



**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., October 12, 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: Francis Schelfhout, WisDot, Charlotte Peterson, UW Extension, Dan Baumann, WI DNR, Rebecca Giroux, WHEDA, Joe Folsom, Pierce County Economic Development Corporation, and Jackie Eastwood, Transportation Planner La Crosse MPO. The attendance roster is attached.

**Minutes of August 10, 2022, Bimonthly Meeting**

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the August 10, 2022, bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the August 10, 2022, bimonthly meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McMillan Urell. 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 July 31, 2022, ending balance in all accounts was \$408,205.32 and the September 30, 2022, ending balance in all accounts was \$361,492.92. She reported the beginning balance on August 1, 2022, in all Revolving Loan Fund accounts was \$1,902,023.73 and the ending balance on September 30, 2022, was \$1,538,683.22. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schlesselman. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments hearing none the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

**Presentation by Dan Baumann, Secretary's Director WI DNR Statewide Flood Resiliency.**

Dan Baumann, Secretary's Director WI DNR, gave a report about Statewide Flood Resiliency efforts. He discussed the ways the Driftless Area is particularly vulnerable to flooding conditions and what area leaders and organizations are doing in order to assist with flood resiliency activities.

**Decision on Accounting and Bookkeeping Firms.**

Mr. Bonifas reported that the contracts were expiring at the end of this year for our audit and bookkeeping services and requests for proposals were sent out to area accounting firms. Of the requests for proposals that were mailed to area accounting firms, we received one for auditing and one for bookkeeping and they were from the two firms that currently work with, Tostrud & Temp SC who performs our audit and McCoy Accounting Services LLC who currently does our bookkeeping. Mr. Bonifas said that their proposals were very competitive and both firms do excellent work. After discussion, Commissioner Borreson made a motion to accept the proposals of both Tostrud & Temp SC for auditing services and McCoy Accounting Services LLC for bookkeeping services. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Burke. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments hearing none the motion was unanimously approved.

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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***

**Decision on Resolution regarding the WI DOT 2023 Workplan.**

Mr. Gollnik reported that the WI DOT Workplan is completed each year for the WI DOT grant. He said that all the elements of the Work Program remained the same and for 2023 the WI DOT grant was increased by \$10,000. Commissioner Schnitzler made a motion to approve the 2023 WI DOT Workplan Resolution. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schroeder and was unanimously approved.

**SMRT Bus Update.**

Mr. Gollnik reported that he was working with, Charlie Handy from La Crosse County and Peter Fletcher from the La Crosse Area MPO about how to strategically plan for the SMRT Bus for the next five years. He said that this will include approaching local communities and asking for new local match amounts to create a consistent budget to allow the SMRT Bus to lease new busses and improve stops and give stability to the program. He said that they presented the statistics of ridership to the communities and created four tiers of support where communities could participate. He said that the communities were happy with the service. He also reported that the fares are currently at \$3.00 per ride but could possibly increase in the future to raise funds if needed. He said that the communities also provided valuable feedback regarding where future stops could be created as another way to increase ridership and revenue.

**BUILD Grant**

Mr. Gollnik reported that he just received the first report of existing conditions for the BUILD Grant Freight Strategy. He presented examples of maps with different data sets that were included in the report such as a map that shows pavement conditions in our region and how the red color showed the roads in bad repair and the green represented the better road conditions. He also reported about outreach efforts for the project such as the map available on the MRRPC website where people can leave comments and an online opportunity where the community can participate.

**Decision on Crawford County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Contract.**

Ms. Nicewander reported that Crawford County was notified by Wisconsin Emergency Management that they will be eligible to update their hazard mitigation plan. She said the total cost of the project will be \$59,987.60 with a 25 percent match of \$14,996.90 from Crawford County and the MRRPC. The plan is to be completed and sent to Wisconsin Emergency Management by October 30, 2023. The final plan will be completed and approved by FEMA by April 30, 2024. Commissioner Burke made a motion to approve the contract between Crawford County and the MRRPC for the MRRPC to complete the update to the Crawford County Hazard Mitigation Plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments hearing none the motion was unanimously approved.

**Decision on Vernon County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Contract.**

Ms. Nicewander reported that Vernon County was notified by Wisconsin Emergency Management that they will be eligible to update their hazard mitigation plan. She said the total cost of the project will be \$59,749.20 with a 25 percent match of \$14,937.30 from Vernon County and the MRRPC. The plan is to be completed and sent to Wisconsin Emergency Management by August 31, 2023. The final plan will be completed and approved by FEMA by February 28, 2024. Commissioner Nickelatti made a motion to approve the contract between Vernon County and the MRRPC for the MRRPC to complete the update to the Vernon County Hazard Mitigation Plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cooper. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments hearing none the motion was unanimously approved.

**WEDC Mainstreet Bounce Back Grants.**

Mr. Bonifas reported that the Main Street Bounce Back Grant Program was extended through the end of the year. He said that once the state decided to fund the program until the end of this year, they quickly realized that there weren't enough funds so an additional \$25 million was put towards the program and we were given an additional \$1 million for our region to ensure the grant would be fully funded until the end of the year. He reported that to date the MRRPC has given out 437 awards or \$4.37 million. He reported that when the state extended the grant, they made the requirement that the space being rented needed to be at least 400 sq. ft. and one grant per business owner because of the popularity of the grant.

**Director Search Update.**

Mr. Bonifas reported that the MRRPC Director position has been posted and the posting closes on October 14<sup>th</sup>. He said that the position is posted on various employment websites and the local paper. He said that there have been 5 completed applications that have been received and accepted and that the Executive Committee will be meeting in November to set up interviews.

**Closed Session**

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner McMillan Urell to post the Senior Planner position and have Abby Nicewander work part-time at 20 hours per week until the position is filled. The motion passed unanimously.

**Reports from Commissioners**

Buffalo County – Commissioner McMillan Urell reported that Buffalo County has a new Administrative Coordinator and an economic development committee is being formed again in January.

Jackson County – Commissioner Carney reported that penal code changes from Madison might require Jackson County to build a new county jail.

Crawford County – Commissioner Stirling reported that Crawford County is doing preliminary work to research building a new jail.

La Crosse County – Commissioner Hampson reported that a city committee she serves on has been formed to look at flood plain mitigation.

Monroe County – Commissioner Kuhn reported that they are also working on flood plain mitigation.

Pierce County – Commissioner Schroeder reported that the county has been moving along with broadband expansion. He also reported that Bay City was awarded a grant from the DNR to update the park and wetlands area.

Trempealeau County – Commissioner Sorge reported that Dave Carlson is the new Economic Development Coordinator in Trempealeau County.

**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.

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Vicki Burke,  
Secretary/ Treasurer

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Date

<b>MRRPC Bimonthly Meeting Attendees</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Del Twidt	Buffalo County
John Schlesselman	Buffalo County
Mary Anne McMillan Urell	Buffalo County
Don Stirling	Crawford County
Brad Chown	Jackson County
Ron Carney	Jackson County
Tom Cooper	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
Patrick Sorge	Trempealeau County
Phillip Borreson	Trempealeau County
Ernest Vold	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
Charlotte Peterson	UW Extension
Jackie Eastwood	Transportation Planner La Crosse MPO
Dan Baumann	WI DNR
Rebecca Giroux	WHEDA
Joe Folsom	Pierce County Economic Development Corporation
Francis Schelfhout	WisDot