

Turtle Creek Valley COG Director's Report

TCVCOG Board Meeting
March 23, 2023

Upcoming Meetings

3/29/: County Executive Candidate Forum, 5:30pm - Palisades

4/6: Manager's Meeting, 2pm

4/13: ALOM Conference

4/18: Police Chief Meeting, 2:30pm

4/13 – 4/16: ALOM Spring Conference

4/27: TCVCOG Board Meeting

CodeNforce

Glassport and North Braddock have begun or finished the onboarding process. Wilkins Twp submitted their signed agreement to be BETA phase participant, and have begun onboarding as well. We have paused work on the Business Plan until we have a better understanding of what support needs are going to be. The challenge is going to be to find a way to affordably scale the system. We are finalizing a job description for a product manager, and hope to have someone in place by June.

I'm happy to report that our LSA grant application has been funded! This grant will support the build out of our last planned component of the system: Rental Registry & Licensing. We will also build some analytics into the system with this support. This build out will be based on the feedback we get from our collaborative participants, and other code enforcement professionals.

Code Enforcement

We have been working with Joy Ruff from LGA, along with John Trant from Strategic Solutions, to establish a new program that will give non-college bound high school graduates an opportunity to be trained and gain real world experience in code enforcement. Students may also have an opportunity to earn their Property Maintenance Certification through the ICC prior to the completion of the program.

Vactor Program

A Certificate of Deposit (4.1%) was opened in the amount of \$100k as a means to save for eventual equipment replacement. Please submit your opt in agreements for 2023, and give us a call to schedule. We would appreciate your help in getting dates on our calendar in April, May and June.

Annual Dinner – Friday, February 10th

We hope you enjoyed our Annual Dinner event. Your feedback – good, bad or otherwise – is welcome so we can continue to improve the event.

County Executive Candidate Forum

Please plan to attend! The County Executive Candidate forum is slated for March 29th at the Palisades in McKeesport. There will be a meet and greet at 5:30pm; and the program will begin at 6:30pm. This is a great

opportunity to showcase our needs/priorities to the next County Executive and it is critical we have attendance from elected officials and staff of our member towns.

Police Training

There is a new annual training requirement mandated by the state. Monroeville is heading up an effort to provide this training locally and at low or no cost. More details to come later in the year.

We will have 2023 Active Shooter training dates soon.

ALOM Spring Conference

ALOM's Spring Educational Conference is slated for April 13 – 16. Are we all in favor of TCVCOG continuing the tradition of hosting a hospitality suite? Should we host all three days? With your permission, I'd like to place the following ad in the program booklet:

Other

Michael Lamb, City Controller and Candidate for County Executive, attended our COG Director's meeting on March 14th. He discussed how he would like to create an office of Municipal Assistance/Partnership; create a Municipal Infrastructure Bank; and create a Tax Claim Bureau. He spent about an hour with our group to discuss issues like Real Estate Assessments, Land Banking and Blight, etc.

Jim Johnston from the Dept. of Economic Development also attended the COG Director's meeting on March 14th. CDBG Year 49 funding letters are expected to go out in April. The next round of ACT 152 applications are also expected to become available in April. His advice was to concentrate demolition sites, and he advised that demolition substitutions will not be granted. There will be about \$400k in CDBG funding allocated to demolition, so it will be very competitive. He suggested that CDBG is a better way to fund scattered site demolition.

The Tri-COG Land Bank is about to acquire its 100th property. The property submission deadlines are changing for 2023 from biannual to quarterly: April 30th, July 10th, October 9th, and January 8th. The landbank recently sold property at 409 Fieldstone drive in Monroeville to Belaouni Homes LLC, who intends to renovate and re-sell. Also, 1601 Summit Dr in White Oak was sold to Jaymmie and David Mackowiak as a side lot. The land bank currently owns 55 properties (39 houses & 16 vacant lots). Recently acquired properties include: 1003 Broadway Ave., East McKeesport, 311 Tintzman Ave., North Versailles, 2800 Woodstock Ave., Swissvale

Manager's Meeting – March 2, 2023 @ 2pm

In Attendance: Greg Bachy, Swissvale; LJ Capps, East Pittsburgh; Alex Graziani, Churchill; Amanda Settelmaier, TCVCOG

Virtual Attendance: Glenn Terry, Braddock; Shane Lanham, Rankin; Nathan Bish, North Braddock; Joe Varhola, North Versailles; Stephanie Schwoegl, Chalfant

Members of the Manager's committee put together a lengthy agenda for the meeting. Amanda started by asking the managers to please encourage attendance at the upcoming Allegheny County Executive Candidate forum on March 29th at the Palisades in McKeesport. She also reminded the group of the TCVCOG Hospitality Suite at the ALOM conference, and asked for input on favorite refreshments.

New State training requirements for police were discussed. A COG program is emerging that will help towns meet this requirement locally and at minimal cost.

The group discussed Senator Brewster's comments from the Annual Dinner, whereby he discussed an excess of State Revenue. Due to significant decreases in Liquid Fuels revenue, the group asked Amanda to draft a letter to Senator Brewster to ask how towns might access these funds. The group agreed that Street Paving is an unmet need due to lack of revenue. Might there be a possibility of getting a one time stipend for this purpose?

Alex discussed a myriad of topics including the possibility/interest of running an Executive Leadership Training program for Police Chiefs/Leadership through the COG. There was also lengthy discussions on how to improve interest and response to police testing/recruitment, and recruitment for municipal positions in general. Ideas included Instagram Ads, posting on alumni job boards, and hosting a job fair.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4pm.

Police Chief Meeting – March 21, 2023 at 2pm

Attendance: Penn Hills, Monroeville, Forest Hills, Swissvale, Wilkins

The group discussed concerns regarding the mutual aid agreement, and the possibility of towns abusing the spirit of the agreement, which is to provide backup – not to become primary response. They are considering the possibility of language changes to the agreement.

Officer Tim Bish from Monroeville presented information regarding the new state training requirements around defensive tactics. Since Monroeville already has a facility and mats, they are going to work toward a low to no cost option for our COG towns. Several towns, including Monroeville, Swissvale and Penn Hills are sending officers to instructor training. A conversation about more robust regional training took place.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Settelmaier