



**MISSISSIPPI RIVER
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**
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**James Kuhn, Cashton, WI
Chairman**
**Margaret Baecker, Independence, 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., August 10, 2016
Best Western Riverfront Hotel, 1835 Rose Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin

Call to Order

Chairman Kuhn called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked for the roll call. A quorum was present. The attendance roster is attached. There were two guests in attendance: Steve Peterson, Monroe County Economic Development Coordinator and Jennifer Kuderer, Regional Economic Developer, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation.

Minutes of June 8, 2016 Bimonthly Meeting

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the June 8, 2016 bimonthly minutes. Commissioner Ehrsam made a motion to approve the June 8, 2016 meeting minutes and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Twidt. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report

Secretary-Treasurer Burke gave the treasurers report. Ms. Burke said the June 30, 2016 balance in all MRRPC accounts was \$302,855.73 and the July 31, 2016 ending balance was \$288,168.18. She reported the beginning balance in July 2016 was \$302,855.73 and July 31, 2016 ending balance was \$288,168.18.

Ms. Burke said the Business Capital Fund (BCF) began with a May 31, 2016 balance of \$239,302.43. Activity from June 1, 2016 through July 31, 2016 included loan repayments of \$9,047.28 and interest earned of \$81.64 leaving a July 31, 2016 balance on hand of \$248,431.35. The BCF Sequester Account began with a May 31, 2016 balance of \$428,508.29 and no additional activity leaving a balance of \$428,508.29.

Ms. Burke said the Business Capital Fund 2 began with a June 1, 2016 balance of \$31,840.42. Activity from June 1, 2016 through July 31, 2016 included loan repayments of \$1480.00 and interest earned of \$10.89 leaving a July 31, 2016 balance of \$33,331.31. Ms. Burke said the Business Capital Fund 2 Sequester Account began with a June 1, 2016 balance of \$160,582.32 and no additional activity leaving a balance of \$160,582.32.

Ms. Burke said the CMV Growth Development Fund began with a June 1, 2016 balance of \$46,625.86. Activity from June 1, 2016 through July 31, 2016 included loan repayments of \$978.30 and interest earned of \$8.19 leaving a July 31, 2016 balance of \$47,612.35. Ms. Burke said the CMV Growth Development Fund Sequester Account began with a June 1, 2016 balance of \$104,045.10. Activity from June 1, 2016 through July 31, 2016 included interest earned of \$17.96 leaving a balance of \$104,063.06.

Providing Planning and Economic Development Services to Improve the Environment, Economy and Quality of Life!

***•Land Use Planning and Zoning Assistance •Transportation Planning •Economic Development Planning •Recreation Planning •Business Lending
•Grant Writing • Economic Data Dissemination •Assisting Local Interests in Responding to State, Federal and Private Programs •Advisory
Services on Planning and Development Issues • Coordinator for Programs and Activities •Advocate on Issues Affecting the Region***

The La Crosse County Economic Development Fund began with a June 1, 2016 balance of \$48,331.21. Activity from June 1, 2016 through July 31, 2016 included loan repayments of \$953.13 and interest earned of \$11.83 leaving a July 31, 2016 balance of \$49,296.17. Ms. Burke said the La Crosse County Economic Development Fund Sequester Account began with a June 1, 2016 balance of \$24,633.70. Activity in this account from June 1, 2016 through July 31, 2016 included interest earned of \$6.16 leaving a balance of \$24,639.86.

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the treasurer's reports. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ehram and approved unanimously.

Steve Peterson Monroe County Economic Development Coordinator Presentation and Discussion

Mr. Peterson provided an overview of the economic development activities that were taking place in Monroe County. Some projects and tools discussed included: (1) Connect Community Program which Monroe County is piloting and impacts towns and villages. Cashton is one of the communities involved. (2) Google – Let's Put Your City on the Map Program is a free web service from Google which allows businesses to list their business information on the web for free. Acts like the Yellow Pages. (3) Organic Valley in Cashton is building a butter and cheese manufacturing plant in the business park. (4) Scenic Bluffs Clinic in Cashton has expanded and is hosting an open house. (5) Cashton School District has expanded their elementary and high schools. The high school expansion focused on technology areas for workforce preparation. (6) In Wilton the United Cooperative feed blending plant and Martin Warehousing are expanding. (7) In Warrens a 27-member cranberry cooperative has formed called CranGrow. They produce raisins and have constructed a juicing plant. Eighty percent of their market is international. (8) 3 Bears Resort has a new management team and have renovated the resort. (9) Monroe County has formed a partnership with 7 Rivers Alliance working with their Stronger Economies Together rural economic development pilot program funded by a USDA – Rural Development grant. (10) Sparta and Tomah have created new business parks which have Tax Increment Districts. (11) Tomah Memorial Hospital is building a new healthcare facility. (12) Oakdale has created a new business park. (13) Cashton is a Connect Community and has learned that Premiere Coop is closing their facility but the community is being proactive in finding solutions for the site. (14) Norwalk is hosting their Rails to Trails running competition. (15) It is the 50th Anniversary of the Elroy-Sparta Bike Trail. (16) Monroe County is working towards building a Business Incubator Center. (17) Monroe County will be hosting the 2017 Economic Development Conference at the Three Bears Resort in Warrens. They have added an extra day for the conference as a result of feedback from this year's conference participants. The conference is open to everyone and has a small conference fee.

Jennifer Kuderer Regional Economic Developer, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Presentation and Discussion

Ms. Kuderer provided an overview of the economic development services that the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation provides. Some services discussed included: (1) Working to brand the State of Wisconsin. (2) Create strategic partnerships to move economic development forward. (3) Program areas include 1) Entrepreneurship – assisting with tech companies, intellectual property, loan funds, product launch, and tax credits for start-up companies. 2) Existing Businesses Support – growth and expansion opportunities, gap financing assistance, tax credit programs, revenue bonds financing providing fixed rates, workforce training grant program. 3) Export Development – encourage foreign investors, develop export markets through tech assistance called Expotech which helps small to medium sized companies research which markets make sense for their business. 4) Assist with trade ventures and trade missions to foreign countries, strategic visits to build relationships with a state wide delegation. (4) Assist with the Brownfield Arena – soil and ground water contamination assessment and clean up in industrial areas. (5) Obtain tax credits for historic building restoration to aid in downtown revitalization projects. (6) Provide resources for minority business development state wide. (7) Fabrication Lab developed by MIT – set of equipment to teach technology such as 3-D printers etc. to area schools to connect the community and young entrepreneurs. (8) Engaged in marketing the state for example the Made in Wisconsin Initiative pairing with the Department of Agriculture's Something Special from Wisconsin Program. Mr. Kuderer also discussed the steps of the national Main Street program which is being implemented in area communities. It is a four-point approach 1) promotion (marketing) 2) design (physical space, facades) 3) organization (volunteers etc.) 4) economic vitality (assessing the business mix).

Decision on La Crosse Center Expansion Project Resolution

Mr. Flogstad said that the City of La Crosse is looking for \$10 - \$12 million from the state to assist with an expansion and renovation project for the La Crosse Center. The state has already set a precedent in supporting other similar projects in the state such as the Milwaukee Bucks Arena, the Dane County Expo Center, and the Eau Claire Confluence Project. The La Crosse Center had expanded the facility in 2000 and has been operating in the black. The La Crosse Center has a positive regional impact with the variety of events that it can host. The Center provides entertainment services for the region. He asked that the Commission approval of a resolution to support this project and have it sent to the state government officials in decision making positions. Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion to act on the resolution asking for an addition \$10 - \$12 million in state funds for the La Crosse Center expansion and renovation project. Commissioner Burke made a motion to sign and send the resolution in support of asking for \$10 - \$12 million in additional state funds for the La Crosse Center expansion and renovation project and the motion was seconded by Commissioner McMillan Urell and it was unanimously approved.

Crawford County Land and Water Management Plan Update

Mr. Bonifas said that the Crawford County Land and Water Management Plan had been board approved by the state and is now waiting for county approval.

Buffalo County Multi Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

Mr. Bonifas said that the plan is still at the Wisconsin Emergency Management waiting to be reviewed. After it is reviewed at WEM, it will then be sent to FEMA for their review.

Discussion of SMRT Bus Expansion and Bremer Transportation Grant

Commissioner Baecker asked about the SMRT bus expanding into Trempealeau County. Mr. Fletcher said that they had received a grant to conduct a Feasibility study which will assess the cost, ridership, and area businesses to see if it is possible to expand the SMRT Bus transportation program north into other surrounding counties such as Trempealeau County. Currently area businesses have been surveyed about how the SMRT bus could help them. Commissioner Baecker also asked about the application process for Bremer Foundation Grants. Mr. Fletcher explained that the Bremer Foundation is through Bremer Bank. They will fund community projects which meet their criteria in communities where they operate a Bremer Bank. Transportation is one of their criteria which made the SMRT bus a good fit for their grant program. He stated grant award decisions should be made in the next few weeks.

Old, Business, New Business and Adjourn

Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any old business. Mr. Flogstad asked for Commissioner input on their Kindle devices and offered help to anyone that was having difficulty with their device. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any new business. Hearing none, a motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to adjourn.

Vicki Burke, Secretary-Treasurer