

SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS TRADE & INVESTMENT COUNCIL

Thursday, July 22, 2021, 9:00-11:00 am

Virtual ZOOM Meeting

Meeting Minutes

I. Roll Call

President Bobby Wondolowski opened the meeting at 9:10 A.M. A roll call was taken, and the following members were present. It was stated that a quorum was present.

Board of Directors

Koerber, Vicki (proxy Koch)	Strope, Mike
Miller, Dave	Prenzler (proxy Williams)
Wondolowski, Bobby	Toskin, Paul
Kniepkamp, David	Li, Al
Johnson, Bryan	

Ex-Officios

Silvia Torres	Nathalie Scharf
Elizabeth Ahern	Ronda Sauget
Kim Hamilton	Han Ko

II. Approval of April 22, 2021, Minutes.

President Wondolowski asked members if there were any corrections to the minutes they received in their meeting packets. With none being offered, a motion was made by Dave Miller and seconded by David Kniepkamp to approve. The motion was carried.

III. Officers Reports:

A. Executive.

President Wondolowski announced that the Executive Committee held a virtual meeting on July 8th by ZOOM, to assemble the agenda for the July 22, 2021, meeting and to address any other issues and concerns. The Executive Committee members in attendance: Mike Strope, Edie Koch, Bobby Wondolowski, Paul Toskin, Walt Williams, and Rick Stubblefield. Bobby stated that the key issues discussed at the meeting would be detailed in the Committee Chair reports that would follow in the meeting. Bobby did announce that he would be stepping down as the Chair for the Marketing and Communications Committee. He next stated that he had appointed Mike Strope as the new Chair for that committee moving forward. Finally, he shared that meeting would remain virtual until the end of the year. At the next meeting, when the 2022 schedule is approved, he will ask the Council members to re-evaluate whether to stay virtual or return to in person meetings.

B. Financial.

Finance Report. Treasurer Paul Toskin referred members to the Quarterly Financial Report enclosed in the meeting packet and reported that the Council had a Bank balance of \$10,027.94. He reported that all bills were paid, and he had filed the taxes for 2020. A motion was made by Dave Miller and seconded by Mike Strope to approve the financial report.

Other Revenue Streams. He went on to say that his committee would reconvene to look for other revenue streams for the Council, but he felt that until there was more traffic to the website, selling advertising or space might not be a viable strategy. For now, charging for training sessions/events is the most obvious revenue stream strategy. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Increase to Serpentine. Next Paul relayed the Executive Committee's discussion on the need for more work from Serpentine on the website in regard to driving more activity to the website and other additions and improvements that might exceed the agreed upon monthly charge. A motion was made by Edie Koch and seconded by Paul

Toskin, to authorize the Marketing and Communication Chair to incur additional costs to Serpentine between now and the next quarterly meeting up to \$500, that would be approved by the Executive Commie prior to expenditure. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.

IV. Committee Reports:

A. Marketing/Communications.

Report on Progress of Exporter Database Work. Mike indicated that he had met with SIUE and the intern to make sure everyone was on the same page in regard to this project. Noted that the intern would not be at the meeting today but had indicated a willingness to work with the Council on the exporter database and other initiatives into next year.

Website improvements. Information about the upcoming Virtual Trade Mission would be added along with testimonials on Export Now. Possibly look at putting SWITIC on Linked In or expanding its social media presence. Al suggested that a strategy and plan should be put in place for moving forward on this and to choose a participation that is not daily, but rather monthly. This is something that this Council could realistically manage. He asked that members begin submitting newsworthy items from their respective businesses now to build up a pipeline for the Marketing Committee to evaluate and then add to the website, Linked In, or Facebook on a regular basis. The new intern will help setting up the new social media accounts and post to these on behalf of the Council.

Outreach and Member Recruitment. It was reported that there were no requests from Council members for a personalized outreach letter to be sent, but a plan has been put in place to personalize the letter towards Chambers, using them as a conduit for business exporters recruitment to the SWITIC. Strobe, with the assistance of the Intern, will implement this approach. Strobe indicated they will start with the Collinsville Chamber first. Silvia Torres added that communications to all the Chambers and the EDO's would be strategic to this outreach and member recruitment, in addition to being an avenue to get the word out on our initiatives such as Export Now.

B. In-Bound Trade Missions.

2021 Select USA Investment Summit. As planned, SWITIC was part of the curtain raiser video that showed prior to the Keynote speaker on the first day. Guaranteed viewership of up to 1,600 Foreign Investors was provided. There were 3,400 total participants and 80 international markets represented. Next, Edie relayed that she was able to garner two comp registrations (\$850 value) for this 4-day virtual summit (June 7-11, 2021). Walt Williams of Madison County and Koch were able to participate. Did not apply to be an exhibitor but should look into next year to be part of Team Illinois exhibitor booth. Koch reported she had the opportunity to participate in some interesting workshops that revealed that Brazil is eager to work with US Incubators and Mexico's FDI is on the rise; Canada seemed an obvious choice for FDI as there are minimal barriers. A panel discussion about European Investment Trends, including some SWISS delegates that indicated interest in the U.S. An Indian Investment Panel gave a good suggestion in regard to increasing relationships with Foreign owned business by hosting them on a regular basis to help build community and elicit their help in attracting FDI from their respective countries. Ronda Sauget also participated and had the opportunity to bring awareness to SWIL and made some good connections for the future. Walt Williams commented that he learned some helpful things and agreed that the virtual nature of the Summit was very challenging.

AmCham Peru virtual meetings. Have been arranging virtual visits with facilities in the metro east of interest to AMCHAM Peru's Supply Chain Committee. Purpose of these virtual visits is relationship building and retaining enough interest in SWIL to spur an in-person visit from a larger delegation from Peru in the future.

Toskin, to authorize the Marketing and Communication Chair to incur additional costs to Serpentine between now and the next quarterly meeting up to \$200, that would be approved by the Executive Commie prior to expenditure. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.

IV. Committee Reports:

A. Marketing/Communications.

Report on Progress of Exporter Database Work. Mike indicated that he had met with SIUE and the intern to make sure everyone was on the same page in regard to this project. Noted that the intern would not be at the meeting today but had indicated a willingness to work with the Council on the exporter database and other initiatives into next year.

Website improvements. Information about the upcoming Virtual Trade Mission would be added along with testimonials on Export Now. Possibly look at putting SWITIC on Linked In or expanding its social media presence. Al suggested that a strategy and plan should be put in place for moving forward on this and to choose a participation that is not daily, but rather monthly. This is something that this Council could realistically manage. He asked that members begin submitting newsworthy items from their respective businesses now to build up a pipeline for the Marketing Committee to evaluate and then add to the website, Linked In, or Facebook on a regular basis. The new intern will help setting up the new social media accounts and post to these on behalf of the Council.

Outreach and Member Recruitment. It was reported that there were no requests from Council members for a personalized outreach letter to be sent, but a plan has been put in place to personalize the letter towards Chambers, using them as a conduit for business exporters recruitment to the SWITIC. Strobe, with the assistance of the Intern, will implement this approach. Strobe indicated they will start with the Collinsville Chamber first. Silvia Torres added that communications to all the Chambers and the EDO's would be strategic to this outreach and member recruitment, in addition to being an avenue to get the word out on our initiatives such as Export Now.

B. In-Bound Trade Missions.

2021 Select USA Investment Summit. As planned, SWITIC was part of the curtain raiser video that showed prior to the Keynote speaker on the first day. Guaranteed viewership of up to 1,600 Foreign Investors was provided. There were 3,400 total participants and 80 international markets represented. Next, Edie relayed that she was able to garner two comp registrations (\$850 value) for this 4-day virtual summit (June 7-11, 2021). Walt Williams of Madison County and Koch were able to participate. Did not apply to be an exhibitor but should look into next year to be part of Team Illinois exhibitor booth. Koch reported she had the opportunity to participate in some interesting workshops that revealed that Brazil is eager to work with US Incubators and Mexico's FDI is on the rise; Canada seemed an obvious choice for FDI as there are minimal barriers. A panel discussion about European Investment Trends, including some SWISS delegates that indicated interest in the U.S. An Indian Investment Panel gave a good suggestion in regard to increasing relationships with Foreign owned business by hosting them on a regular basis to help build community and elicit their help in attracting FDI from their respective countries. Ronda Sauget also participated and had the opportunity to bring awareness to SWIL and made some good connections for the future. Walt Williams commented that he learned some helpful things and agreed that the virtual nature of the Summit was very challenging.

AmCham Peru virtual meetings. Have been arranging virtual visits with facilities in the metro east of interest to AMCHAM Peru's Supply Chain Committee. Purpose of these virtual visits is relationship building and retaining enough interest in SWIL to spur an in-person visit from a larger delegation from Peru in the future.

- On a referral by Silvia Torres, Mr. Roberto Figari, Business Director for Ransa Peru and Vice President of the AmCham Peru Supply Chain Committee, has been reaching out, to set up visits with the following: Amazon Fulfillment Center, Walgreens, America's Central Port, and multi-state agriculture Highway Corridors, Freshness Preservation and Agricultural Product Packaging Processes.
- To that end, a virtual Zoom visit was held on June 23rd hosted by Alex Burkhart, Director of Strategic Marketing, America's Central Port, for Mr. Figaro. Alex presented a PowerPoint of ACP and its operations and answered questions.
- The next virtual visit has tentatively been set for the week of August 23rd with Mid America Airport. I did some pre-planning with Bryan Johnson, and he is ready to go. A final date and time are in the works. Roberto briefed his supply chain committee about the upcoming virtual meeting with Mid America Airport and is expecting to get a response of those who are interested during this week. In the same way, Roberto is coordinating with some agro-industry clients so that they can participate. He will confirm the list in the last week of July. It is appearing that the meeting will occur on August 26th, 2:00 P.M. Silvia has asked to be informed. Bryan indicated he would also have someone on the call with him.
- Have reached out to Amazon and Walgreens but have yet to set anything up. Moving forward, will also look at setting something up with North Bay Produce and Rock City Business Complex. It was suggested that we also look at Menasha and Worldwide Technology if Amazon and Walgreens don't materialize.

C. Out-Bound Trade Missions.

Silvia Torres offered the following initiatives that are underway.

Virtual Trade Mission to South America. A virtual trade mission to South America on September 20th - 27th is in the works. Virtual stops will include Peru, Colombia, and Chile. Southern Illinois companies already exporting to this region in addition to those looking to get started in these markets are welcome to apply. Participating companies will have the opportunity to meet with potential business partners on one-on-one business matchmaking meetings in a virtual setting. All industries and sectors welcome. A two-page flyer with background information, details of the virtual trade mission, services included and how to register is included in the meeting packet. Thanks to Federal CARES Act funding, a business can benefit from Two full days customized, pre-arranged one-on-one virtual meetings with pre-screened prospective partners, carefully selected with the business's input, for one country at only \$250 participation fee (complete service package valued at \$1800). The participation fee for each additional country is \$900/day/company* Registration deadline is July 16th or when all spots are filled, whichever happens first. So far, four participants have signed up. A company could also qualify for the Illinois State Trade Export Promotion (ISTEP) financial funding offered to small and medium-sized exporters.

In-Person Trade Mission to South America. As an added bonus, Silvia noted that the above virtual event could also serve businesses as preparation for an In-Person Trade Mission to South America, sponsored by our partners at the U.S. Department of Commerce, to take place December 7th-10th. The ITC will be participating in this in-person mission and ISTEP funding can be made available to eligible small businesses interested in registering and traveling with us. Virtual events leading up to an in-person trade mission can be very beneficial in that they allow companies to make initial contacts, learn more about the markets to be visited and lay the groundwork for a more productive trip.

Virtual Platform for Small Business Exporters. Lastly Silvia referred members to the new virtual platform being created to contain an electronic listing of small business exporters from the southern region. This will also serve as a promotional tool for southern Illinois (FDI). This project is being funded with CARES Act dollars.

D. Education Committee.

In the absence of Paul Jarzombek, Chairperson of the Education Committee, Edie Koch offered his update for the Export Now Training series from a summary Paul submitted to the Executive Committee as follows:

Update on EXPORT NOW.

- The Spring 2021 program was a success. 5 companies participated and their company tuition along with CARES ACT funds generated over \$4000 for SWITIC. 5 companies were just the right amount for this first attempt at this program.
- Branding was initiated by Paul and his team at LRI but fine-tuned by ITC SIUE and turned out great and can easily be replicated.
- Some post program follow up will generate some quotes and video that can be used for recruitment for future EXPORT NOW programs. The ITC/SIUE has taken the lead on securing post program quotes and marketing material (quotes were included in the meeting packet). Final observations from Paul are as follows
- Companies that participated overwhelmingly agreed that the program was very useful, practical, affordable and they liked the virtual format.
- Participation by the SWITIC Board was good as far as lecturing and coaching but on recruitment of participants, more help from the SWITIC Board is needed.
- The program should be offered Spring/Fall each year. Target company participation is 4-8 companies each time to keep the time commitment by participants and volunteers manageable. Paul suggested virtual again for Fall 2021 and maybe for 2022 in person.
- 5-6 sponsors at \$1000 (\$500 per session) each per year should be sought out for future sessions. would allow the participant tuition to stay under \$1000 per company. This past Spring, the CARES ACT funds helped reduce the tuition to \$150.00 per company. However, CARES ACT will not be available going forward. 100% of respondents to a survey felt that the tuition cost was just right at \$850.00 per company. Sponsors could also contribute to food, study materials etc....when meeting in person. Virtually the sponsors could donate straight cash to the program.
- The agenda and materials for a future program can be replicated from the Spring 2021 program. 20 volunteers to cover all aspects of this would be needed. In the Spring 201 program volunteer support came from SWITIC, LRI, ITC/SIUE, The IL District Export Council, SBA, EXIM and some various other professional contacts from Silvia and Paul.
- The biggest issue is recruitment of participating companies. In the Spring, Silvia recruited 3 of the participant companies and Paul recruited 2 of them. Need more help from the SWITIC Board on this by sending out personal invites and taking the lead on participant recruitment.
- Lastly, Paul does not want to run this program in the Fall of 2021 or beyond, his schedule will not allow it. In the future he is willing to volunteer for it and promote it as well as act as a sort of consultant to whoever ends up running it.

A discussion ensued among Council members on how to proceed on future Export Now Sessions. The following strategy was agreed upon:

- Next Export Now Training Series to be no earlier than Spring of 2021.
- President Wondolowski will reach out to each of the members of the Education Committee to seek interest in leading the next Export Now series. Other Council members may also be contacted until someone is found.
- Prior to the October 28th, 2021, quarterly meeting, the Executive Committee will meet to discuss and finalize the date and the leadership and member participation strategy for the 2022 Export Now Series.

V. New Business.

There was no new business to be discussed at this time.

VI. Public Comment and Announcements.

Dave Miller announced that once SWITIC in-person meetings are back, he is still interested in holding something out at Westar. Natalie Scharf requested feedback on the Select USA Summit as organizers are already looking at a 2022 event in terms of in-person and/or hybrid event. Han Ko briefed members on recent activities of his organization.

VII Adjourn

With no other business, a motion was made by Bobby Wondolowski and seconded by Edie Koch to adjourn. Motion passed and President Wondolowski adjourned the meeting at 11:00 A.M.