

Alle-Kiski Intergovernmental Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
Meeting #8 - April 20th, 2023
New Kensington City Hall

Attendees (D-Delegate, A-Alternate)

AK IGC: Melissa Cortileso (D-Upper Burrell Township), George Hawdon (D-Arnold), Kristen Sarno (A-East Vandergrift Borough), Jody Sarno (D-Vandergrift Borough), Tom Guzzo (D-New Kensington), Dennis Scarpiniti (A-New Kensington)

Westmoreland County Planning: Bella Fiume, Victoria Baur

Guests: None **Public:** None

Meeting started at 5:10 PM.

1. Review/approve minutes from Meeting 7

A motion was made by Jody and seconded by Kristen to approve the Meeting 7 minutes. The Meeting 7 minutes were approved.

2. AK IGC Blight Inventory and Plan

Victoria provided an update on the blight inventory and plan project. She said that six out of the eight AK IGC communities have confirmed their interest in participating. Lower Burrell and Upper Burrell will not be participating. She thanked the group for continuing to advocate for this project.

Victoria shared a revised project cost table, highlighting the amounts that changed with the absence of Lower Burrell. She highlighted that the total value of the project is \$76,000, but communities will only need to contribute a combined total of \$34,600.

Jody said that the decision for Vandergrift to participate was difficult to make and that several council members still have questions about the project. He noted that Daniel provided answers to council's questions via email and that members have been provided all of the project information. He expressed concern from their council about the ability to find funds in the budget to pay for the project, even if the County is flexible and allows payments to start in 2024.

Jody suggested that it would be helpful for Daniel or another staff person from the County, or even an AK IGC member, to attend Vandergrift's council meeting in May to help advocate for the project and answer questions. Victoria said that she would discuss the possibility of attending the meeting in May with Daniel. She noted that all council members are invited and encouraged to come to the monthly AK IGC meetings to participate and ask questions directly. Victoria said she and Daniel would be in touch.

Victoria explained that the next step in this process is to execute an agreement. She noted that Daniel is currently working with the County's solicitor to prepare the draft agreement and that he

will be sending communication soon, asking communities to review and provide prompt feedback. She added that this agreement will look similar to the annual AK IGC agreement between Westmoreland County and the participating communities. Victoria said that at the current pace, communities could be signing the agreement in June and kicking off the project in July.

3. AK IGC shared code enforcement

a. Subcommittee

i. CEO needs follow-up

George explained that the subcommittee put together a matrix to weigh the different options for addressing Code Enforcement Officer (CEO) needs. George summarized the matrix - where he ranked having a full time CEO, part time CEO, or contracted CEO and the example scenarios that a CEO deals with. George asked if any additional responses were received regarding the CEO needs assessment that was distributed.

Victoria noted she only received two responses - one from Upper Burrell and one from West Leechburg. Jody shared that Marilee suggested Vandergrift's CEO would be willing to meet with AK IGC members to talk through CEO sharing options and provide feedback on ideas.

Victoria summarized that it sounded like East Vandergrift, Vandergrift, West Leechburg, and Arnold have all expressed interest in sharing CEOs in some capacity. Dennis said that New Kensington may be looking to hire an additional CEO. George noted that Arnold is satisfied with their current capacity, but that this can quickly change.

The group discussed the challenges of sharing a CEO when it comes court appearances. George discussed the pros/cons of relying on municipal police departments to support CEOs.

Victoria asked what is needed to take sharing CEOs to the next step? George said that more input is needed on the CEO needs assessment from other communities. Kristen and George echoed Marilee's suggestion about meeting with current CEOs to discuss ideas. George and Kristen suggested that current CEOs could either come to the next AK IGC meeting or meet separately with the subcommittee members. Victoria said she would reach out to help coordinate this if needed and noted she could redistribute the CEO needs assessment for more feedback.

4. Joint purchasing equipment

a. Continue discussion of items/needs

Victoria reminded the group that they were asked to think of up to five equipment items (of any price) to consider jointly purchasing with other communities. She compiled feedback in a joint purchasing wish list. Victoria said that responses were still needed from several communities. She noted that Upper Burrell indicated they currently aren't interested in jointly purchasing any items - unless the piece of equipment is used intermittently. Melissa, cited concerns about attempting to share a piece of equipment that is in high demand.

Victoria asked if communities had additional items to add to their wish list. Jody suggested the group could bulk purchase security cameras, but noted Vandergrift needed more time to consider items. George suggested software and security cameras. Melissa noted security cameras as well. Tom added a drone and garbage truck (to be used for recycling pick-up only).

Victoria reminded the group that not every community has to agree on the same item to jointly purchase. She said that if two communities overlap in their interests, then those two communities can take the next step. Victoria suggested that the group consider leaning on Allegheny Township and Lower Burrell to share how they successfully jointly purchased equipment in the past. Victoria said she would ask these communities to share how they accomplished this.

Victoria noted that more feedback is needed from the other communities and suggested that this agenda item be discussed again at the next meeting.

5. Municipal Fire Departments

a. Discuss regionalizing, sharing resources & volunteers

Victoria noted that Michael Korn suggested this item for the agenda, but that he and Ren were not able to make it to the meeting. She suggested that this item be tabled until the next meeting to discuss. Tom noted that considering how to coordinate firefighter training and testing would be one way to share costs between communities.

b. Volunteer Tax Credit for Firefighters Ordinance

George and Tom brought up that Lower Burrell recently voted to not approve this ordinance. George explained that this was a decision made by the City's volunteer firefighters, citing that they didn't want to be incentivized to serve their community and would rather money be given to the fire departments for equipment. George noted that Arnold is preparing to vote on this ordinance soon.

Victoria asked if there was a way to approach this ordinance jointly. George suggested that if communities are interested in offering the tax credit to incentivize volunteers, they should pursue adopting the ordinance first. He said that once an ordinance is in place, communities can discuss coordinating the amounts offered through the program.

6. Next AK IGC meeting date: Thursday, May 18th, 2023 @5PM

a. Discuss agenda items

7. Public comment

None

Other Discussion

Bella introduced herself to the group. Bella is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh and has recently joined the Westmoreland Planning Division as a Planner I. Victoria noted that two additional planners will be joining the Planning Division this spring.

Victoria reminded the group that the Redevelopment Authority of Westmoreland County is having their second annual Blight Remediation Summit on April 21st at the Westmoreland County Community College campus in Youngwood. She encouraged members to register and attend the event.

Victoria provided an update on the Westmoreland Broadband Program. She noted that the County will be reviewing proposals from Internet Service Providers to complete early action projects in Derry, Ligonier, and Fairfield Townships. She noted that additional funding will continue to come out for broadband infrastructure and that the County plans to apply for funding to help address unserved and underserved areas throughout the rest of the County.

Victoria reminded the group that the TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) update is happening soon. The TIP is the four year program that is updated every two years to advance the highest priority transportation projects in the region. She said to watch for communication via email from Daniel Carpenter regarding feedback/recommendations for transportation projects within communities.

8. Adjournment

A motion was made by Kristen and seconded by Melissa to adjourn the meeting. The meeting ended at 6:10 PM.