



**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*  
*Jon Bingol, La Crosse, WI  
Executive Director*

**MINUTES**  
**MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRRPC)**  
**BIMONTHLY MEETING**  
**10:00 a.m., December 14, 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: Tom Baron, Economic Development Administration, Gregg Wavrunek, Senator Baldwin's Office, LeAnna Kavanaugh, Pepin County Economic Development, Joe Folsom, Pierce County Economic Development Corporation, Carol Roth, Driftless Development, and Jackie Eastwood, Transportation Planner La Crosse MPO. The attendance roster is attached.

**Minutes of October 12, 2022, Bimonthly Meeting**

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the October 12, 2022, bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the October 12, 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 September 31, 2022, ending balance in all accounts was \$361,492.92 and the November 30, 2022, ending balance in all accounts was \$363,781.46. She reported the beginning balance on October 1, 2022, in all Revolving Loan Fund accounts was \$1,538,683.22 and the ending balance on November 30, 2022, was \$1,642,613.01. Commissioner Carney made a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments hearing none the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

**Presentation by Tom Baron, EDA's Wisconsin Economic Development Representative.**

Tom Baron, EDA's Wisconsin Economic Development Representative, gave a presentation about how the U.S. Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration (EDA) partners with regional planning commissions designated as Economic Development Districts (EDD) such as the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission. He gave examples of how EDA assists communities after disaster declarations, public works projects, planning assistance, and local technical assistance and how the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission is an integral part of the process.

**Decision on WIDOT Resolution amending 2022 work plan.**

Mr. Gollnik reported that each year the commission approves the work program with time designated over the six different work elements. He said that the time spend on the different work elements was different than the original work program and it needs to be amended with a resolution to reallocate the time spent on the work elements. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve Resolution 20221214-3 to reallocate the time spent on the 2022 transportation work elements in the work plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schroeder, 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***

**SMRT Bus Update.**

Mr. Gollnik reported that three new buses have been delivered. He said that agreements on local matches have almost all been approved with just a few to follow up with. He reported that on the marketing side of the SMRT Bus there have been discussions with the Gundersen Health System and their new All of Us Program that they have been promoting. An agreement has been reached for them to advertise their program on the side of the SMRT Buses. It was a partnership developed through Vendi Advertising which assisted with the new marketing program for the SMRT Bus.

**BUILD Grant Update**

Mr. Gollnik reported that the BUILD Grant is sixty percent completed. He said the existing conditions are completed and now the work is focusing on outreach and one-on-one interviews. He said that the discussion has been about how to rank projects in our region which have been identified for freight movement improvement and to pursue funding.

**Monroe and Trempealeau County Hazard Mitigation grant applications.**

Ms. Nicewander reported that the commission has been asked to submit the Hazard Mitigation Plan applications to WEM for Monroe, Trempealeau, and Pierce Counties. She said that a draft of the applications was due on December 9<sup>th</sup>. They have been submitted to WEM and they will be officially submitted to FEMA at the end of this month. She reported that each grant is for \$60,000. Mr. Bonifas added that this is the first time that the commission will be completing Pierce County's Hazard Mitigation Plan update.

**WEDC Mainstreet Bounce Back Grants.**

Mr. Bonifas reported that the Main Street Bounce Back Grant Program ends on December 31, 2022. He said that 522 grants have been awarded in the region. He said that there is money for 560 grants and the grant program will end on December 31 or when the funds have been depleted.

**Westby EDA grant update.**

Ms. Nicewander reported that the Westby Industrial Park is at the closeout stage of the grant. She said that the closeout documents have been sent to EDA and the construction has been completed since August. There have also been inquiries by businesses about moving into the industrial park. She said that we are just waiting for the final disbursement of funds from EDA. The final requirement is updating EDA every three years about the progress of the project with the number of businesses in the park and jobs created.

**Senior Planner search update.**

Mr. Bonifas introduced the new Executive Director, Mr. Bingol, to give the report. Mr. Bingol reported that there are 4 candidates for the open Senior Planner Positions. He will be in contact with all the candidates with a preliminary phone interview and then schedule an interview with the Executive and Administrative Committee. An interview with the Executive and Administrative Committee will be scheduled in the first two weeks of January.

**Potential Internships**

Mr. Bingol reported that our current Senior Planners Bob and Abbey have been communicating with some UW-La Crosse students who are studying in the fields conducive to planning and have GIS and mapping training. One of the interns is close to graduating and has the potential to be a future planner. He said that the commission has not paid internships in the past, but a paid internship is a competitive market and an opportunity to get good candidates. Mr. Bingol asked the board if the commission was in favor of offering paid internships at \$15 to \$20 an hour. A motion was made by Commissioner McMillan Urell and seconded by Commissioner Cooper to hire interns at \$15 to \$20 per hour, the motion passed unanimously.

**Reports from Commissioners**

Crawford County – Commissioner Krachey reported that Crawford County is building a new jail and will be conducting a study to move forward with the project.

Vernon County – Commissioner Jaekel reported that Vernon County is in discussions with the commission to administer the Vernon County RLF fund.

Trempealeau County – Commissioner Borreson thanked Dave for his work at the commission and for Trempealeau County.

**New Business and Adjourn**

Commissioner Schroeder thanked Mr. Bonifas for his years of service at the commission and wished him well in his retirement. Commissioner Hampson asked about the catering contract and the Executive and Administrative Meeting minutes. Mr. Bonifas replied that we are still exploring options for meeting sites and the Executive and Administrative Meeting minutes can be requested. Commissioner Schlesselman asked if there was any discussion of going back to in person meetings. Mr. Bonifas responded that there hasn't been any discussion about it but it could be discussed in the future. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any other 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
Gerald Krachey	Crawford County
Brad Chown	Jackson County
Ron Carney	Jackson County
Tom Cooper	Jackson County
Vicki Burke	La Crosse County
Sharon Hampson	La Crosse County
James Kuhn	Monroe County
Kim Seipel	Pepin County
Bill Schroeder	Pierce County
Neil Gulbranson	Pierce County
Richard Purdy	Pierce County
Patrick Sorge	Trempealeau County
Phillip Borreson	Trempealeau County
Nancy Jaekel	Vernon County
Jon Bingol	MRRPC Staff
Dave Bonifas	MRRPC Staff
Bob Gollnik	MRRPC Staff
Abbey Nicewander	MRRPC Staff
Sarah Ofte	MRRPC Staff
Carol Roth	Driftless Development
Jackie Eastwood	Transportation Planner La Crosse MPO
Tom Baron	EDA Wisconsin Economic Development Representative
LeAnna Kavanaugh	Pepin County – Economic Development
Joe Folsom	Pierce County Economic Development Corporation
Gregg Wavrunek	Senator Baldwin's Office