



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., February 9, 2011

Days Inn Hotel and Conference Center, 101 Sky Harbour Drive, La Crosse, Wisconsin

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.

Director Flogstad informed Commissioners that Commissioner Baker recently celebrated his 65th wedding anniversary and congratulations were extended from the Commission.

Minutes of December 8, 2010 Bimonthly Meeting

Commissioner Ehram made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Kuhn, to accept the minutes of the December 8, 2010, bimonthly meeting. Approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Chairman Savage asked Secretary-Treasurer Burke to present the treasurers reports. Ms. Burke said the December 1, 2010 balance in all MRRPC accounts was \$207,752.58 and the December 31, 2010 ending balance was \$168,644.82. Ms. Burke reported that the beginning balance in January 2011 was \$168,644.82 and the balance in all accounts at month's end was \$280,419.60.

Ms. Burke then presented the financial report for the Business Capital Fund. The balance in this account as of November 30, 2010 was \$194,809.28. From December 2010 through January 2011, activity in this account included loan repayments of \$20,960.53 and account interest of \$168.56 leaving an ending balance in the Business Capital Fund as of January 31, 2011 of \$215,938.37. Ms. Burke said that as of November 30, 2010, the Business Capital Fund II RLF had a balance of \$66,492.47. She said that from December 2010 through January 2011, interest on this account totaled \$56.95 and loan repayments of \$6,972.98 were made leaving a January 31, 2011 balance of \$73,522.40.

The CMV Growth Development Fund began with a November 10, 2010, balance of \$55,820.94. Ms. Burke said that from the period of November 10, 2010, through January 12, 2011, interest earned on this account totaled \$14.56 and loan payments of \$1,002.51 were made leaving a January 12, 2011, balance of \$56,838.01. Ms. Burke said the balance in the CMV-EDA Sequestered Fund as of November 10, 2010, was \$151,810.67. During the period of November 11, 2010 through January 12, 2011, activity in this account consisted of \$39.30 interest earned leaving a balance of \$151,849.97.

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 November 14, 2010 balance of \$55,097.40. During the period of November 14, 2010 through January 13, 2011, loan repayments of \$1,570.00 were made and interest earned totaled \$26.17. The ending account balance as of January 13, 2011 was \$56,693.57. Chairman Savage asked for a motion of approval on the treasurers reports presented. Commissioner Murray made a motion to approve the treasurer's reports as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schnitzler, and approved unanimously.

Bryan Law, MRRPC Economic Development Planner reported there hasn't been any new loan activity in the Business Capital Fund, Business Capital Fund 2, and the CMV Growth Development Fund. He said there have been a few inquiries on loan funds which is encouraging. Mr. Law said he continues to market the funds.

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

Decision on 2011 MRRPC Budget

Chairman Savage asked Mr. Flogstad to present the MRRPC's 2011 budget. Mr. Flogstad reviewed the income categories included in the 2011 budget. Mr. Flogstad said 2011 County Contributions are lower in 2011 than in 2010. He explained that staff will also be working on several new projects in 2011. Mr. Flogstad said staff have entered in to contracts with the Town of Utica in Crawford County to update their zoning ordinance, and have signed a contract with Pepin County to assist them in the preparation of their comprehensive plan. He reported staff will also be working on the MRRPC's regional comprehensive plan. Mr. Flogstad said staff will also be assisting Westby and Viroqua in Vernon County, and Spring Valley in Pierce County with Safe-Routes-To-Schools planning. Mr. Flogstad then continued by reviewing the budgeted expenses for 2011. He explained most of the increase in staff fringe benefits was due to an employee changing from single health coverage to family health coverage. Mr. Flogstad said everything else on the expense side is about the same as 2010 with the exception of the budgeted expense for the regional comprehensive plan survey. Mr. Flogstad said the MRRPC's total budget for 2011 is \$438,559. Chairman Savage asked for a motion regarding the budget as presented. Commissioner Ehram made a motion to approve the MRRPC's 2011 budget as presented and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. Chairman Savage asked if there was any further discussion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Decision on Survey Method, Questions, Costs and Vendor for the Regional Comprehensive Plan Survey

Mr. Flogstad said everyone should have received a copy of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission Survey and cost proposal. He explained the survey cost proposal and reviewed the survey document and opened the floor for comments and questions. Commissioner Ross commented that question 8 should be broken into two parts and that survey respondents may answer more on one side then another. Mr. Ross suggested adding a survey question about the personal property taxes businesses pay on equipment and whether that tax should be eliminated or restructured. More discussion occurred on survey questions pertaining to taxes. Commissioner Savage suggested asking whether technical schools should be taken off property tax rolls and treated like other higher education funding institutions. Mr. Flogstad explained that questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 on the survey regarding taxes were from the Build Wisconsin Report. Mr. Fisher asked if there was a survey question regarding more frequent passenger rail service. Commissioner Christenson pointed out a clerical error on the survey indicating there were two survey questions with number 15. Commissioner Schlesselman said some people may have trouble understanding Question 8. Mr. Flogstad stressed that survey questions should not lead people. Commissioner Jaekel asked if additional information on the survey could be provided on a website. Commissioner Borreson commented a media effort would make sure people are aware of the survey and also educate people. Mr. Flogstad said press releases could be sent. After more discussion on distribution of the survey and how the results would be used, Chairman Savage asked for a motion to approve the survey cost proposal and survey document. Commissioner Burke made a motion to approve the cost proposal and survey, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Krachey, and approved unanimously.

Decision on Regional Principles of Collaboration Compact – 7 Rivers Alliance

Mr. Flogstad provided background on the 7 Rivers Alliance and explained the Alliance is marketing the region through state grant funds with the purpose of maximizing resources and economic development assets of the region. He said the Alliance is asking organizations to sign and commit to a Regional Principles of Collaboration Compact. He explained the compact acknowledges the success of the region is greatly enhanced by a commitment to regional collaboration. Mr. Flogstad asked the Commissioner Board for a decision on approval of the compact. Commissioner Nickelatti made a motion to approve the MRRPC signing the Regional Principles of Collaboration Compact; the motion was seconded by Commission Burke, and approved unanimously.

Decision on MRRPC Administering the Transportation Service Provider Contract for Rural Commuter Bus Service in Crawford, Vernon and La Crosse County Communities Starting in May 2011

Mr. Fletcher reported on the daily commuter bus service in the works for Vernon, Crawford and southern La Crosse County. He said three buses will make 4 round trips per day (Monday-Friday) on each route and provide service for commuters, shoppers and medical service. The service should begin in May 2011 if local matching funds are secured. Mr. Fletcher said he has been meeting with local units of government and businesses and organizations to request matching funds.

Mr. Fletcher explained he was asking for approval from the Commission Board to potentially administer the Transportation Service Provider Contract for the commuter service. Commissioner Nickelatti made a motion to approve the MRRPC administering the Transportation Service Provider Contract and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Burke. Chairman Savage asked if there was any further discussion. Commissioner Ehrsam asked about the length of the contract. Mr. Fletcher said the contract would run from year to year and the first year it would be an 8 month contract. Some discussion occurred on how long the service would run to see if it's workable. Mr. Fletcher said he expected there will be funds to run the service a year and a half. Some more discussion occurred on whether the service could be self sustaining or would be partially subsidized. Commissioner Kuhn asked if the time devoted to this contract would affect other projects. Mr. Fletcher said he felt the Commission staff could handle the contract effectively. Commissioner Ross questioned the ride home service available. Mr. Fletcher explained that there would be a fee for that service to guard against people abusing that service. Commissioner Christenson asked if the commuter service would be in jeopardy with the new state government officials. Mr. Fletcher said he didn't think so as the Department of Transportation has been encouraging expanded commuter service. Chairman Savage asked if there were any more comments or questions, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Decision on Pepin County Comprehensive Plan Contract

Mr. Bonifas presented a contract between Pepin County and the MRRPC. The purpose of the contract is for Pepin County to secure planning services to prepare their comprehensive plan. Mr. Bonifas outlined components of the contract and said the contract would run from 2/9/2011 through December 31, 2012. Mr. Bonifas explained as part of the planning process the county will need to conduct a countywide survey on comprehensive plan issues. Mr. Bonifas stated he is discussing with the County as to whether or not this county-wide survey could be combined with the MRRPC's regional comprehensive plan survey. Mr. Bonifas asked if anyone had any questions. Hearing none, Chairman Savage asked for a motion on the contract Mr. Bonifas presented. Mr. Murray made a motion to approve the contract between Pepin County and the MRRPC; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Smith and approved unanimously.

Decision on Zoning Ordinance Contract with Town of Utica, Crawford County

Mr. Fletcher presented a contract for consideration. He said the Town of Utica would like to secure the planning services of the MRRPC to revise the Town of Utica's zoning ordinance and map. Mr. Fletcher said the Town of Utica completed their comprehensive plan last year and would like to update their zoning to reflect their comprehensive plan. Mr. Fletcher said he met with the Town last night and they are ready to go on this project. Mr. Fletcher asked if anyone had any questions. Hearing none, Chairman Savage asked for a motion on the contract. Commissioner Ross made a motion to approve the contract between the Town of Utica, Crawford County and the MRRPC. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baecker and approved unanimously.

Presentation on Contents of County Tactical Interoperability Communication Plans

Mr. Bonifas said in 2011 the MRRPC will assist several counties with the preparation of their Tactical Interoperability Communication Plans. Mr. Bonifas said Interoperability is the ability to communicate between agencies that utilize different radio systems and other interoperability methods such as mutual aid channels, gateways, dispatch centers and radio caches. Mr. Bonifas showed a PowerPoint slide presentation outlining the content of the TIC plans. He said Section 3, Interoperability Equipment and Policies and Procedures, is the heart and soul of the plan. Mr. Bonifas said the MRRPC is partnering with the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission on this project. He explained there are six regions in the State and each region has a coordinator. He said another facet of this project involves entering data into the CASM. He explained the CASM is a web based tool that provides the ability for representatives of public safety agencies within an urban area or State to collect, store, and visualize data about agencies, communications assets, and how agencies use those assets.

Mr. Bonifas said a kick-off meeting was held in Pepin County and he was waiting for feedback from that meeting before scheduling additional meetings in other counties. Mr. Bonifas asked if anyone had any questions. Commissioner Schlesselman asked if this was just inclusive of Wisconsin or does this mean we could communicate with Minnesota. Mr. Bonifas said that is

being worked on and that Minnesota has funds in the budget to install software that would allow that communication to occur. Mr. Bonifas said ideally we should be able to communicate nationwide but there are issues. Some discussion occurred on the various issues affecting communication between different radios and whether the communication was via satellite or tower. Mr. Flogstad asked what the term gateway meant. Mr. Bonifas explained a gateway is a computer software program that plugs into a dispatch center allowing radios of different makes to talk to one another. Commissioner Smith inquired if the counties were connected to Burlington Northern. Mr. Bonifas said that ideally, the answer should be yes, and it's very important to get everyone at the table. Commissioner Baker said it's a good concept and he hopes this all works. Mr. Bonifas said there was a good turnout at the Pepin County meeting and people seemed enthusiastic about this project.

Chairman Savage thanked staff members for their reports.

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 written staff reports.

Commissioner Schroeder brought up the issue of flood proofing structures located in a floodplain. He said that people should be able to flood proof themselves. Some discussion occurred on the 50% rule through the Department of Natural Resources and what counts against the 50% rule and what doesn't.

Mr. Law gave a brief overview of the Western Wisconsin Farm Fresh Atlas Project. Mr. Law said the project is a statewide effort to identify farms and businesses in an atlas that have committed to help create a sustainable, regional food system through farming methods that protect natural resources, minimize the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, and treat animals with care and respect. Mr. Law said the atlas will be a one stop shop for locally grown food. Mr. Flogstad explained the lead on this project shifted from Chippewa County UW Extension to the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC). Mr. Flogstad said staff provided WCWRPC with a list of press release contacts to assist in the promotion of the atlas.

Old Business and New Business

Mr. Flogstad said that under other business he wanted to bring everyone's attention to the handout included in the meeting packets from the National Association of Development Organizations. He said the handout discusses the federal policy landscape and developments. Mr. Flogstad said that annually the MRRPC receives grant funds from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration.

Commissioner Baker questioned if HUD was still an active federal program. Mr. Flogstad said the program is more active in urban areas of the country.

Commissioner Schroeder asked about the Food Resource and Agribusiness Network and the Equipment and Metal Manufacturing Industry Cluster Initiatives. Mr. Law explained these industry cluster initiatives are aimed at getting manufacturers and organizations working together to improve the competitive advantage of businesses and grow the economy of the region. He said a focus is looking at joint opportunities to improve their operations. Excess trucking capacity is an area under consideration. Mr. Law stated some of the manufacturers indicated an interest in avoiding empty back hauls and decreasing the amount of excess capacity by coordinating shipments and getting more efficiencies from their trucking operations. Commissioner Kuhn commented about awareness of laws that have to be followed.

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 February 9, 2011, bimonthly meeting minutes approved on the 13th day of April 2011.