



**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., December 11, 2019**  
**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. There were several guests in attendance: Frank Frassetto Wisconsin Director of USDA-Rural Development, Brenda Heinen USDA-Rural Development Specialist, Rebecca Giroux WHEDA (Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority), Jenny Kuderer-Radcliffe Dairyland Power Cooperative, and Peter Fletcher La Crosse MPO. The attendance roster is attached.

**Minutes of October 9, 2019 Bimonthly Meeting**

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the October 9, 2019 bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the October 9, 2019 bimonthly meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ehram. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the minutes were unanimously approved.

**Treasurer's Report**

Director Flogstad stated that in the absence of Secretary/Treasurer Burke he would give the Treasurer's report. He reported that September 30, 2019 balance in all accounts was \$301,780.23 and the October 31, 2019 ending balance was \$298,261.31. He reported the beginning balance in November 1, 2019 was \$298,261.31 and November 30, 2019 ending balance was \$309,557.17.

Mr. Flogstad reported the Business Capital Fund (BCF) began with a September 30, 2019 balance of \$123,286.92. Activity from October 1, 2019 through November 30, 2019 included loan repayments of \$6,812.03, interest earned of \$60.38, and administrative expenses of \$303.95 leaving a November 30, 2019 balance on hand of \$129,855.38. The Business Capital Fund (BCF) non-federal account began with a September 30, 2019 balance of \$132,069.25. Activity from October 1, 2019 through November 30, 2019 included interest earned of \$62.97 leaving a balance on hand of \$132,132.22.

Mr. Flogstad reported the Business Capital Fund 2 began with a September 30, 2019 balance of \$153,074.14. Activity from October 1, 2019 through November 30, 2019 included loan repayments of \$1,894.00 and interest earned of \$73.50 leaving a balance on hand of \$155,041.64.

Mr. Flogstad reported the CMV Growth Development Fund began with a September 30, 2019 balance of \$23,908.44. Activity from October 1, 2019 through November 30, 2019 included loan repayments of \$5,733.08 and interest earned of \$4.43 leaving a November 30, 2019 balance of \$26,787.60.

The La Crosse County Economic Development Fund began with a September 30, 2019 balance of \$73,925.15. Activity from October 1, 2019 through November 30, 2019 included loan repayments of \$5,496.67 and interest earned of \$9.64 leaving a November 30, 2019 balance of \$79,431.46.

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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 Microloan Fund began with a September 30, 2019 balance of \$10,348.34. Activity from October 1, 2019 through November 30, 2019 included interest earned of \$2.33, loan payments of \$8952.00, and administrative expenses of \$4762.09 leaving a November 30, 2019 balance of \$14,540.58. Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Commissioner Borreson made a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Twidt. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments hearing none the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

#### **Presentation on USDA-Rural Development Administration programs by Frank Frassetto, Wisconsin Director of USDA-Rural Development.**

Mr. Frassetto presented information about the available USDA-Rural Development Administration programs. He said that the USDA-Rural Development Administration is the economic development arm of the USDA and supports rural prosperity and quality of life through its programs and partnerships with other agencies. He said that the organization works with communities and other agencies to provide guaranteed lending, grants, and technical assistance to communities to support their mission.

#### **U.S. Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration Performance Review preparation for February 12, 2020 meeting.**

Mr. Bonifas reported that the U.S. Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration (EDA) Performance Review will be conducted at the next bimonthly meeting on February 12, 2020. He said that the evaluation will be similar to the last review that was performed on December 12, 2014. The review will be conducted after the regular February bimonthly meeting with representatives from EDA present at the meeting and others participating through a teleconference phone call. He said that the evaluation will include 7 areas such as the effectiveness of the Executive Director, capabilities and performance of partnership planning staff, the economic district board composition, economic activities, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) preparation and implementation, the work program and quality of work under partnership planning, our Economic Development District (EDD) impact and the financial management of our budget. He said a large part of the review will be of the CEDS which maintains our eligibility as an Economic Development District. The CEDS documents our region's conditions, our economic challenges and strategies, strengths and weaknesses, and strategies to improve our region's environment, economy, and quality of life. With the completed CEDS our member counties maintain an Economic Development District designation. This designation qualifies our member counties, communities, institutions, and businesses in the region to be eligible for EDA economic assistance under its public works and economic development programs and technical assistance programs, loan programs, and planning programs. He said that the CEDS document is good through 2022 and the update process will begin in 2021. Mr. Bonifas reviewed the handout from the packet outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the region taken from the CEDS document and the four main economic strategies that are listed in the CEDS.

#### **Update on submission of an EDA grant application to fund economic recovery planning, engineering and administration activities for the communities of Ontario, La Farge, Viola and Readstown with MRRPC serving as the applicant and grant administrator.**

Mr. Flogstad reported that the application for the EDA Kickapoo Valley Economic Recovery Assistance Grant was submitted online at the end of June. He said that he has received a letter from EDA stating the project "Merits Further Consideration" (MFC) and have recently responded to several issues involving: consultant selection process responsibilities, indirect rate budget adjustment, real estate appraisal activities, staff time charged to federal projects and the indirect rate calculation. He said that this is very good news since usually receiving a MFC letter leads to an eventual grant award.

#### **Report on Disaster Recovery Microloan Program lending to businesses and decision on per diem for CMV Board Members for participating in review of 16 loan applications.**

Ms. Ofte reported that since the Microloan Program began in November of 2018, \$233,059 has been loaned out to 16 businesses. She said the maximum loan amount is \$15,000 with 0% interest, 48 month payback period, and a six month deferral for the first payment. All the loans are current and the last two loans that were made in July of 2019 will make their first payment January 15, 2020 after their six month deferral. She said that the CMV Growth Development Fund Revolving Loan committee reviewed all the loan applications and approved the loans through 7 teleconference meetings. Mr. Flogstad recommended providing a per diem of \$50 per microloan teleconference meeting attended for each CMV Growth Development Fund Board member for being willing to take on this extra duty of reviewing these 16 microloans. A motion was made by Commissioner McMillan Urell and seconded by Commissioner Jaekel to approve a \$50 per diem for each CMV Board Member for each of the 7 microloan teleconference meetings attended. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any discussion on the motion hearing none the motion was unanimously approved.

### **Report on the status of City of Mondovi and the City of Westby Federal EDA Industrial Park Grant Applications.**

Ms. Nicewander reported that the City of Mondovi is a 210 acre project providing 25 jobs and is expected to cost \$7.5 million with 50% of the cost planning to be covered by the EDA grant. The business beneficiaries are still being working on as is the preliminary engineering report. She said that the City with MRRPC assistance is still in the process of applying for this grant. The City of Westby Industrial Park expansion is a 74 acre project and is expected to cost \$4.3 million with 80% being provided through an EDA grant due to the disaster declaration. She said that there have been 6 beneficiaries that have signed on to the project creating 49-67 new jobs. Assuming that each of these 6 businesses will purchase 5 acre lots that will leave 28 acres remaining 6 jobs per acre would create an additional 120 jobs. The grant application was submitted October 3<sup>rd</sup> and an environmental narrative was written investigating the impacts on the environment from the industrial park. After communicating with the Fish and Wildlife Service, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the Army Corps of Engineers, and DNR it was found that there will be no environmental issues stopping the project from moving forward. Further documentation was also required by EDA on the effects of the beneficiaries after the first narrative was submitted. A new narrative was submitted to EDA with a preliminary engineering report and bond schedule. The additional materials were submitted November 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Decision on Wisconsin DOT Planning Grant Work Program Resolution 201912113.**

Mr. Bonifas reported that the Draft Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission Transportation Planning Annual Work Program for 2020 was completed and sent to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for their review. The recommended changes from Wisconsin DOT staff were made to the plan. He said this work program is required to receive Wisconsin (DOT) funding and a new requirement this year of the Wisconsin DOT is requesting a resolution be passed to approve the plan instead of approving the plan solely through the commission meeting motion that is recorded in the minutes. He said that with an approved resolution, it expedites the process to get the approved plan to the Wisconsin DOT. He reviewed the elements of the work plan. A motion was made to approve the Resolution 201912113 to adopt the 2020 Transportation Work Program by Commissioner Nickelatti and seconded by Commissioner Baecker. The motion was unanimously approved

### **Acceptance of Executive and Administrative Committee minutes and Hiring of new Executive Director, and new Senior Planner.**

Mr. Flogstad also reported that the Executive and Administration Committee interviewed 4 candidates for the Executive Director position on November 10, 2019, and selected Dave Bonifas to fill the position of Executive Director. Mr. Bonifas will begin work in his new position on January 1, 2020. He also reported that on September 10, 2019 the Executive and Administration Committee interviewed and selected Abbey Nicewander as the new Senior Planner. He stated Ms Nicewander began work on October 21, 2019 and this was her first Commission meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Purdy and seconded by Commissioner Schroeder to approve the Executive and Administration Committee's recommendation of hiring Dave Bonifas as Executive Director and Abbey Nicewander as new Senior Planner of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission. The motion was unanimously approved.

### **Decision on Federal Grant Policies and Procedures Manual.**

Mr. Flogstad reported that our auditors recommended having a Federal Grant Policies and Procedures Manual. He said the manual only applies to Federal Funds. A motion was made by Commissioner Schnitzler and seconded by Commissioner Schroeder to approve the Federal Grant Policies and Procedures Manual as presented.

### **Decision on check signing authority.**

Mr. Flogstad said that with the hiring of a new Executive Director. He highlighted the number of accounts that will need to have signing authority changes made to them with the hiring of Dave Bonifas as the new Executive Director. Commissioner McMillen Urell made a motion to replace the signing authority of Greg Flogstad with the signing authority of Dave Bonifas for each account and adding the signing authority of Vicki Burke and Sarah Ofte on the CD account for the commission held at Associated Bank. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Purdy. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions on the motion. The motion was approved.

### **Status of hiring new Senior Planner.**

Mr. Flogstad reported that employment ads have been placed in the La Crosse Tribune and the online sources they provide. He said that ads have also been placed with the American Planning Association Chapters in WI, MN, and IL, and the Wisconsin Job Center. The position is open until January 3, 2020 or until filled. There have been 4 applicants thus far.

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

Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any old business. Commissioner Folcey asked about the status of the Monroe County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Mr. Bonifas replied that the Hazard Mitigation Plan is finished and is waiting for approval by the Monroe County Board. Mr. Bonifas said he would contact someone at the county to help get it on the county board agenda. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any new business. Commissioner Schroeder presented a plaque to Mr. Flogstad in recognition of his retirement and unwavering commitment to the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission for 35 years, 11 months, and 20 days. He thanked everyone for the plaque. 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

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Date

MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING ATTENDANCE ROSTER

DATE: 12-11-2019

PLACE : AmericInn

	NAME	REPRESENTING
1.	Craig Trogstad	MRRPC Staff
2.	James Kuhn	MONROE
3.	John Nickelatte	VERNON CO.
4.	Herb Conely	Vernon CO
5.	Thomas Jacob	Vernon Co
6.	Scott Gray	Crawford Co.
7.	Bill Schroeder	Pierce Co
8.	Rich Turdy	" "
9.	Bill	Jackson County
10.	Dave Bulp	staff
11.	Lark Opts	staff
12.	Abbey Nicwandler	MRRPC Staff
13.	Phillip Barason	Trempealeau County
14.	Doc Fiedt	Buffalo County
15.	John Sellesman	Suffalo Co
16.	Cedric Schnitzer	monroe Co
17.	James EHRSTAM	La Crosse Co
18.	Sharon Foley	Mouree Co.
19.	James R. Johnson	Crawford Co
20.	Margaret Baeker	Duffalo County
21.	Margaret Baeker	Trempealeau Cty.
22.	Sonny Kuderer-Rockliffe	Dairyland Power Cooperative
23.	Dexter Fletcher	Calrossie MPO
24.	Rebecca Giroux	WHEDA - (Wise. Housing & Economi Dev. authority)
25.		