



**MISSISSIPPI RIVER
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**
1707 Main Street, Suite 435
La Crosse, WI 54601
Phone: (608) 785-9396
Email: plan@mrrpc.com
Website: mrrpc.com

*James Kuhn, Cashton, WI
Chairman*
*Margaret Baecker, Independence, WI
Vice Chairman*
*Vicki Burke, Onalaska, WI
Secretary & Treasurer*
*Dave Bonifas, La Crosse, WI
Director*

MINUTES
MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRRPC)
BIMONTHLY MEETING
10:00 a.m., June 10, 2020
Teleconference Call

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: Mike Temp CPA Tostrud & Temp, Gregg Wavrunek Representing Senator Tammy Baldwin, Brian Fukuda La Crosse County Community Development Specialist, Rebecca Giroux, WHEDA, and Francis Schelfhout, WI DOT. The attendance roster is attached.

Minutes of February 12, 2020 Bimonthly Meeting

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the February 12, 2020 bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the February 12, 2020 bimonthly meeting minutes. 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 reported that the January 31, 2020 balance in all accounts was \$340,348.11 and the February 29, 2020 ending balance was \$322,043.77. She reported the beginning balance in March 1, 2020 was \$322,043.77 and March 31, 2020 ending balance was \$350,300.62. She reported the beginning balance in April 1, 2020 was \$350,300.62 and the ending balance April 30, 2020 was \$401,958.32. She reported the beginning balance in May 1, 2020 was \$401,958.32 and the ending balance in all accounts on May 31, 2020 was \$442,018.12.

Ms. Burke reported the Business Capital Fund (BCF) began with a January 31, 2020 balance of \$138,263.69. Activity from February 1, 2019 through May 31, 2020 included loan repayments of \$12,178.81, interest earned of \$87.41, and administrative costs of \$3,179.00 leaving a May 31, 2020 balance on hand of \$147,350.91. The Business Capital Fund (BCF) non-federal account began with a January 31, 2020 balance of \$132,188.34. Activity from February 1, 2020 through May 31, 2020 included interest earned of \$81.33 leaving a balance on hand of \$132,269.67.

Ms. Burke reported the Business Capital Fund 2 began with a January 31, 2020 balance of \$157,001.96. Activity from February 1, 2020 through May 31, 2020 included loan repayments of \$3,211.17, interest earned of \$97.10, and administrative costs of \$1562.00 leaving a balance on hand of \$158,748.23.

Ms. Burke reported the CMV Growth Development Fund began with a January 31, 2020 balance of \$33,458.97. Activity from February 1, 2020 through May 31, 2020 included loan repayments of \$7234.16 and interest earned of \$6.18 leaving a May 31, 2020 balance of \$40,699.31.

Ms. Burke reported the La Crosse County Economic Development Fund began with a January 31, 2020 balance of \$84,938.96. Activity from January 31, 2020 through May 31, 2020 included loan repayments of \$2,417.00 and interest earned of \$13.16 leaving a May 31, 2020 balance of \$87,369.12.

Ms. Burke reported the Microloan Fund began with a January 31, 2020 balance of \$22,780.69. Activity from February 1, 2020 through May 31, 2020 included interest earned of \$10.11 and loan payments of \$11,574.00 leaving a May 31, 2020 balance of \$34,364.80. Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Mr. Bonifas reported that the businesses with Microloans were given an opportunity to defer their loans for three months due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. He said that thirteen businesses took advantage of the opportunity. Commissioner Borreson made a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ehram. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments hearing none the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

Presentation on 2019 MRRPC Audit by Mike Temp, CPA, Tostrud and Temp S.C.

Mike Temp of Tostrud and Temp S.C. said his firm prepared the 2019 Financial Statements and Independent Auditors report for the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC). He said there were no significant findings when preparing the audit and there were no disagreements with management. He referenced the opinion on page 5 of the audit that states "In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, the aggregate discretely presented component units, each major fund and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission as of December 31, 2019, and the respective changes in financial position, and where applicable, cash flows thereof for the year then ended, in conformance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America". He then referred to Page 7.7, the Management's Discussion and Analysis, a laymen's overview of what happened at the Commission the past year. Mr. Temp then reviewed the 2019 Statement of Net Position, Statement of Activities, the 2019 Balance Sheet, and the Reconciliation for Governmental Funds. He also reviewed the balance sheets for the four revolving loan funds. Mr. Temp said the MRRPC's 2019 Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance shows a decrease of \$8,177.00. Mr. Temp opened the floor for questions.

Decision to accept 2019 MRRPC Audit.

Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions regarding Mr. Temp's audit presentation. Hearing none he asked for a motion to accept the 2019 Financial Statements and Independent Auditor's Report as presented. Commissioner Burke made a motion to accept the 2019 Financial Statements and the independent auditor's report as presented. Commissioner Ehram seconded the motion. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the motion was approved.

Election of Officers: Nominating Committee comprised of Jim Ehram, Chair, Bill Schroeder, Jo Ann Nickelatti, Margaret Baecker and Del Twidt will provide nominations for the position of Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary/Treasurer.

Commissioner James Ehram, Chair of the nominating committee comprised of Bill Schroeder, Jo Ann Nickelatti, Marge Baecker, Del Twidt, and himself reported that the committee met via teleconference call on May 29th and after discussion voted to retain all present officers: Jim Kuhn for Chairman, Marge Baecker for Vice-Chairman, and Vicki Burke for Secretary Treasurer with Marge Baecker sustaining from the vote. Commissioner Ehram took nominations from the floor for the office of Commission Chair and asked if there were any other nominations from any other board members three times. Hearing none, Commissioner Twidt made a motion to nominate and approve Jim Kuhn as Chair and seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. The motion was unanimously approved. Commissioner Ehram took nominations from the floor for the office of Commission Vice Chair and asked if there were any other nominations from any other board members three times. Hearing none, Commissioner Ehram made a motion to nominate and approve Margaret Baecker as Vice Chair and seconded by Commissioner Krachey. The motion was unanimously approved. Commissioner Ehram took nominations from the floor for the office of Commission Secretary/Treasurer and asked if there were any other nominations from any other board members three times. Hearing none, Commissioner Ehram made a motion and seconded by Commissioner Nickelatti to nominate and approve Vicki Burke as Secretary/Treasurer. The motion was unanimously approved. Commissioner Ehram congratulated the officers and thanked them for their continued service. Commissioner Kuhn, Commissioner Baecker, and Commissioner Burke thanked the commissioners for their vote of confidence.

Decision on the Executive and Administration Committee's recommendation on 2020 staff wage adjustments.

Mr. Bonifas reported that the Executive and Administration Committee met via teleconference call on May 18th. He said the committee went into closed session to discuss wage adjustments for the MRRPC staff. He reported that during the open session a motion was made and seconded to recommend a 2.0% increase for the Director Dave Bonifas, Senior Planner Abbey Nicewander, Senior Planner Bob Gollnik and a 3% increase for Administrative Assistant Sarah Ofte effective July 1, 2020 funded out of the general fund. Commissioner Ehram made a motion to approve the Executive and Administration Committee's recommendation of a 2% increase for the Director Dave Bonifas, Senior Planner Abbey Nicewander, Senior Planner Bob Gollnik, and a 3% increase for Administrative Assistant Sarah Ofte effective July 1, 2020 and funded out of the general fund. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kraft. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none the motion was unanimously approved with a roll call vote.

Decision on the Executive and Administration Committee's recommendation on 2020 staff leave time.

Mr. Bonifas reported that prior to the changeover in staff the Executive Committee met and changed the commission's personnel policy manual to allow the Director when hiring someone new with significant past experience the ability to increase their annual leave similar to what they would be offered if they had been working for the commission during that period of time. He said that prior to Bob Gollnik's hiring he did not get the Executive Committee's permission to offer more vacation time for past experience even though the change had been made in the personnel policy manual. In negotiation during Mr. Gollnik's hiring Mr. Bonifas said that he would discuss it with the Executive and Administration Committee for their consideration. He said that when it was brought to the Executive and Administration Committee, their recommendation was to offer Mr. Gollnik an additional week of vacation after his one-year probationary period ended for his past fifteen years of service in the field. Commissioner Krachey made a motion to give Bob Gollnik an additional week of vacation after his one-year probationary period has ended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none the motion was unanimously approved with a roll call vote.

Decision on the Executive and Administration Committee's recommendation on 2021 County Contributions.

Mr. Bonifas reported that the Executive and Administration Committee was recommending the county contributions per county remain at the same level per county totaling \$136,998 from the counties for 2021 resulting in a county contribution rate of .00051652113% based on 2019 real property equalized values. Commissioner Nickelatti made a motion to approve 2021 county contributions totaling \$136,998. Commissioner Kraft seconded the motion. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none the motion was approved with a roll call vote.

Update of the EDA grant to fund economic recovery planning, engineering, and administrative activities for the communities of Ontario, La Farge, Viola, and Readstown with MRRPC serving as the applicant and grant administrator.

Mr. Bonifas reported that the Kickapoo EDA grant to fund economic recovery plans for the four villages located along the Kickapoo River was approved with the MRRPC serving as the administrator. He said that the RFPs had been sent out and nine were received for each community and all of the RFPs came in under the \$200,000 which is the limit for each community. Staff reviewed the RFPs and developed a list of recommendations for each community. Then each community met separately and selected their top one, two, or three consultants for the project. He said that committees were then formed with two representatives from each community. He said that each meeting was held via Zoom with two representatives from each community where they discussed who they wanted and why they wanted to choose the consultant. He said that Readstown chose SHC, Ontario chose MSA, La Farge and Ontario both chose Vierbecher and Associates. He said that the contracts were reviewed with the consultants. In discussions with Vierbecher and Associates they were concerned with the amounts of payments and how they were disbursed. Vierbecher and Associates would like to see a greater amount disbursed at the beginning of the project since the majority of their work will be conducted at the beginning of the project. Mr. Bonifas said that the total amount will remain the same. He said that the contracts that we will be acting on will only have minor changes to add more clarity and the total amounts will stay the same. Mr. Bonifas said that as the administrator for the grant all the payments will go through us. Commissioner Kuhn asked for clarification on the contracts. Mr. Bonifas responded that the payment schedule will change from the contracts that were sent out to the commissioners for review, but the total amounts will remain the same. Commissioner Kuhn asked if the changes will be reflected on all contracts. Mr. Bonifas replied that the changes will be made to the Vierbecher and Associates contracts with the Village of La Farge and Ontario, but he had not received a response from the other two consultants, SHC and MSA and we can mutually change items in the contract if all parties agree. Commissioner Czajkowski responded that after he reviewed the contracts, he noted that the legal names for the consultants were not used. He suggested that the language in the contracts be changed to the consultants' legal names to make them legally enforceable. Mr. Bonifas responded that he would make the change to the contracts and use the consultants' legal names.

Decision on Village of Ontario's EDA grant Contract.

Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none asked for a motion. Commissioner Burke made a motion to accept the contract between the Village of Ontario, the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission and MSA. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nickelatti. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none the motion was approved.

Decision on Village of Readstown's EDA grant Contract.

Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none asked for a motion. Commissioner Nickelatti made a motion to accept the contract between the Village of Readstown, the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, and SHC. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Folcey. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none the motion was approved.

Decision on Village of Viola's EDA grant Contract.

Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none asked for a motion. Commissioner Krachey made a motion to accept the contract between the Village of Viola, the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission and Vierbecher and Associates. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none the motion was approved.

Decision on Village of La Farge's EDA grant Contract.

Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none asked for a motion. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to accept the contract between the Village of La Farge, the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission and Vierbecher and Associates. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none the motion was approved.

Update on the City of Westby Industrial Park EDA grant.

Ms. Nicewander reported that the City of Westby Industrial Park EDA grant application was submitted on October 3, 2019 to EDA for approximately \$4.3 million with an 80% Federal share. It was announced on April 21, 2020 that the City of Westby received the grant from EDA. She said that a preliminary virtual construction meeting was held with EDA, City of Westby officials, engineering staff and MRRPC staff via Zoom to go over the final paperwork. She said that the MRRPC is currently in negotiations with the City of Westby for administering the grant. She said that the City of Westby and Delta 3 Engineering are working with the U.S. Federal Fish and Wildlife Agency to officially sign off on the project stating that there are no concerns of the area being a wetland. Next week the City of Westby is scheduling a meeting with their board to go over the processing of this grant as well.

Decision on City of Westby EDA grant administration Contract.

Mr. Bonifas reported that the contract between the MRRPC and the City of Westby is not to exceed \$25,000 to administer the EDA grant. He said that the contract was created from a template which EDA provided and meets all of their requirements. The contract has been sent to the City of Westby and they are reviewing it and the consultant Delta 3 had seen similar contracts before and did not have any issues with the contract. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none asked for a motion. Commissioner Schroeder made a motion to accept the contract between the City of Westby and the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kraft. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none the motion was approved.

Decision on Town of Campbell Comprehensive Plan update Contract.

Mr. Bonifas reported that he had attended the Town of Campbell board meeting and spoke with the Town Chairman and the Planning Commission Chairman. He said that the schedule of the contract will be altered due to the COVID-19 and a face-to-face meeting is being planned for July. He said that it would not affect the completion of the contract. Commissioner Burke made a motion to accept the contract between the Town of Campbell and the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Folcey. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none the motion was approved.

Update on EDA CARES Act Supplemental Funding.

Mr. Bonifas directed the participants to the two letters in the meeting packet that were received from EDA inviting the commission to apply for EDA CARES Act funding. He said the first letter is for a 100% grant up to \$400,000 for the MRRPC to use to help the commission and region recover from COVID-19. He said the grant application was submitted last week and the items applied for included funds to update equipment such as laptops for staff and a new printer to accommodate working from home and in the office, a SMRT Bus marketing plan due to the ridership being impacted by COVID-19 restrictions and businesses closing, an EMSI data report about the effects of COVID-19 in our region, and current data sets of mobile cellphone data of multi modal transportation data, and staff time to assist communities with grant applications and plans to assist the communities in our region with COVID-19 recovery efforts. He said that part of the staff time would be devoted to updating all the counties' Hazard Mitigation

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Plans to include a pandemic response which would be at no additional cost to the counties. He said the grant was submitted and is in the review process. Commissioner Schroeder asked if the cellphone data sets would be an infringement on people's privacy. Mr. Bonifas responded that the data is collected by another agency anonymously and we will have the ability to query the data for example the number of people traveling through a particular city and Mr. Gollnick added that it is commercial data that is all anonymously collected. The second letter invitation from EDA was for funds to supplement our current revolving loan funds with additional funding for COVID-19 response.

He said that EDA invited us to apply for \$1,050,000 with an additional \$100,000 for administration. This new money would be placed in a separate fund with loosened restrictions including the ability to reduce the interest rates for loans, eliminate the bank turn down letter requirement, and the 2:1 financing ratio. Mr. Bonifas has been in contact with the other revolving loan funds boards and it is in the planning stages of how the money will be distributed. He said that the existing revolving loan fund boards would evaluate the loans for these funds. He said that the existing RLF Plan would be used with an addendum for the new requirements for the new RLF funds during that one year. He said that if the money is awarded there would be a meeting scheduled to discuss different scenarios about how the money could be distributed equitably across the region.

Decision on Resolution 20200610-2 adopting the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission Economic Development Fund RLF Plan.

Mr. Bonifas reported that the Resolution would adopt the existing revolving loan fund plan with the new addendum which would be in effect for one year to reflect the new loosen requirements of the new RLF money. Commissioner Pelock made a motion to accept Resolution 20200610-2 adopting the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission Economic Development RLF Plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Twidt. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none the motion was approved.

Decision on updating signature cards for the CMV Growth Development Fund account and the La Crosse County Economic Development Fund account.

Mr. Bonifas reported that the signature card for the CMV Growth Development Fund needed to have a new signature card for the account due to staff changes. He said that currently Greg Flogstad and Dave Maxwell were listed on the signature card. He recommended changing the signature card to remove Greg Flogstad, retired Director, and add Dave Bonifas, new Director, Dave Maxwell, CMV Growth Development Fund President, and Sarah Ofte, MRRPC Administrative Assistant. Mr. Bonifas said that the signature card for the La Crosse County Economic Development Fund also needed to be updated and recommended removing Greg Flogstad, retired Director, and Tara Johnson, retired La Crosse County Board Chair, and add Dave Bonifas, new Director, Monica Kruse, the newly elected La Crosse County Board Chair, and Sarah Ofte, Administrative Assistant MRRPC. Commissioner Jaekel made a motion to update the La Crosse County Economic Development Fund signature card to remove Greg Flogstad and Tara Johnson and replace with Dave Bonifas, Monica Kruse, the newly elected La Crosse County Chair, and Sarah Ofte, Administrative Assistant MRRPC and update the CMV Growth Development Fund signature card to remove Greg Flogstad and replace with Dave Bonifas, Dave Maxwell, and Sarah Ofte. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baecker. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none the motion was approved.

Update on the Build Grant.

Mr. Gollnik reported that in late 2019 the US Department of Transportation announced that there would be an additional \$1 million in Build Grant funding. He said that this is the latest of the Tiger Grant program. He said that for this round there is \$1 million available for capital and planning grants. This year is unique because 50% of the funding is going to rural areas. He said that the grant was submitted May 18th for \$140,000 for a region wide freight strategy for growth and opportunity and ways to recover from COVID-19 impacts. He said that the grants are extremely competitive, and we will be notified in the Fall if we are awarded any funds.

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. A motion was made to adjourn by Commissioner Twidt and seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. The motion was unanimously approved.

Vicki Burke, Secretary/ Treasurer

Date

MRRPC Bimonthly Meeting Attendees	
Name	Representing
Del Twidt	Buffalo County
John Schlesselman	Buffalo County
Dennis Pelock	Crawford County
Gerald Krachey	Crawford County
James Czajkowski	Crawford County
Brad Chown	Jackson County
Vicki Burke	La Crosse County
James Ehram	La Crosse County
Sharon Folcey	Monroe County
James Kuhn	Monroe County
Cedric Schnitzler	Monroe County
James Kraft	Pepin County
Richard Purdy	Pierce County
William Schroeder	Pierce County
Greg Place	Pierce County
Margaret Baecker	Trempealeau County
Ernest Vold	Trempealeau County
Phillip Borreson	Trempealeau County
Jo Ann Nickelatti	Vernon County
Nancy Jaekel	Vernon County
Dave Bonifas	MRRPC Staff
Bob Gollnik	MRRPC Staff
Abbey Nicewander	MRRPC Staff
Sarah Ofte	MRRPC Staff
Mike Temp	Tostrud & Temp SC
Brian Fukuda	La Crosse County Community Development Specialist
Rebecca Giroux	WHEDA
Gregg Wavrunek	Representing Senator Tammy Baldwin
Francis Schelfhout	WI Dept. of Transportation