



**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., October 10, 2018
Americinn, 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.

Minutes of August 8, 2018 Bimonthly Meeting

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the August 8, 2018 bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner McMillan-Urell made a motion to approve the August 8, 2018 meeting minutes and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Baecker. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report

Secretary-Treasurer Burke said the July 31, 2018 balance in all MRRPC accounts was \$284,786.69 and the August 31, 2018 ending balance was \$283,924.77. She reported the beginning balance in September 1, 2018 was \$283,924.77 and September 30, 2018 ending balance was \$253,930.48.

Ms. Burke said the Business Capital Fund (BCF) began with a July 31, 2018 balance of \$213,308.29. Activity from August 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018 included loan repayments of \$7650.33, interest earned of \$94.97, and \$59,892.68 transferred in from the BCF Sequester Account leaving a September 30, 2018 balance on hand of \$280,946.27. The BCF Sequester Account began with a July 31, 2018 balance of \$60,317.84. Activity from August 1, 2018 to September 30, 2018 included interest earned of \$55.55, \$480.17 paid to the U.S. Department of Commerce-Economic Development Administration, and a transfer of \$58,892.68 to the BCF Regular account leaving a September 30, 2018 balance of \$0.00 and closing the account. The Business Capital Fund (BCF) non-federal account began with a July 31, 2018 balance of \$131,635.39. Activity from August 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018 included interest earned of \$55.01 leaving a balance on hand of \$131,690.40.

Ms. Burke said the Business Capital Fund 2 began with a July 31, 2018 balance of \$49,733.25. Activity from August 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018 included loan repayments of \$864.00, interest earned of \$32.00, and \$160,630.42 transferred in from the BCF 2 Sequester Account leaving a September 30, 2018 balance of \$211,259.67. Ms. Burke said the Business Capital Fund 2 Sequester Account began with a July 31, 2018 balance of \$160,833.23. Activity from August 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018 included interest earned of \$148.12, \$350.93 paid to the U.S. Department of Commerce-Economic Development Administration, and a transfer of \$160,630.42 to the BCF 2 Regular Account leaving a September 30, 2018 balance of \$0.00 and closing the account.

Ms. Burke said the CMV Growth Development Fund began with a July 31, 2018 balance of \$73,709.74. Activity from August 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018 included loan repayments of \$1,726.16 and interest earned of \$19.30 leaving a September 30, 2018 balance of \$75,455.20.

The La Crosse County Economic Development Fund began with a July 31, 2018 balance of \$41,050.13. Activity from August 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018 included loan repayments of \$2,417.00 and interest earned of \$10.29 leaving a September 30, 2018 balance of \$43,477.42. Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Commissioner Ehram made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Borreson. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

Decision on bookkeeping-accounting firm for MRRPC.

Mr. Flogstad said that the bookkeeping and auditing firm contracts needed to be renewed. He stated he sent out a request for proposals to nine area accounting firms including our current accounting firms. He shared with commissioners a spread sheet on the costs submitted from each accounting firm. He stated that of the nine proposals sent out three of the nine accounting firms responded, Johnson and Block, Tostrud and Temp, and JRM CPAs. Mr. Flogstad said that he would recommend Johnson and Block our existing bookkeeping firm for the bookkeeping tasks since their proposal was lower and more definitive than JRM's. Commissioner Schroeder made a motion to accept Johnson and Block as the commission's bookkeeping firm. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schlesselman. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any discussion and hearing none, the motion was approved.

Decision on annual auditing firm for MRRPC.

Mr. Flogstad said that of the nine requests for proposals that were sent out to accounting firms for auditing services there was only one response from Tostrud and Temp. He said that Tostrud and Temp have been conducting our audits for a long time. He said that requests for proposals could be sent out again or he would recommend Tostrud and Temp as our auditing firm. Commissioner McMillan Urell made a motion to accept Tostrud and Temp as the commission's auditing firm. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ehram. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any discussion. Commissioner Schroeder commented that Tostrud and Temp's auditing hourly rate was more than the bookkeeping hourly rate. Commissioner Baecker asked on average how long does it take them to complete the audit. Mr. Flogstad replied that they are getting more efficient at completing the audit, but we do call them during the year for questions and consulting that isn't reflected in the quote. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any other discussion and hearing none the motion was approved.

Report on heavy rain and flooding disaster event of August 27-28 and local, state, and federal recovery efforts to date.

Mr. Bonifas reported that after the flooding event all the affected counties had to submit an estimate of their damages to the state which is a preliminary amount of the infrastructure damage to roads, bridges, municipal buildings, parks, and utilities for the public assistance portion. He said they also gathered estimates for the residences and businesses with minor or major damage or if they were destroyed. These preliminary estimates are given to the state for review. He said that once they are reviewed by the state and they meet a certain threshold the Governor will send it to the President to request a federal disaster which will open up additional funding through FEMA and SBA and other sources. He said that the preliminary numbers have been submitted and the threshold has been met and the Governor submitted a request for the President to make a Federal Disaster Declaration which includes 18 counties in Wisconsin which met the threshold for damages. In our area the counties of La Crosse, Vernon, Monroe, and Crawford Counties were part of the declaration. During the disasters there were two deaths, one in Dane County and one in Sauk County. There were record river crests in Coon Valley, Viola, Readstown, Gays Mills, and Steuben. Mr. Bonifas said that throughout these 18 counties 7 dams failed and 9 had sufficient damage. He said that 11 of the 16 dams have no funding for repairs. He directed the meeting participants to handouts in their packets. He presented a list of Flooded Businesses that had been compiled by the MRRPC in the various communities identified with flood damage. He said the list did not include residential homes. Mr. Flogstad said that the list of businesses helped to develop an amount for the microloan program which he would discuss in more detail later in the meeting. Mr. Bonifas directed the meeting participants to another handout in their packets of a survey compiled by SBA of a list summary of eligible public assistance damages divided into different columns/categories which included debris removal, emergency protective measures, roads and bridges, water-controlled facilities, buildings and equipment, and utilities. He said that this was the information the Governor used to make his disaster request. Mr. Bonifas said that La Crosse County had damages totaling \$1,359,201, Monroe County had \$3,353,164 worth of damage, and Vernon County was hardest hit with damages totaling \$12,317,472. This is just the public sector on the other side of the handout is the total for residential and business damages in the categories of minorly damaged, majorly damaged or destroyed. Commissioner Leys commented that scientists have been warning us about this and there have been three one-hundred year floods in the last 11 years. He said that as a result in Gays Mills public money was used to move businesses out of the flood area and some businesses decided not to move. Mr. Bonifas said that they have been attending public meetings in Viola, La Farge, Ontario, and Readstown to discuss alternatives for short term assistance and long term solutions.

Many residents are tired of the flooding and want to look at long term solutions such as moving structures out of the flood plain. He said that fortunately we are in the process of updating the Hazard Mitigation Plans for Crawford, Vernon, La Crosse, and Monroe Counties. He said the plans for Vernon and Crawford County will be completed at the end of the year and Vernon County's plan is being expedited to get it completed ahead of schedule so that they can put these projects into a plan so that communities can start applying for some of these grants. Commissioner Borreson asked how long does it take for the money to get to people. Mr. Bonifas responded that a preapplication is open to the whole state then the areas that are heavily impacted will get priority and then those areas will be required to fill out a full application. Chairman Kuhn said that it can take up to a year and Commissioner Nickelatti

responded that it took up to 6 years to get moneys to get reimbursed for the 2007 flood. Mr. Bonifas said that part of the reason for the delay in payments is due to not knowing what records to keep for submission with the applications. He said that he is working on scheduling informational meetings to inform municipalities about what records to keep for filling out the application forms as well as talking with Emergency Management staff in each county to help them through the application process.

Report on US Department of Commerce-EDA economic recovery flood disaster grant assistance projects in the cities of La Crosse, Arcadia, and Viroqua (\$3.6 million grant was approved for La Crosse).

Mr. Bonifas reported that La Crosse County was awarded their EDA grant for \$3.6 million. He said that Arcadia and Viroqua have not been contacted since submitting their application. He said that looking at past history Arcadia will probably be funded. Mr. Flogstad said that the \$3.6 million awarded to La Crosse was as a result of last year's flood to increase their lift stations and stormwater management capacity which impacts many businesses. He said that it looks as if Arcadia will probably be awarded a \$6 million grant, but he didn't know about Viroqua because it was more of a long term economic development project. Mr. Bonifas said that if EDA receives supplemental funding from another Presidential Disaster Declaration La Farge will be looking at moving their electrical municipal utility out of the flood plain. Commissioner Borreson asked if they are redefining floodplains. Mr. Bonifas replied that within the last ten years there has been a push to upgrade floodplain mapping using technology to create more detailed and more cost-effective maps of the topography and elevations. He said Vernon County's map was completed in 2012. Commissioner Ehram asked how many businesses and homes had flood insurance. Mr. Bonifas responded that if homes are in the floodplain and have a mortgage, they are required to have flood insurance. He said that it is very expensive, and it has gone up substantially in the last 10 years. In order to lower the premium, the deductible is raised making it cost prohibitive. He said that most of the homes and businesses do not have it because of the high cost. He said that the cost also is based on where you are located in the floodplain. Commissioner Leys commented that Prairie du Chien had issues with flooding in the 1970s and the city worked to get those buildings out of the floodplain through federal buyouts which has solved the flooding issues there but in Gays Mills there still are many who are in the floodplain. Mr. Bonifas responded that those houses that did not take the buy out but instead chose to elevate their house to the recommended height still were flooded even though they elevated their homes to the recommended levels above the 100 year flood. Mr. Bonifas commented that at the meetings being held in the flooded communities he recommended that if buyouts are approved that the new homes should remain in the municipal limits in order to maintain the tax base.

Decision on Jackson County Hazard Mitigation Plan Contract.

Mr. Bonifas said that this summer Jackson County received notification of their approval from FEMA for a grant to update their Hazard Mitigation Plan. He said the commission had completed their original plan and they are contracting with us to update the plan. The contract would begin immediately and end in September 1, 2020. He said he doesn't anticipate it taking that long unless there is another disaster which would take the Emergency Management staff away from the planning process. The total contract is \$40,500.26. He said that this would be a 75% grant and 25% match. The amount of the grant would be \$30,375.19 and we and the county would absorb the 25%. Commissioner Schnitzler made a motion to approve the contract between the MRRPC and Jackson County to update Jackson County's Hazard Mitigation Plan, seconded by Commissioner McMillan Urell. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any discussion and hearing none it was unanimously approved.

Decision on La Crosse County Hazard Mitigation Plan Contract.

Mr. Bonifas said that this summer La Crosse County received notification of their approval from FEMA for a grant to update their Hazard Mitigation Plan. He said the commission had completed their original plan and they are contracting with us to update the plan. The contract would begin immediately and end in September 1, 2020. The total contract is \$41,774.92. He said that this would be a 75% grant and 25% match. The amount of the grant would be \$31,331.19 and we and the county would absorb the 25%. Commissioner Schnitzler made a motion to approve the contract between the MRRPC and La Crosse County to update La Crosse County's Hazard Mitigation Plan, seconded by Commissioner Burke. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any discussion. Commissioner Schlesselman commented that the contract amount is not to exceed \$41,774.92 and the county and the planning commission would contribute \$10,443.73 and wondered if the wording should be changed to up to \$10,443.73 because the amount could be potentially less. Chairman Kuhn commented that the contract is for the commission to receive \$31,131.19 and we will have to spend the \$10,443.73. Mr. Bonifas said that in the past we haven't spent less than the contracted amount for these projects. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was a motion to amend the wording of the contract, and hearing none it was unanimously approved.

Approval of disaster recovery microloan agreement between WEDC and MRRPC.

Mr. Flogstad said that WEDC has not given us an agreement yet to approve. He said that since the contract did not arrive before our bimonthly meeting an Executive Meeting will need to be held or a teleconference call held to approve this agreement for us to be able to make some microloans to businesses. He gave some background information about the Microloan Program. He said that this microloan program has been in the planning stages for awhile at WEDC before this disaster and they had planned to roll out the program in 2019. This latest disaster prompted them to roll it out more quickly. He said that WEDC was looking for planning commissions such as ours in the state who already administer revolving loan funds to administer this program. These microloans are looked at as bridge loans to help businesses to get back on their feet while they are waiting for FEMA reimbursement, insurance payments, and SBA loans. The terms of the loans are a maximum of \$15,000, minimum to be paid back within two years at 0% interest. With the money that is paid back it would continue the microloan program in the region to help during federal disasters. He said that there are some exclusions of certain businesses that would not be eligible. The applicants need to demonstrate their need for the funds and that their business is a going concern. He said that the WEDC asked for ideas to create a budget for the loans and the list of impacted businesses was used to show the demand. He said that he requested \$600,000 and it was estimated that of the businesses impacted there could be forty \$15,000 loans made to arrive at the microloan fund amount. He directed the meeting participants to the copy of the Microloan Application Form. Commissioner Leys commented that certain businesses are ineligible such as liquor stores. He asked what we would do with an application from a gas station that sells beer and liquor. Mr. Flogstad responded that the exclusion list was compiled by the WEDC and that they were looking at businesses where selling liquor was their primary business. Commissioner Schlesselman asked what is the thought process behind excluding home based businesses and farms. Mr. Flogstad responded that those businesses would be eligible for individual and family grants and farms would get funding through the Department of Agriculture. Commissioner Stittleburg asked how quickly could funds get to applicants after a disaster since \$15,000 is a small loan. Mr. Flogstad said that it is taking too long now but when the fund gets established, the idea is to get those funds to the recipients as soon as possible if they are available and WEDC would recapitalize the funds. Commissioner Chown asked how long is the approval process to get businesses the funds. Mr. Bonifas responded that as soon as the application is received the funds can be approved locally and disbursed.

Approval of forming an ad hoc Micro Loan Review Committee.

Mr. Flogstad said that a committee to approve the Micro Loan applications is needed. He recommended that the commission use the existing boards of the Business Capital Fund, the CMV Growth Development Fund, and the La Crosse County Economic Development Fund to review and approve the loans. He said that he has contacted those board members and they were willing to review loans for businesses that reside in the counties where they service revolving loan funds. Commissioner McMillan Urell made a motion that if we receive the microloan funding from the WEDC to recommend that the microloan fund program would be administered with our existing Business Capital Fund, CMV Growth Development Fund, and the La Crosse County Revolving Loan Funds' existing revolving loan fund boards to review and approve the Microloan Fund applications, seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any discussion and hearing none the motion was unanimously approved.

Update on the Wisconsin Department of Administration's proposed Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Close Grant program involving terminating all CDBG Revolving Loan Funds in cities and counties across the state with CDBG RLFs. Then allowing these communities to apply for a guaranteed CDBG grant for the amount of RLF funds returned.

Mr. Flogstad reported that the City of Tomah, City of Sparta, Village of Kendall, Village of Hillsboro, City of Osseo, Pierce, Pepin, Buffalo, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon Counties have Community Development Block Grant Revolving Loan Funds. He said the state wants to close this program down and has provided these communities with two options about how to use the funds. He said option 1 requires the community or county to return all the cash on hand to the Department of

Administration (DOA) and assign all active loans to DOA. He said the community can then apply for a CDBG-Close Grant in the amount of the cash on hand that the community or county returned to the DOA; option 2 requires the community or county to return all RLF cash on hand to DOA and reimburse the state for principal owed on all active loans and then these communities can apply for a CDBG Close Grant in the amount of the cash on hand plus the amount that the community or county loan principal reimbursement amount was to DOA. He said that the community or county would continue to collect principal and interest on active loans and use the funds anyway the community or county desires with local control of the funds. He said these funds could continue the RLF or could be used for other needs. He said that the CDBG-Close Grant application with few exceptions must have a 51% Low and Moderate Income (LMI) benefit. The grants can be used for a variety of projects including but not limited to: road, water sewer, other public facilities, broadband-internet installation, housing, planning, job training and centers, senior centers and services, crime prevention and public safety, hazard mitigation, child care, health services, substance abuse services-counseling

and treatment (opioid treatment), fair housing counseling, education programs, energy conservation, services for senior citizens, services for homeless person, welfare services and recreational services. The one important caveat though is there must be a 51% benefit to low and moderate income from a project. Mr. Flogstad said that it is possible to fund more than one project depending on the amount of funds available.

Old, Business, New Business and Adjourn

Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any old business. Mr. Fletcher reported that the Regionally Coordinated County Human Services Transportation Plans are completed and have been submitted to each county in our region. Commissioner Borreson asked how the plans impact the counties. Mr. Fletcher responded that it aids the counties in sustaining funding for vehicles that serve low income and the handicapped and gives communities more options as well as opportunities for cost sharing and resource pooling.

Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any new business. Mr. Flogstad said that there is an informational meeting open to the public at the Cranberry Country Lodge in Tomah at 11:00 a.m. where businesses can discuss how they can become involved in the supply chain for Foxconn. Mr. Flogstad also reported that WEDC is taking grant applications for Fab Lab grants for school districts. A motion was made to adjourn by Commissioner Schroeder and seconded by Commissioner Borreson. The motion was unanimously approved.

Vicki Burke, Secretary-Treasurer

MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING ATTENDANCE ROSTER

DATE: 10-10-2018

PLACE: Americ Inn

	NAME	REPRESENTING
1.	Greg Flogstad	MRRPC STAFF
2.	James Kuhn	MONROE Co.
3.	Viki Burk	La Crosse
4.	John Tichelstett	Vernon
5.	James Ross	Pierce County
6.	Herb Cornell	Vernon County
7.	Donald Kutz	Crawford Co.
8.	Bill Schneider	Pierce Co.
9.	Ron Canny	Jackson Co
10.	Tadel Hattberg	Jackson Co.
11.	[Signature]	Jackson County
12.	Rich Pundy	Pierce Co.
13.	Dave Bonifis	STAFF
14.	John Platten	STAFF
15.	Ernest Vold	TREMPER
16.	Phillip Borreson	Trempealeau
17.	Cedric Schnitzler	Monroe
18.	Sharon Foley	Monroe Co.
19.	JAMES EHRSAM	LA CROSSE
20.	RON LEYS	CRAWFORD
21.	John Schlesselman	Buffalo
22.	Mary Anne McMillan Urell	Buffalo
23.	Margaret Baecher	Trempealeau Cty.
24.	Sarah Ofte	MRRPC STAFF
25.		