



**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., April 12, 2017**  
**Americinn (formerly 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 several guests in attendance: Mike Temp, Tostrud and Temp SC, Jon Horne, The Idea Fund and the Badger Fund of Funds, and Adam Kuhn, UW-La Crosse Intern

**Minutes of February 8, 2017 Bimonthly Meeting**

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the February 8, 2017 bimonthly minutes. Commissioner Ehram made a motion to approve the February 8, 2017 meeting minutes and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. 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 January 31, 2017 balance in all MRRPC accounts was \$291,264.74 and the February 28, 2017 ending balance was \$336,124.85. She reported the beginning balance in March 2017 was \$336,124.85 and March 31, 2017 ending balance was \$311,197.18.

Ms. Burke said the Business Capital Fund (BCF) began with a January 31, 2017 balance of \$251,601.48. Activity from February 1, 2017 through March 31, 2017 included loan repayments of \$14,493.28 and interest earned of \$83.96 leaving a March 31, 2017 balance on hand of \$266,178.72. The BCF Sequester Account began with a January 31, 2017 balance of \$454,056.62. Activity from February 1, 2017 through March 31, 2017 included interest earned of \$167.97 leaving a balance on hand of \$454,224.59.

Ms. Burke said the Business Capital Fund 2 began with a January 31, 2017 balance of \$37,334.00. Activity from February 1, 2017 through March 31, 2017 included loan repayments of \$1,480.00 and interest earned of \$12.31 leaving a March 31, 2017 balance of \$38,826.31. Ms. Burke said the Business Capital Fund 2 Sequester Account began with a January 31, 2017 balance of \$160,591.98. Activity from February 1, 2017 through March 31, 2017 included interest earned of \$59.41 leaving a March 31, 2017 balance on hand of \$160,651.39.

Ms. Burke said the CMV Growth Development Fund began with a January 31, 2017 balance of \$49,751.95. Activity from February 1, 2017 through March 31, 2017 included loan repayments of \$1,401.24 and interest earned of \$8.70 leaving a March 31, 2017 balance of \$51,161.89. Ms. Burke said the CMV Growth Development Fund Sequester Account began with a January 31, 2017 balance of \$104,070.84. Activity from February 1, 2017 through March 31, 2017 included interest earned of \$17.96 leaving a balance of \$104,088.80.

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***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 January 31, 2017 balance of \$7,822.46. Activity from February 1, 2017 through March 31, 2017 included loan repayments of \$3,049.68 and interest earned of \$1.85 leaving a March 31, 2017 balance of \$7,822.46.

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ehrsam. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the treasurer's report was unanimously approved.

#### **Decision on Acceptance of MRRPC 2016 Audit**

Chairman Kuhn introduced Mike Temp of Tostrud and Temp S.C. Mr. Temp said his firm prepared the 2016 Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report for the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission. He referred to Page 5 and said the MRRPC was given an unqualified opinion on the financial statements, which is what you want. He referred to Pages 7.1 through 7.7 of the Audit, the MRRPC Management's Discussion and Analysis. Mr. Temp said pages 9 and 10 of the audit provide an overall picture of the MRRPC including the Revolving Loan Funds (RLFs) the MRRPC administers. He said the statements on these pages were prepared using a business type accounting. The statements show the MRRPC and the RLFS recorded more revenues than expenses in 2016. He said the statement on Page 11, the MRRPC balance sheet, was prepared using governmental accounting. Page 13 shows \$359,565 in revenues and \$346,160 in expenses for the MRRPC in 2016. Mr. Temp said Page 15 shows the net position of the revolving loans funds as of 2016.

Mr. Temp said since the Commission is in the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS), the WRS must determine if it has enough assets to meet its obligations to retirees. An actuarial study is done to determine if they have enough assets, too many assets, not enough assets etc. He explained that right now the current study determined the WRS is underfunded so the Commission has a pension liability on its books. He said if this changes, instead of showing a liability the Commission could show an asset. He said the WRS will conduct this study every few years so the numbers on the MRRPC's financial statements will be affected every few years.

Commissioner Borreson asked what are the factors that determine if the pension is an asset or liability. Mr. Temp said actuarial studies have to make a lot of assumptions, including rates of return on investments etc. and obviously, it's impossible to predict what the stock markets going to do. All these factors play a part.

Mr. Temp referred to pages 21-22 under capital investments between the RLF's and the planning commission there is \$1.27 million in cash. Some of the cash in these accounts exceed federal depository standards for coverage in the event that depository institution would fail. Mr. Temp wanted to bring this to the commission's attention and there are ways to collateralize those accounts to obtain added coverage. Mr. Temp referred to pages 55 and 56, the report on compliance and on internal control and said no deficiencies were found. He said there were no difficulties in performing the audit. Mr. Temp asked if there were any more questions.

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion approving the 2016 MRRPC financial statements. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the 2016 Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report for the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission. Commissioner Burke seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

#### **Decision on Executive and Administration Committee's: recommendations on 2017 Staff Salary Adjustments**

Commissioner Baecker reported that the Executive and Administration Committee met at the Buffalo County Courthouse on March 20, 2017. She said the committee went into closed session to discuss wage adjustments for the MRRPC staff. She said a motion was made and seconded recommending a 1.5% increase plus a 50 cent an hour increase for all MRRPC staff effective July 1, 2017.

She commented that staff salaries are still between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in the state and said that the Executive and Administration Committee was very supportive of the increase. Commissioner Baecker asked for a motion on staff salary adjustments. Commissioner Nickelatti made a motion to approve the Executive and Administration Committee's recommendation to approve a 1.5% salary increase plus a 50 cent an hour increase for all MRRPC staff effective July 1, 2017. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schlesselman and was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Ehrsam asked what would it take to raise the salaries to make them the same as the other comparable positions Commissioner Baecker said that to catch up all at once could harm the Commission financially but the the 50 cents increase an hour was a way to increase salaries to stay competitive. Mr. Flogstad said that we are moving in the right direction.

**Decision on Executive and Administration Committee's recommendations on 2018 County Contributions**

Commissioner Baecker said the Executive and Administration Committee was recommending the same amount (\$138,860) for funding from counties for 2018 as in 2017 resulting in a county contribution rate of .00060304% based on 2016 real property equalized values. Commissioner Ross made a motion to approve 2018 county contributions totaling \$138,860. Commissioner Schroeder seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

**Presentation on a new Venture Capital Fund serving Western Wisconsin – The Idea Fund and the Badger Fund of Funds**

Jon Horne, the Managing Director of The Idea Fund and the Badger Fund of Funds in La Crosse, discussed how The Idea Fund of La Crosse was established in 2016 to invest in seed- and early-stage startup companies. It is made up of private investors who have invested \$10 million into the fund. The fund invests in startup companies in Wisconsin pre-product and takes an equity position in the company through stock ownership. The Idea Fund is the first venture capital fund to receive a commitment investment from the Badger Fund of Funds. These venture capital funds are another way for companies to get startup capital.

**Report on the MRRPC's 2017-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**

MRRPC Staff reported on the 2017-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Mr. Fletcher began by saying since 1976 the MRRPC has cooperated with MRRPC member counties to annually develop the CEDS. He said preparation of this report maintains the region's Economic Development District designation with the U.S. Department of Commerce-Economic Development Administration qualifying the region's communities, institutions, and businesses to be eligible for EDA assistance. He discussed the organization of the report. Mr. Bonifas discussed the sections regarding population and housing in the region. Commissioner Leys commented on the aging population of the region and the young people leaving. There was some discussion on how this impacts the workforce. Mr. Bonifas discussed the housing costs of the region. Commissioner Borreson asked what is used to determine the housing values. Local government building permit data and census surveys (1, 3 and 5 year American Community Survey) were cited sources. There was a discussion of how the housing dollar goes farther in some parts of the country than in others. Commissioner Stittleburg asked if the Amish population impacted the number of homes without full indoor plumbing facilities. It was cited that this would increase that amount of homes without indoor plumbing. Mr. Bonifas discussed the job base, the top industries, and earnings in the region. Commissioner Stittleburg asked how those salaries were determined. (Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages is the primary source of this information). Mr. Flogstad continued the presentation by discussing the labor force, labor force participation rates, and unemployment rates and trends of the region. Ms. Ofte discussed the regional commuting patterns, educational attainment, job openings by skill level, and the age structure of the region's population.

**Public Comments on the MRRPC's 2017-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**

Mr. Flogstad discussed the presentation by going over the strategy section. He said the CEDS document was posted on the MRRPC website and comments were solicited from the public. Some changes were suggested such as including the concept of cost sharing of training for elder care workers. At a Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board Meeting the Director of Coulee Cap suggested that a definition of poverty should be included where poverty is mentioned in the report. Mr. Flogstad said stated that the CEDS document is our economic development advice to region. The adoption of the document maintains the region's eligibility for funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration for public works projects that led to business expansion and job creation such as industrial parks, business incubators, revolving loan fund capitalization, and technical assistance funding for engineering, architectural and economic studies. Commissioner Ross commented that the National Nut Company is no longer in business in Pierce County which was represented on one of the industry cluster maps on page 58. Commissioner Kraft also inquired about how to begin a SMRT Bus service in Pepin County. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any other public comments on the 2017-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. No other comments were provided.

**Decision on Adoption of Resolution 04.12.2017. (Adopting the MRRPC's 2017-2022 Comprehensive Development Strategy)**

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion to approve the 2017-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Commissioner Leys made a motion to adopt Resolution 04.12.2017 adopting the MRRPC's 2017-2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy with changes. Commissioner Twidt seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Decision on Monroe County Hazard Mitigation Plan Contract**

Mr. Bonifas presented a contract between Monroe County and the MRRPC to secure planning services of the MRRPC to update Monroe County's Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the contract. Commissioner Burke made a motion to approve the contract between the MRRPC and Monroe County for the purpose of updating the County's Multi-Hazards Mitigation Plan. Commissioner Baecker seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

**Decision on Vernon County Hazard Mitigation Plan Contract**

Mr. Bonifas presented a contract between Vernon County and the MRRPC to secure planning services of the MRRPC to update Vernon County's Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the contract. Commissioner Borreson made a motion to approve the contract between the MRRPC and Vernon County for the purpose of updating the County's Multi-Hazards Mitigation Plan. Commissioner Nickelatti seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

**Old, Business, New Business and Adjourn**

Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any old business. Hearing none Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any new business. Hearing none, a motion was made to adjourn by Commissioner Twidt and seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. The motion was unanimously approved.

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Vicki Burke, Secretary-Treasurer