



## **MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

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*Eugene Savage, Black River Falls, WI  
Chairman*  
*James Scholmeier, Fountain City, WI  
Vice Chairman*  
*Vicki Burke, Onalaska, WI  
Secretary & Treasurer*  
*Greg Flogstad, Onalaska, WI  
Director*

### **MINUTES**

#### **MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRRPC) BIMONTHLY MEETING**

**10:00 a.m., December 8, 2010**

**River Jacks, 1835 Rose Street, La Crosse, WI 54603**

#### **Call to Order**

Chairman Savage called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked for the roll call. Greg Flogstad, Director of the MRRPC took roll and said a quorum was present. The attendance roster is attached.

Guests in attendance: Paul Wydeven, Wisconsin Department of Transportation-SW Region; Brett Mittelstaedt, MRRPC-UWL Intern; and John Medinger representing U.S. Senator Herb Kohl.

#### **Minutes of October 13, 2010 Bimonthly Meeting**

Commissioner Ehrsam made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Baecker, to accept the minutes of the October 13, 2010, bimonthly meeting. Approved unanimously.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Chairman Savage asked Secretary-Treasurer Burke to present the treasurers reports. Ms. Burke said the October 1, 2010 balance in all MRRPC accounts was \$226,698.59 and the October 31, 2010 ending balance was \$211,207.35. Ms. Burke reported that the beginning balance in November 2010 was \$211,207.35 and the balance in all accounts at month's end was \$207,752.58.

Ms. Burke then presented the financial report for the Business Capital Fund. The balance in this account as of September 30, 2010 was \$226,059.81. From October 2010 through November 2010, activity in this account included loan repayments of \$21,829.04, account interest of \$184.85, an annual corporation filing fee of \$10 paid to State, and a \$53,254.42 loan drawdown leaving an ending balance in the Business Capital Fund as of November 30, 2010, of \$194,809.28. Ms. Burke said that as of September 30, 2010, the Business Capital Fund II RLF had a balance of \$60,859.03. She said that from October 2010 through November 2010, interest on this account totaled \$52.90 and loan repayments of \$5,580.54 were made leaving a November 30, 2010 balance of \$66,492.47.

The CMV Growth Development Fund began with a September 14, 2010, balance of \$56,190.28. Ms. Burke said that from the period of September 14, 2010, through November 10, 2010, interest earned on this account totaled \$13.20, loan payments of \$1,407.53 were made, and \$1,790.07 was transferred to the CMV Sequester Bank Account leaving a November 10, 2010, balance of \$55,820.94. Ms. Burke said the balance in the CMV-EDA Sequestered Fund as of September 14, 2010, was \$150,018.32. During the period of September 14, 2010 through November 10, 2010, activity in this account consisted of \$35.26 interest earned, a transfer of \$1,790.07 from CMV Growth Development Fund RLF Account, and a payment of \$32.98 in interest to the U.S. Treasury leaving a balance of \$151,810.67.

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#### ***A Nine County Economic Development District Providing Assistance to Local Governments***

- *Land Use Planning* ▪ *Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances* ▪ *Transportation Planning* ▪ *Economic Development Planning*
- *GIS Mapping* ▪ *Recreation Planning* ▪ *Revolving Loan Fund Administration* ▪ *Grant Writing* ▪ *Socioeconomic Data Dissemination*
- *Assist Local Interests in Responding to State and Federal Programs* ▪ *Advisory Service on Local Planning Issues*
- *Coordinating Agency for Programs and Activities* ▪ *Public Advocacy on Issues Affecting Our Region*

Ms. Burke said the La Crosse County Economic Development Fund began with a September 13, 2010 balance of \$52,080.17. During the period of September 13, 2010 through November 13, 2010, loan repayments of \$2,990.00 were made and interest earned totaled \$27.23. The ending account balance as of November 14, 2010, was \$55,097.40. Chairman Savage asked for a motion of approval on the treasurers reports presented. Commissioner Scholmeier made a motion to approve the treasurer's reports as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nickelatti, and approved unanimously.

Bryan Law, MRRPC Economic Development Planner said no additional loans have been made since the last bimonthly meeting. He said right now the state of the economy is affecting this.

Mr. Flogstad reported that no additional loans have been made from the La Crosse County Economic Development Fund.

### **Status of Commissioner Appointments**

Director Flogstad said all appointments have been made by the Governor. He congratulated the Commissioners that were reappointed. Mr. Flogstad introduced two new Commissioners: Nancy Jaekel (Vernon County) and Phillip Borreson (Trempealeau County).

### **Discussion and Approval of Survey Method, Questions, Costs and Vendor for the Regional Comprehensive Plan Survey**

Mr. Flogstad explained the purpose of doing a regional survey as part of the regional plan was to receive input from residents on what they think and value regarding regional land use planning and economic development. He outlined the regional comprehensive plan survey method. He explained there are 139,000 households in the region and 89 different zip codes. He said that 1,532 randomly selected households will be mailed surveys and will be followed up by post cards and telephone contacts. Mr. Flogstad said that both rural and urban households would be sampled with results distinguishable. Mr. Flogstad stated that a 33% return rate will be targeted. He said that accuracy to within +/- 5% with 95 % confidence will be attained with a 33% return rate.

Mr. Flogstad reported that he had done some research on attaining a survey consultant. He said that U.W. River Falls has a survey research center and has done surveys similar to the regional comprehensive plan survey. He said that in discussion with UW-River Falls it is estimated that a four page survey would cost \$6,597. The \$6,597 includes formalizing the survey, mailing of the survey, post cards, telephone follow up, collecting, analyzing and final report. Mr. Flogstad added that UW-River Falls Survey Research Center has conducted over 35 Comprehensive Plan Surveys for RPCs, counties, cities, villages and towns in Wisconsin and that all surveys and reports are on their website. Mr. Flogstad said he also contacted UW-La Crosse-Small Business Development Center. He said their survey methods are less formalized. He said they would have to contact professors to see who may be interested and it would be an ad-hoc endeavor.

Mr. Flogstad asked the Commission board to approve up to \$10,000 for survey work as mentioned that would include 1,532 urban and rural surveys mailed among 89 zip codes for 33 % return (506). The survey costs would also include post cards, telephone follow up and a written report. Mr. Flogstad explained that for every survey returned over 506 they charge \$5.00 if we want it included to increase the confidence interval. So if we get a return of 66%, the cost would be \$9,127. Commissioner Ehram asked if the survey consultant would take care of all the mailing. Mr. Flogstad said "yes". Commissioner Savage asked for motion to approve hiring a survey consultant for a cost up to \$10,000. Commissioner Carney made the motion to hire a survey consultant for a cost up to \$10,000; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Christenson, and was approved unanimously.

Mr. Flogstad said he would also like comments on the content of the survey. He said Bryan Law, the MRRPC's Economic Development Planner suggested some questions on manufacturing be added to the survey due to the importance of manufacturing in our region. Mr. Flogstad said the final survey would be approved at the February 2011 meeting. Commissioner Savage said using a telephone survey for people not returning a written survey may be difficult since the use of cell phones for home phones, and these numbers are not publicly listed. Commissioner Baker asked if question No. 8 on the survey was referring to toll roads. Mr. Flogstad said yes and explained the question came from the document "The Wisconsin Way – Blueprint for Change 2010. Commissioner Christenson said the discussion of toll roads versus an increase in gas tax is a highly discussed topic right now. Commissioner Leys said a question should be added to the survey asking if people were willing to spend tax money to encourage economic development. Commissioner Smith added that a question should be added along that line regarding tourism and economic development. Commissioner Baecker commented on question 9 and asked about the Governor acting on the High Speed rail funding. Commissioner Schroeder said that he thought there was

some legislation in the works regarding this issue. Commissioner Purdy said he recently listened to a radio program indicating high speed rail would improve freight rail lines. There was some discussion on whether or not the current rail lines were deficient. Paul Wydeven said the high speed rail improvements would upgrade freight lines. Mr. Wydeven added that a majority of the current freight rails are owned by Canadian Pacific and Burlington Northern. Commissioner Leys added that it's easy to run a passenger train 100 mph, the difficulty is in the track, not in the locomotive. Mr. Wydeven said the money for the high speed rail project would benefit freight rail, but the official position of the Department of Transportation is the project is on hold. He said the Secretary of Transportation said the money could not be transferred and used for highway projects as Governor Walker had asked. Commissioner Schlesselman said another survey question could pertain to establishing a long term goal of establishing on time schedules and when can we expect results. Commissioner Schlesselman asked Mr. Flogstad when the survey will be completed. Mr. Flogstad said he didn't have an exact date but it would be done 3 months after the initial survey mailing. Mr. Medinger said that high speed rail funds will probably never be used for anything but high speed rail. He said perhaps the money could be used for other rail purposes, but if the issue is not decided in the next six months, the funding allocated to Wisconsin for high speed rail will be pulled. He concluded saying we cannot just rely on our highway systems for future transportation needs.

### **Presentation on Department of Defense Joint Land Use Study Program for Local Governments Surrounding Fort McCoy**

Mr. Law said he was going to present some information on Department of Defense Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) Program for Local Governments surrounding Fort McCoy. He asked the question: "Why conduct a JLUS?". He explained that as the Fort McCoy military installation and civilian communities develop there are many sources of potential land-use conflicts. Mr. Law said even if no land-use conflicts exist at the present, there is potential for conflicts in the future. He said planning for the future will help maintain a healthy coexistence between the military installation and the surrounding local governments.

Mr. Law said that a JLUS planning document will encourage collaboration between military installations and surrounding communities. The objective of the JLUS is to identify sources of potential conflict and allow both parties to avoid them as they make plans for future development. Mr. Law continued by explaining the typical JLUS process. Mr. Law said first the U.S. Military Department nominates an installation and the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) then conducts a site visit. After the site visit OEA will confirm a need for preparing a JLUS and the next step involves local government(s) agreeing to participate. If the local governments agree, a steering committee is organized, a local sponsor endorses the effort and a grant application is filed. He said the grant is a 90/10 grant (90% is paid by OEA and 10% from local governments). Mr. Law said once OEA awards the grant, the joint land use study is conducted and completed over 12 months. The next step is implementation of the recommendations made in the study by the local governments and military installation.

Next Mr. Law provided an overview of general topics included in a JLUS: 1) Community profile, 2) Existing and proposed land uses, 3) Steering committee, 4) Public participation plan, and 5) Installation operations ↔ community development. Mr. Law said some potential conflicts identified by a JLUS could include installation noise impacts, aircraft approach and departure safety zones, incompatible development (at installation/in surrounding community), and development encroachment that threatens installation mission. He said typical recommendations in a JLUS could include a revision of installation operations to reduce impacts. This could be accomplished by making military operations more compatible with the land uses in the surrounding community. Another recommendation could include revising a community comprehensive land use plan to be compatible with installation mission. This could be accomplished by making land uses in the surrounding community more compatible with core military operations on the base. Other recommendations could include: plan coordination (revising community zoning and development regulations to prevent incompatible land uses within sensitive noise and aircraft approach zones); Growth management (limit development intensity within sensitive noise and aircraft approach/departure zones); revising building codes for sound attenuation; and Conservation (establishing environmental criteria to preserve rural and undeveloped lands that may be in proximity to the post).

Mr. Law said typical measures to implement in a JLUS could include updated comprehensive plans, zoning, building code modifications, subdivision regulations, Planned Unit Development regulations, mandatory deed/noise disclosure, aviation easements, transfer of development rights, conservation easements, and a Memoranda of Understanding. Mr. Law displayed a chart showing the economic benefit of Fort McCoy to the region in 2009. The chart showed that in 2009, dollars returned to the local economy due to the Fort McCoy military installation were over \$442 million and its overall economic impact was over \$1.4 billion using an economic multiplier effect.

Mr. Law said the more participants in a JLUS, the better because it shows commitment of local communities to the installation and demonstrates good working relationship between military and civilian entities. Mr. Law said a JLUS is a good idea because the process deals with issues, but a JLUS is not BRAC proofing. Base Realignment and Closing (BRAC) can still occur at any installation across the U.S. Mr. Law said right now OEA has confirmed a need for a JLUS to be done for Fort McCoy. He explained the MRRPC will write the application and if approved prepare the JLUS. He said the typical cost for a JLUS is about \$100,000. He said the local match is \$10,000 and that Xcel Energy has committed \$3,000 for the local match and the MRRPC could provide the remaining \$7,000. He said everything is contingent on the OEA grant being awarded. He explained the OEA grant application will likely be submitted in early 2011, and grants are typically approved within three weeks after submission. If approved, work on the JLUS would begin early in 2011 and end in early 2012. Mr. Law asked if anyone had any questions. Mr. Leys asked if the local match would be provided in services. Mr. Flogstad said that was the case. Mr. Law handed out a Q&A summary sheet on JLUS studies.

### **Presentation on County Communications Interoperability Plans, Survey to Report Community Communication Capacities and Status of Contract with WCWRPC**

Mr. Bonifas explained the MRRPC is working with the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission on a project involving the implementation of a Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP). He said one aspect of the project involves the preparation of Tactical Interoperable Communication (TIC) plans for every county in our region. He explained the preparation of these plans is a matter of public safety. Mr. Bonifas said Regional Interoperability Councils have been established to ensure that interoperability implementations address local concerns and unique regional circumstances while also adhering to the strategies and tactics adopted in the Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan (SCIP). He said Regional Councils are chartered by the State Interoperability Council with membership based on representation from each county within planning regions already established by Wisconsin Emergency Management. He explained each Council is supported by a state-funded Regional SCIP Implementation Coordinator. He said MRRPC counties fall within the West Central and Southwest region. Buffalo, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, and Trempealeau counties are in the West Central Region and Crawford and Vernon counties are in the Southwest Region.

Mr. Bonifas said La Crosse County has completed their TIC Plan. Mr. Bonifas said a Kickoff meeting on Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan (TIC Plan) Template and Guidance is scheduled for December 16<sup>th</sup> in Pepin County. Mr. Bonifas said he would be going through a typical presentation that would be made to the counties on TIC plans. He said a typical agenda would include: 1) Regional Council and Coordinator review, 2) What is a TIC Plan, 3) Overview of the TIC Plan template and guidance, 4) What planning is required, 5) Future steps, and 6) Discussion and questions. Mr. Bonifas said Tactical Interoperable Communications is defined as the rapid provision of on-scene, incident based mission critical voice communications among all first-responder agencies (EMS, fire and law enforcement), as appropriate for the incident, and in support of an incident command system as defined in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) model. Mr. Bonifas explained that a TIC Plan provides standardized information on county, regional, or Urban Area (UASI) communications resources and capabilities, and is a tactical tool to use for incidents and planned events. Mr. Bonifas reviewed the TIC process. He said the State has created a general format for each county to follow. Mr. Bonifas explained that a workshop format for preparing a TIC works well and when done correctly, the TIC Plan should be, at a minimum, 90-98% complete at the close of the workshop. Mr. Bonifas said Stakeholder Participation is the key to success.

Mr. Bonifas reviewed the planning process for TICS. Mr. Bonifas said the MRRPC will facilitate the TIC meetings. Mr. Bonifas said TIC planning objectives include: developing a TIC Plan for the County, utilizing a county-wide approach. He explained that working with the county, information will be collected prior to the workshop, reformatting it into the TIC Plan template. Additional and new data collected will be added during the workshop and a consensus will be established on the TIC Plan contents. Mr. Bonifas said the TIC Plan Template is designed to help write the TIC Plan and serves as a starting point. The template can be adjusted to fit the county's needs, deleting items that don't apply and adding items you need. Text is provided to help in developing wording for the plan but text can be modified, adjusted, left "as is", or deleted. He said that Words/phrases in brackets are placeholders to fill in the appropriate information required for your specific locations. Mr. Bonifas said TIC Plan Guidance contains instructions, suggestions, and examples to use as a guide for entering information into the TIC Plan Template and helps with areas that may not be self-explanatory. Suggestions are included for additional sections.

Mr. Bonifas said a primary TIC Plan would include an Executive Overview (if desired), Section 1 - County/Region Participation, Section 2: Governance, Section 3: Interoperability Equipment and Policies and Procedures, Section 4: County/Regional Emergency Resource Staffing, Section 5: Community Asset Survey Method (CASM), and Appendices. Mr. Bonifas reviewed

what would be included in each section of the TIC Plan. He said the CASM or database is located out in California and that all information for the entire U.S. would be entered into that database. He said the information will be easier to update if it's in one place. He added that only certain people would be able to update the information. He said Section 3 dealing with Interoperability Equipment and Policies and Procedures is the heart and soul of the plan. Mr. Bonifas briefly discussed WISCOM, Wisconsin's shared Interoperable System for Communications that first responders in communities across the state can use to communicate during a major disaster or large-scale incident. He said that Minnesota has something very similar. Mr. Leys said this is a major step; the sticking point is making sure this actually happens, and he gave the example of 911 where there was a communication breakdown between law enforcement and fire fighters. Mr. Bonifas said interoperability communication is huge in the event of a major disaster. Commissioner Ross said using plain language in the event of a major disaster is a major component. Mr. Bonifas said this will be addressed on a County by County basis. Commissioner Kuhn commented that we need a reality check and questioned the conflict. There was some more discussion on communication problems and using plain language during major events and catastrophes. Commissioner Kuhn said the biggest problem is the equipment. Mr. Bonifas said gateway patches allow different radios to talk to one another. Some discussion then occurred on the required transfer to narrow band radio in 2011. Commissioner Murray said there is grant money available right now to get radios for narrow band. Commissioner Ehram commented the biggest problem is the Towers. Mr. Bonifas said in cooperating with the State of Minnesota we may be able to utilize some of their equipment and that the States of Minnesota and Wisconsin need to work cooperatively. Commissioner Purdy said that Pierce County already knows what their deficiencies are but what the County needs is a good system. He said a plan won't alleviate that issue. Some discussion occurred on who would update the TICs. Mr. Bonifas said the TICs are a living document and it's up to each County to decide how to update and when. Commissioner Kuhn said what is essential is a common frequency and if you don't have the right equipment you aren't going to accomplish anything.

#### **Presentation on Rural Commuter Bus Service Project Proposed to Serve Crawford, Vernon, and La Crosse County Communities Starting in May 2011**

Mr. Fletcher said he has been working with the Crawford County Transportation Coordinating Committee on a commuter bus project. He said that from May through October 2010 a feasibility study was prepared looking at the feasibility of a commuter bus serving Crawford, Vernon and La Crosse Counties. Mr. Fletcher said the original focus was STH 35 and a commuter bus providing service between Prairie du Chien and La Crosse but based on county input the focus changed to connecting Prairie du Chien, Viroqua and La Crosse. He said that transportation is needed for commuters, elderly/disabled, and the general public and based on ridership data, there would not be enough users to support a STH 35 commuter bus route between La Crosse and Prairie du Chien at this time. Mr. Fletcher said that three preferred routes were identified based on potential ridership. Mr. Fletcher displayed maps of all three routes and provided information on the service. He said the goal is to get people the best we could to where they are going so stops will be provided at major shopping outlets, medical facilities, Trane Company, the downtown Transit Center in La Crosse, and at UW-La Crosse and Western Technical College. He said currently they are looking at one 12 passenger bus on each route making 4 round trips per day. The trips would be early morning, mid morning, mid afternoon and early evening routes with fixed route service and stops in each community served. The fares currently being considered are \$3.00 to \$4.00 one way fare with transfers available. He said it's important to make the service affordable for riders. He said another proposal is to have "Flag Stops" in rural areas where an individual could flag down the commuter bus for pickup if they live on the route. Another service that could be provided is a guaranteed ride home service so a rider would have a number to call in case of emergency and they needed to get home. Mr. Fletcher said potentially existing mini-buses could be utilized as feeders to the system to provide service to a larger area. Mr. Fletcher added that the 12 passenger commuter buses would be handicapped accessible and bike accessible.

Mr. Fletcher said the estimated annual cost of the service is \$362,000. Mr. Fletcher gave a breakdown of the funding sources and said the annual local match needed will be \$65,160. Mr. Fletcher said service should begin in May 2011. Mr. Fletcher said he is attempting to secure the partial local match of \$43,005 needed for 2011 from local units of government, businesses and organizations. The next steps involve developing a Request for Proposal to contract bus service from a private provider, identifying stop locations, and marketing the service so service can begin May 2011. Commissioner Christenson asked if there would be any cost savings to counties from this commuter service. Mr. Fletcher said it should alleviate some costs. One example is county's providing individual trips to get people to medical appointments. Mr. Fletcher said they envision a reliable fixed route system that will be used more because of its efficiency. Commissioner Leys asked if they ever thought of using school buses to provide the commuter services. Commissioner Baecker said there could be some problems with insurance when using school buses. There was some discussion on using school buses and liability issues.

**Presentation on the Importance and Power of Manufacturing**

Mr. Flogstad presented a PowerPoint on the importance of manufacturing in the region, State and Nation. He said manufacturing matters in the MRRPC region and that the Mississippi River 9 county region had more people employed in manufacturing in 2008 than it did in 2001. Both the State and Nation showed notable declines in manufacturing during this same period. Mr. Flogstad displayed a series of slides demonstrating the importance of manufacturing to an economy. He stated the U.S. manufacturing sector alone would be the 8<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world. Mr. Flogstad said that the largest percentage of manufacturers have between 0-4 employees. Mr. Flogstad said that manufacturing has the greatest multiplier effect of all employment sectors and that manufacturing employees earn more than nonmanufacturing employees. Mr. Flogstad said the State of Wisconsin ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in the U.S. in manufacturing. Mr. Flogstad said bio-manufacturing has great potential in the U.S. He said bio-manufacturing is products manufactured wholly or partially from agricultural feedstocks. Mr. Flogstad said auto manufacturers use bio-based products in their manufacturing processes.

Mr. Flogstad said innovation is key in manufacturing, and a skilled, educated workforce is the single most critical element of innovation success. Mr. Flogstad concluded with a quote from Charles Darwin which read "It's not the strongest of species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones most responsive to change."

**Questions and Comments on the Following Projects Listed in the Written Staff Report**

Commissioner Savage asked if there were any comments or questions on the projects listed on the written staff report. Commission Burke commented that the project listing was a good idea.

**Old Business and New Business**

Mr. Flogstad said under new business he would like to mention the "Regional Principles of Collaboration Compact" for the 7 Rivers Region that everyone should have a copy of in their meeting packets. Mr. Flogstad said the document acknowledges that success of the region is greatly enhanced by a commitment to regional collaboration. He said he would like the Commission Board to consider the compact at the upcoming February 2011 meeting.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by and approved unanimously.

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the December 8, 2010, bimonthly meeting minutes approved on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of February 2011.

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Vicki Burke, Secretary-Treasurer