

SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS TRADE & INVESTMENT COUNCIL

Thursday, October 28, 9:00-11:00 am

Virtual ZOOM Meeting

Meeting Minutes

I. Roll Call

President Bobby Wondolowski opened the meeting at 9:00 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)

Prenzler (proxy Williams)

Wondolowski, Bobby

Kniepkamp, David

Strope, Mike

Weilbacher, Ed

Kern, Mark (proxy Stubblefield)

Johnson, Bryan

Ex-Officios

Silvia Torres

Elizabeth Ahern

Nathalie Scharf

Han Ko

II. Approval of July 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 David Kniepkamp and seconded by Walt Williams to approve. The motion was carried. President Wondolowski introduced Greg Williams of S.M. Wilson & Co. and asked him to briefly describe his company and his interest in trade and investment. It appears that his company could be a valuable resource to businesses exporting and/or attracting foreign direct investment.

III. Officers Reports:

A. Executive.

President Wondolowski announced that the Executive Committee held a virtual meeting on October 14th by ZOOM, to assemble the agenda for the October 2021, meeting and to address any other issues and concerns. The Executive Committee members in attendance: Mike Strope, Edie Koch, Bobby Wondolowski, Paul Toskin, Silvia Torres. Bobby stated that the key issues discussed at the meeting would be detailed in the Committee Chair reports that would follow in the meeting.

B. Financial.

Current Bank Balance. Paul Toskin stated as of October 13th, the bank balance for the Trade and Investment Council was \$9,850.94. There were no outstanding bills or receivables and anticipated that the consulting contract with Serpentine would be the only expenses forthcoming.

Other Revenue Streams. Toskin reported that the Executive Committee discussed developing a revenue stream for the Council. The viability of charging a membership fee was discussed but the idea was tabled for further discussion at a later meeting. It was noted that there are no outstanding expenses to cover now, but there will be costs associated with Export Now and also the Spinoff event through Select USA.

David Kniepkamp made a motion to accept the Finance Report which was seconded by Mike Strope. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.

IV. Committee Reports:

A. Marketing/Communications.

Outreach and Member Recruitment – Strope reported that he reached out to Collinsville Chamber of Commerce. They have agreed to link the SWITIC website and invitation letter to their newsletters. They are also interested in bringing in SWITIC members for a lunch and learn for Collinsville Businesses. The Committee's next action item

is to gather a list of local Chambers and invite them to an Exec Meeting to discuss SWITIC and opportunities to work together.

Website – Working to update members, board of directors, news, and adding the current officers. Mike added that an inquiry came through for a company interested in joining. A LinkedIn profile has also been created. Next step is to have all members send to Mike Strobe a brief intro of their respective companies, link the intro to our LinkedIn page, along with any pertinent stories/articles that could be used.

Exporter Database – The SIUE-E Intern, Julia, has been calling down the potential exporter list. So far, no one has been interested in joining. Will be working to get a list of Illinois companies that have used ISTEP funds before as a more targeted list. In addition, looking through the ITC website for success stories could also be a resource.

B. In-Bound Trade Missions.

AmCham Peru Virtual meetings. On August 26th, a virtual meeting was held between a representative from AmCham Peru and Mid America Airport that included Roberto Figari, Business Director for Ransa Peru and Vice President of the AmCham Peru Supply Chain Committee, Mid America Airport Director Bryan Johnson, St. Clair County Economic Development Director Rick Stubblefield, and SWITIC members Edie Koch and Silvia Torres. It was hoped that some of the other members of the Supply Chain Committee would also join the call, but unfortunately that did not happen.

- Bryan led off the discussion with an overview of Mid America Airport and future aviation development. A good discussion ensued where Ricardo shared his vision for supply chain/logistics and the possible balance between exports and imports between Peru and Mid America Airport.
- Bryan pointed out the competitive advantage for establishing and operating a logistical hub for the distribution of products and goods in southwest Illinois as opposed to Miami or Los Angeles. North Bay Produce was also discussed and the potential for a follow-up virtual business with that company.
- The next step would be for Roberto to bring info from the meeting to his Supply Chain Committee for further feedback in regard to their individual requirements and any plans that could create a good business/partnership possibility for them with Mid America Airport.
- Koch reached out to Roberto recently in regard to directions he may have gotten from his Supply Chain Committee and readiness to set up a follow-up Zoom meeting with the Airport. Silvia Torres suggested that we send a formal letter to Roberto to emphasize our interest and outline next steps. Uncertainties surrounding the new government there could be slowing things down.

2022 Select USA Spinoff Event. Edie Koch next relayed that the Select USA Investment Summit would be in person this year in June of 2022. Spin-Off Events to their registered attendees are to be held before the Investment Summit starts on June 26th in Washington DC. Koch added that if we wished to leverage from the convening power of the Select USA Investment Summit, we have to submit an application to host a Spinoff Event in our area by October 22nd. To this end, the Inbound Trade Mission Committee met to modify SWITIC's 2020 submission that was approved but cancelled due to COVID. After making some changes, the following was agreed upon: Date: June 23-24, 2022, Registration close: May 13th, 2022, Primary Industry Sector: Distribution and Logistics, Secondary Industry Sector: Information & Communication Technology. Notice that our application to host an official Select USA Spinoff event prior to the 2022 investment summit has been approved. A link to register for our Spinoff event will be embedded on the main application form that potential foreign investors will use to apply to attend the 2022 Investment Summit. The Investment Summit application is expected to go live mid-November.

Still to be done, Marketing/Recruitment Plan by November 10th. Will be reaching out to Committee members once again to determine five priority markets and details about the promotional strategy. While Select USA will lead the main promotion/recruitment strategy for their spinoff events worldwide, as a spinoff host, we will have the added responsibility to lead the main promotion/recruitment strategy for our own Spinoff event.

C. Out-Bound Trade Missions.

Virtual Trade Mission to South America Update: September 15th – November 19th. Three businesses from southern Illinois began participating in virtual connections with Peru, Chile and Colombia in mid-September and will continue through mid-November. So far, the feedback has been extremely positive and there is now strong interest in participating in a follow-up in-person trade mission to South America in 2022. Silvia will embark on a trip to Peru in late November to begin the planning process.

In-person Trade Mission to South America Update: Silvia stated that she will be traveling to Lima, Peru next month to reconnect with trade partners as well as participating in meetings with leaders from Universidad de Lima to begin implementing our partnership agreement signed in early 2020 and to discuss a new Dept. of Education grant. ITC has recently been approved for a brand-new program “Passport to Success: Enhancing Student International Business Capacities to Assist Rural and Minority Owned Businesses with South American Trade.”

Virtual Platform for Small Business Exporters Status: Torres reported that the first phase is expected to be completed before the end of the year and an invitation to regional businesses to list their products will follow.

Other: Torres referred members to an invitation to participate (and help recruit businesses) in the October Virtual Trade Roundtable: The Importance of Export Compliance. Roundtable will be held on October 28th, so help is appreciated.

D. Education Committee - Wondolowski

Bobby discussed the continued interest in hosting another Export Now Training Series in the Spring and that a strategy needed to be put in place soon to allow for ample time to promote the program. For this to happen, the following are key items to address:

- Silvia Torres indicated that her CARES Act funds were being extended until September of 2022, which could be of help.
- Torres suggested that Tom Dustan, International Sales Director at Sunnen Products Company, might be an option for running the program this time around. It was suggested that Bobby reach out to him to see if he had an interest and what costs would be involved.
- Even with Tom organizing and implementing, it would still be important that Council members get involved in the recruitment of companies.
- To that end, the recruitment process should be spearheaded by the Education Committee. Bobby will be reaching out to each of the current Education Committee members in terms of continued commitment and also with the hopes of finding someone interested in Chairing this Committee moving forward.

V. New Business.

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

VI. Public Comment and Announcements.

None.

VII Adjourn

With no other business, a motion was made by Edie Koch and seconded by Ed Weilbacher, to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 10:20 A.M.