



**MISSISSIPPI RIVER
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**
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*James Kuhn, Cashton, WI
Chairman*
*Bill E. Schroeder, Hager City, 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., August 10, 2022
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: Nancy Wedwick, Coon Creek Community Watershed Council, Dr. Monique Hassman, Coon Creek Community Watershed Council, Peter Fletcher, Executive Director La Crosse Area MPO, Jackie Eastwood, Transportation Planner La Crosse MPO, Carol Roth, Driftless Development Inc., Francis Schelfhout, WisDot. The attendance roster is attached.

Minutes of June 8, 2022, Bimonthly Meeting

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the June 8, 2022, bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the June 8, 2022, bimonthly meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nickelatti. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report

Secretary Burke reported that the May 31, 2022, ending balance in all accounts was \$423,992.73 and the July 31, 2022, ending balance in all accounts was \$408,205.32. She reported the beginning balance on June 1, 2022, in all Revolving Loan Fund accounts was \$945,853.61 and the ending balance on July 31, 2022, was \$1,902,023.73. Mr. Bonifas reported that the BCF accounts were reduced to two accounts due to transferring the funds from the defederalized account into the BCF I account. He said that the goal is to combine the remaining two accounts into one account for the Business Capital Fund. He also reported that the CARES Act RLF is now operating under the same parameters as the other RLF accounts since the original funds have been lent out to area businesses. Commissioner Schlesselman 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 by Nancy Wedwick, Coon Creek Community Watershed Council (CCCWC) and Dr. Monique Hassman, Watershed Planner, Valley Stewardship Network.

Nancy Wedwick, Coon Creek Community Watershed Council (CCCWC) and Dr. Monique Hassman, Watershed Planner, Valley Stewardship Network presented how the Coon Creek Community Watershed Council was created and how they work to educate communities about ways to mitigate flooding and take care of the land. They discussed how the group was created with community interest in finding ways to mitigate flooding after the devastating impacts of the huge floods of 2018 to the communities in the Coon Creek watershed area. Within the Coon Creek Watershed Council, they have formed committees for planning, education, outreach, and regenerative practices.

TAP Funding projects for the MRRPC region.

Mr. Gollnick reported about the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) Funding Projects. The TAP program is an 80/20 program that is primarily for bike and pedestrian projects. He said that \$5 million was awarded in our region for these grants. Some examples included the City of Viroqua's \$40,000 project and the West Salem School District's project for \$50,000. He also reported that all projects that were proposed in the City of La Crosse were funded.

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

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He encouraged communities to apply since TAP and SRTS grants can be pooled together to make it easier for communities to raise the funds for their match.

BUILD Grant

Mr. Gollnik reported that the BUILD Grant Freight Strategy has been ongoing for six months and is on schedule. He stated that a survey and interactive map has been created on our website to include a comments section and the link has been emailed to 300 people in transportation related fields in government and in the private sector. He said that the goal of the survey is to identify specific areas for moving freight that could be included in future projects.

Jackson County Comprehensive Update.

Mr. Bonifas reported that he met with Jackson County's Zoning Committee last month and explained to them the process of updating and revising their comprehensive plan. After the meeting the committee decided to go ahead with the project and Mr. Bonifas left a draft of the contract with the committee. He said that their corporation council will review the contract before they sign it and return it to our office. He anticipates that the project will begin this month.

WEDC Mainstreet Bounce Back Grants.

Mr. Bonifas reported that the Main Street Bounce Back Grant is continuing through the end of the year, and the commission has received another \$770,000 to distribute to businesses in our region. As of August 5th, there have been 370 grants awarded in our nine-county region. He said that we currently have 34 applications that are still under review. He encouraged those present to let businesses know about this grant.

Westby Industrial Park EDA grant.

Ms. Nicewander reported that the Westby EDA Industrial Park Project is 90% completed. She said that there is one more disbursement for the project and she is waiting for the final inspection documents to send to EDA to close out the grant.

Lower Kinni restoration plan.

Mr. Bonifas reported that the Kinnickinnic River runs through the City of River Falls and the city of River Falls had two power dams on the river. The city abandoned one after a big flood and the other is still power producing. The city applied for and received a \$1 million grant from the DNR to remove the lower dam. The Army Corps of Engineers evaluated the dams and said that they would give the city \$8 million dollars if they would like to remove both dams at this time. Mr. Bonifas said that if they remove both dams the city would need to conduct a feasibility study for \$350,000. The city has to decide whether to wait 5 to 8 years to remove both dams or remove one now and then the other later and work out the funding issues with all parties.

Closed Session

A motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner Schroeder to enter into closed session pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes 19.85(1)c considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility to wit: Decisions on filling staff positions the motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

A motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner Schroeder to enter into open session, the motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner Twidt to accept Dave Bonifas's resignation and approve and post the Executive Director job description that was presented and would include: 1) Salary range of \$75,000 to \$80,000 2) Posting in the La Crosse Tribune, La Crosse Tribune online jobs, Indeed, Wisconsin Job Center and the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Planning Association. 3) The position will be posted until October 14, 2022 or until filled 4) Health insurance, deferred compensation withholding, life insurance, and retirement benefits would start immediately upon hire. 5) A 12 month probationary period would apply to the position, 6) a starting date January 3, 2023. 7) The Executive and Administration committee shall interview and select the candidate. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner's questions and comments on the projects or subjects listed in the written staff report

None reported.

Reports from Commissioners

None reported.

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New Business and Adjourn

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.

Vicki Burke,
Secretary/ Treasurer

Date

MRRPC Bimonthly Meeting Attendees	
Name	Representing
Del Twidt	Buffalo County
John Schlesselman	Buffalo County
Gerald Krachey	Crawford County
Brad Chown	Jackson County
Vicki Burke	La Crosse County
Sharon Hampson	La Crosse County
Robin Schmidt	La Crosse County
James Kuhn	Monroe County
Cedric Schnitzler	Monroe County
Bill Schroeder	Pierce County
Richard Purdy	Pierce County
Neil Gulbranson	Pierce County
Phillip Borreson	Trempealeau County
Ernest Vold	Trempealeau County
Jo Ann Nickelatti	Vernon County
Herb Cornell	Vernon County
Dave Bonifas	MRRPC Staff
Bob Gollnik	MRRPC Staff
Abbey Nicewander	MRRPC Staff
Sarah Ofte	MRRPC Staff
Peter Fletcher	Director, La Crosse MPO
Jackie Eastwood	Transportation Planning La Crosse MPO
Carol Roth	Driftless Development
Nancy Wedwick	Coon Creek Community Watershed Council
Dr. Monique Hassman	Coon Creek Community Watershed Council
Francis Schelfhout	WisDot