission.

The 2021 budget has been prepared assuming that the funding levels will stay the same as in 2020. The amount of support given by the County would remain at \$65,792.25 and the amount of support from Bridgewater, Raritan and Somerville would remain at \$10,890.00 per town.

The 2021 budget allocates up to \$117,638.94 for Regional Center Strategic Plan Implementation initiatives representing \$45,017.29 less than what was budgeted in 2020 for Plan Implementation. In light of the Regional Center's plan endorsement/center designation set to expire in October 2023, funding could be utilized to pursue activities related to Plan Endorsement necessary to preserve the Regional Center's "center" designation. Activities could include fulfilling any outstanding Plan Implementation Agreement obligations and/or new requirements for Plan Endorsement. Funding could also be used to pursue a priority of the Regional Center Strategic Plan. Funding for Challenge Grants would be dependent on the other planned work program activities.

For Public and Business Education, the budget allocates up to \$25,000.00 for public and business education (marketing) activities which is the same amount that was allocated in 2020. Funding in the amount of \$19,000.00 would be used for Year 2 of the existing Principal Marketing contract to perform the regular marketing outreach activities (Annual Achievements Report, press releases, website maintenance, bi-monthly newsletters, and related marketing outreach). The Public & Business Education portion of the budget also contemplates up to \$6,000.00 to support public outreach efforts.

No change is proposed for the amount allotted for Non-profit Legal/Accounting (\$5,000.00).

Additional funding to support priority projects or initiatives consistent with Regional Center goals could become available in the form of grants from non-traditional sources. The State Planning Commission's endorsement of the Somerset County Regional Center should be emphasized when applying for state and federal grants. RCP's standing as a 501(c)3 organization should also be maximized to help leverage additional funding.

2021 BUDGET

1. Regional Center Plan Implementation/Challenge Grant Initiatives **\$117,637.94**

Funding could be utilized to pursue Plan Endorsement-related activities to preserve Regional Center designation.

2. Non Profit Legal/Accounting Services **\$5,000.00**

For the various costs associated with the operation of a non-profit group.

3. Public and Business Education Program **\$25,000.00**

Funding would be used to perform the regular and annual marketing program activities (Annual Achievements Report, newsletters, press releases, website maintenance, etc.) and to support public outreach efforts.

Total Budget **\$147,637.94**

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Anticipated Revenue: | \$ 65,792.25 Somerset County \$ 10,890.00 Bridgewater \$ 10,890.00 Raritan <u>\$ 10,890.00</u> Somerville \$ 98,462.25 |
| Subtotal: | |

\$49,175.69 **2020 Carry-Over Funds*** A/O 11/06/2020*

Total: **\$147,637.94**

*\$52,575.69 (uncommitted bal ao 11/6) less \$3,400 = \$49,175.69 assuming \$3,400 is encumbered 11/12 for Yr 2 audit contract



REGIONAL CENTER PARTNERSHIP 2021 MEETING SCHEDULE

Proposed for 1-20-2021

Meeting Dates

January 20 @ 5:00 PM

March 17 @ 5:00 PM

May 19 @ 5:00 PM

July 21 @ 5:00 PM

Thursday September 09 @ 5:00 PM

November 10 @ 5:00 PM*

January 19, 2022 @ 5:00 PM

All meetings will be held at the County Administration Building, 20 Grove Street, Engineering Conference Room, Second Floor, Somerville, NJ unless noted otherwise. Please note that all meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 5:00 PM, unless noted otherwise.

Meetings will be held bi-monthly. Additional meetings may be scheduled as warranted. When needed, these additional meetings will be scheduled on the third Wednesday of the month at 5:00 PM unless noted otherwise. Meeting reminders will be sent out in which any changes or special meetings will be identified.

*tentative