



SOUTHERN TIER CENTRAL REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Thursday, September 18, 2025

In-person

Board Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Chair, Jack Wheeler, called the in-person STC Board Meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Chemung County – Aaron Dowd, Jennifer Furman, Ernie Hartman, Joe Roman

Schuyler County – Carl Blowers, Joann Lindstrom, James Ryan

Steuben County – Jack Wheeler, Kelly Fitzpatrick, Tom Hauryski, James Johnson, James Kuhl, Jenn Miller, Robert Nichols

STC Staff – Chelsea Robertson, Katie Heverly, Jack Cook, Victoria Ehlen, Liv Lovejoy, Dot Richter, Cathy Rook, and Janet Thigpen

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion duly made (Joe Roman and Jamie Johnson) and carried, the July 17, 2025, **Board Meeting Minutes** were approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Audit Committee

- a. The **Abstract of Claims** was presented by James Kuhl. On a motion duly made (Joe Roman and Jenn Miller) and carried, 9 abstracts totaling \$70,764.51 were approved.

2. Budget and Personnel Committee

- a. The **Budget Update** was given by Chelsea Robertson. Chelsea stated that STC has reduced staff in 2025 (Brian Toy moved to CA and Hannah Waschezyn left) and the 2 positions have not been replaced, constituting a positive cash flow to the budget. EDA funding is uncertain and if STC does not receive a contract this year, it would represent a \$70,000 loss for the year. The STC office is focused on reducing supply costs and has done a good job with this goal. Chelsea has extended a job offer for a Senior Planner and is waiting to hear if the offer will be accepted. Looking ahead to the 2026 budget, ARC funding was approved by the House Committee for \$90,000 to STC, which is approximately a 25% cut. Possibly the Senate will approve more ARC funding. EDA funding for 2026 is uncertain. 604b federal funding is a potential concern and is typically slow to issue contracts or has delays. STC only has 604b funding in place until July 2026, so for the remainder of 2026 it could represent a \$75,000 loss. STC is also anticipating a \$25,000 cost increase for Health Insurance.

Chelsea has presented the STC 2026 budget to all three county legislators: Schuyler County in June, Steuben County in July, and Chemung County in August. The budget presentations were very positive even though it's a difficult budget year for everyone. Other agencies are also experiencing losses and are asking for more funding. However, Chelsea noted that this is the first time in 18 years she has asked the counties and municipalities for more money. In summary, Chelsea said STC will:

- Plan for decreases and watch the 2025 budget carefully.
 - Continue to communicate with administrators, managers, and executives.
 - Continue to meet with county legislators.
 - Chelsea and Katie are designing a 2026 budget that will incorporate quite a few decreases while attempting to allow for some salary increases (STC salaries are lower than the rest of the region).
 - Chelsea plans to present a balanced budget to the STC Board in December.
- b. **2026 Budget Meeting** dates were presented by Chelsea Robertson.
 - i. The **Budget Breakfast** was tentatively set for November 24, but Jack Wheeler stated the date conflicts with Steuben County's Legislative meeting. Chelsea said she would send out an email or doodle poll with alternative dates for rescheduling.
 - ii. The tentative date for the **STC Board – Budget Approval** meeting was scheduled for Thursday, December 4, and appears to be a good date for everyone.

REGIONAL PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

1. The **IRT (Innovative Readiness Training) Mission** report was given by Dot Richter. Last month STC investigated the possibility of hosting an IRT Mission in our region and a committee was formed to further the investigation. The IRT Committee Members are: David McCormick (representing Chemung County), Joann Lindstrom (representing Schuyler County), Heather Reynolds (representing Steuben County), Ernie Hartman (member at large), Chelsea Robertson (STC), and Dot Richter (STC). The newly formed IRT Committee held two virtual meetings on August 6th and August 20th and exchanged several emails and phone calls while locations were being explored that met all criteria to host an

IRT mission. Dot reported that tremendous effort was put forth by all IRT Committee members to find a site that was centrally located for all 3 counties. The site search results revealed Schuyler County had all the necessary components to host the IRT mission. Therefore, Joann Lindstrom will be the County Lead, the mission site will be Watkins Glen Central School District, and the Civilian Health point-of-contact will be Dr. Saks at Cayuga Health. Next steps include a board vote to approve submission of an application by September 30, 2025, and submission of two public legal notices to let the private sector know we intend to host a mission in Schuyler County in 2027. On a motion duly made (Kelly Fitzpatrick and Jamie Johnson) and carried, the board gave approval for STC to submit an IRT mission application.

2. Two **Intergovernmental Reviews** were reviewed, processed, and approved by STC last month to meet the 30-day process deadline. The following IGOR reports were given:

- a. **IGOR 2508** – Janet Thigpen

Applicant: NYSDEC – Division of Water requested \$2,055,741.00 in federal funding through the EPA's Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant III to support ongoing efforts to improve water quality both in New York and in the Chesapeake Bay by implementing projects that reduce nutrients and sediment in the Susquehanna and Chemung watersheds. This funding is new funding and will support agricultural best management practice implementation through the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. Three review comments were received stating, "Should approve." One more review comment, with approval, was received from Jim Diederich stating, "DEC should hire more staff to support permitting requirements - wetland permit process is new and particularly cumbersome; DEC should authorize Districts a general permit that allows them to complete work within certain parameters without the need for additional approvals." Date of Clearinghouse Action for IGOR 2508 was August 20, 2025.

- b. **IGOR 2509** – Victoria Ehlen

Applicant: Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation, Inc. requested \$146,000 in federal funding through the USDA Housing Preservation Grant RD533 to rehabilitate 16 owner-occupied housing units in Allegany, Cayuga, Livingston, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Wayne, and Yates Counties. These are rural areas with older homes that require moderate rehabilitation for preservation and there is a serious lack of mortgage credit for lower to moderate income families. 25% of the RD repair cost will be related to energy efficiency (excluding administrative costs). Based on a preliminary survey, the applicant determined that the average rehabilitation cost will be approximately \$18,192 per unit. The work needed includes new roofs, septic and water systems, furnaces, energy efficiency/green build, and interior alterations to alleviate overcrowding and improve accessibility by persons with physical disabilities. Two positive review comments were received stating "Should Approve." Date of Clearinghouse Action for IGOR 2509 was September 2, 2025.

3. The **NY HELPS (New York Hiring for Emergency Limited Placement Statewide) Civil Service** evening training event was presented by Victoria Ehlen. Victoria stated this evening training will be held at STC on Sept 30, 2025. Christina Lyon, from the NYS Department of Civil Service, Rochester Division, will share information about the NY HELPS Civil Service program and other Civil service requirements for governments in our region. The NY HELPS program is a one-time authorization for all State agencies, hiring for approved civil

service positions, to hire qualified candidates permanently without taking an open-competitive civil service exam. Each county chooses whether to participate in this program or not. Steuben and Chemung Counties chose to participate and submitted job titles for approval, but Schuyler County did not. Any town or school district within Schuyler County will not be able to participate in the program. Victoria concluded her report stating she would send out an email to the STC Board members with details about the upcoming evening training on September 30th and asked the Board to please help spread the word concerning this important training event.

INTERBOARD REPORTING

1. The **Gaffer District** inter-board report was presented by Jenn Miller, who is the President and Chair for the Board of Directors since July of this year. Recently, Catherine Price, who had been running the Geneva Business Improvement District, was hired as the new Executive Director for the Gaffer District, bringing two decades of experience in hospitality, economic development, operations, and nonprofit leadership with her. Catherine replaced long-time Executive Director, Coleen Fabrizi, who retired in June after 18 years serving the Gaffer District. Future focus is on growing events and attracting new businesses.
2. The **Southern Tier Network (STN)** inter-board presentation was given by Chelsea Robertson. Currently, a lot of build-out engineering is happening for Broadband build up. STN received a large MIP (Municipal Infrastructure Program) grant through NYS and, in the first round of the MIP, plans to build-out 65 miles in their region (which encompasses 8 counties). Right now, you will see them working in the Millport area hanging fiber and there will be further build-out in Beaver Dams (Schuyler County), Hornby (Steuben County), and Newark Valley (Tioga County) to hit areas that are under-served which is a requirement of the grant. STN is a nonprofit and part of its mission is to increase economic development in the region it serves. One of the most interesting items Chelsea learned from the last STN Board Meeting was about FlexNAP, a product designed by Corning, Incorporated. This product connects optical fiber cables without the need for on-site splicing of cables. It speeds up the installation time from what used to take a month or more to just 3 or 4 days.
3. The **REDEC (Regional Economic and Development Energy Corporation)** inter-board presentation was made by Jamie Johnson. STC Board members who sit on the REDEC Board of Directors include Jamie Johnson, Joe Roman, Jenn Miller, Chelsea Robertson, and Judy McKinney Cherry. REDEC is a nonprofit that was spun out of STC and their primary focus is on funding programs targeted to small businesses and community development and providing business loans for capital equipment and expansion throughout Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben counties. REDEC provides flexible terms (5-20 years depending upon the program) and has several funding streams such as ARC, EDA, and SBA. REDEC also administers other portfolios and programs, the largest one being STREDEC (Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Corporation) which serves 8 counties: Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins. There are 3 types of STREDEC programs that businesses may be eligible for: Downtown Development, Agriculture Focus, and Infrastructure Development/Site Readiness. The current REDEC portfolio is approximately \$2.3M with just under \$1M available for lending. The STREDEC portfolio is \$12.6M with almost \$3M available for lending. After the retirement of George Miner, Lindsay Wolf was hired earlier this year as the new President and Executive Director for REDEC.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. **“Congratulations”** goes out to Jim Ryan, the Mayor of the Village of Montour Falls, his team, and STC Planner, Liv Lovejoy, for all their hard work to achieve the **Climate Smart Community Silver Certification status** for the village. Chelsea Robertson stated the silver certification is very difficult to obtain and a huge accomplishment. Statewide only 7 communities have met the requirements to earn CSC Silver status and we are so proud that Montour Falls is one of them. NYS DEC will hold a small recognition ceremony in Kingston, NY, for all seven of the Silver status communities.
2. The next **STC Board Meeting** will be on **October 16, 2025 (Virtual) - ARC Application Review**.

ADJOURN

On a motion duly made (Ernie Hartman and James Kuhl) and carried, the Board Meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.