



**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., Wednesday, April 12, 2023
Altra Federal Credit Union Operations Center, 1700 Oak Forest Dr., Onalaska, Wisconsin 54650

Call to Order at 10:00 am

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: Chris Smith, Northern Grain Belt Statistical Area, Jackie Eastwood, La Crosse MPO Transportation Planner, Peter Fitcher, Executive Director – La Crosse MPO, Charlie Handy, La Crosse County Human Development Manager, Dillon Constant, La Crosse County Planner, Bobbi Johnson, Finance Manager - Vernon County, Le Anna Kavanaugh, Economic Development Pepin County, Francis Schelfhout, WI DOT, Joe Folsom, Executive Director – Pierce County Economic Development Corporation.

Welcome – Steve Koenen, President/CEO Altra Federal Credit Union.

Steve Koenen, President/CEO Altra Federal Credit Union, welcomed all the meeting attendees and gave a brief presentation about Altra Federal Credit Union.

Minutes of February 8, 2023, Bimonthly Meeting

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the February 8, 2023, bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the February 8, 2023, bimonthly meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schlesselman. 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 February 28, 2023, ending balance in all accounts was \$428,301.73 and the March 31, 2023, ending balance in all accounts was \$407,476.62. She reported the beginning balance on February 1, 2023, in all Revolving Loan Fund accounts was \$1,126,234.81 and the ending balance on March 31, 2023, was \$1,150,472.69. Commissioner Seipel 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 Mike Temp of Tostrud & Temp SC

Mike Temp of Tostrud and Temp S.C. said his firm prepared the 2022 Financial Statements and Independent Auditors report for the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC). He referenced the independent auditor's report on page 4 which states that 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 which was an unmodified opinion and he said that it is what you want to have. He referenced Page 8 which outlines Management's Discussion and Analysis which is an overview of what is in the financial statements and on 8.4 has a Statement of Net Position or balance sheet comparing 2022 to 2021 which is a snapshot of the Commission's position on December 31, 2022. Mr. Temp then reviewed the 2022 Statement of Net Position, Statement of Activities, the 2022 Balance Sheet, and the Reconciliation for Governmental Funds. He also reviewed the balance sheets for the six different revolving loan funds. Mr. Temp suggested that with the amount of funds the commission has on hand that the commission should take measures to guarantee the funds in the banks that have more funds than the FDIC will insure. Mr. Temp then opened the floor for questions.

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Decision on 2022 Audit.

Chairman Kuhn asked if anyone had any questions regarding the audit. A motion was made by Commissioner Burke to accept the 2022 MRRPC Audit as presented seconded by Commissioner Twidt. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions. The motion was approved with a majority yes vote and one no vote.

Presentation by Chris Smith, Northern Grain Belt Port Statistical Area

Chris Smith, Northern Grain Belt Port Statistical Area, discussed the importance of being a designated Port Statistical Area. Mr. Smith reported that the area on the Mississippi River from Red Wing, MN to Prairie du Chien, WI includes 11 counties, and all are now a part of the Northern Grain Belt Port Statistical Area. He said that with this designation all the tonnage that travels through this area is now documented and will provide more opportunities for state and federal funding for the region.

Decision on the Executive and Administration Committee's recommendation on 2023 staff wage adjustments and 2024 County Contributions

Mr. Bingol reported that the Executive and Administration Committee met on March 27, 2023, and the minutes from the meeting were also emailed and included in the meeting packets. The recommendations that were brought forth from the meeting were regarding salary adjustments for current staff that would go into effect on July 1 and the recommendations for county contributions in 2024. A motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner Gulbranson to approve the presented Executive and Administration Committee's 2023 Staff Salary Structure of a 10% increase for the Executive Director and Administrative Assistant beginning July 1, 2023, and an increase of up to \$4,000 in yearly salary for newly hired planners after they complete their 6 month probation period. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or discussion hearing none the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Bingol directed the attendees to the minutes from the Executive and Administration meeting minutes. He said that the county contributions are based on the real equalized property value with the chart showing the 2021 values and the 2022 values and the county contributions from 2023 and the proposed 2024 county contributions. He reported that the average increase in valuation from 2021 to 2022 was 12.6 percent with some counties having an 8 percent increase and some counties had a 15 percent increase in value. The six percent increase was proposed since the use of county contributions goes towards the match for grants such as EDA, DOT and the additional hazard mitigation plans that have been applied for and will begin in 2024.

2024 COUNTY CONTRIBUTION AMOUNTS				
	2021 Real Property Equalized Value	2022 Real Property Equalized Value	2023 Contributions Rate of .0004725552%	2024 Contributions Rate of .0004447558% 6% increase from 2023 contributions
Buffalo	1,301,025,300	1,440,645,800	6,148	6,407
Crawford	1,381,532,000	1,528,211,600	6,529	6,797
Jackson	1,802,400,600	1,955,550,700	8,517	8,697
La Crosse	11,914,125,100	13,394,205,500	56,301	59,572
Monroe	3,836,523,800	4,338,305,700	18,130	19,295
Pepin	712,814,300	820,113,900	3,368	3,648
Pierce	4,121,070,900	4,714,968,300	19,474	20,970
Trempealeau	2,597,987,700	2,903,304,000	12,277	12,913
Vernon	2,347,076,500	2,708,454,300	11,091	12,046
Total	30,014,556,200	33,803,759,800	141,835	150,345

A motion was made by Commissioner Borreson and seconded by Commissioner Twidt to approve the presented 6% increase from 2023 County Contributions for the 2024 County Contributions. The motion carried unanimously.

Decision on contract to update Outdoor Recreation Plan for the Village of West Salem

Mr. Bingol reported that the Village of West Salem approached the commission to update their Outdoor Recreation Plan. Previously the commission did not charge for completing these plans but after a review of the time involved and to add value to the plans the commission is charging \$1,000 to complete Outdoor Recreation Plans. This has been communicated to the municipalities. A motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner Sorge to approve the \$1,000 contract between the Village of West Salem and the MRRPC to complete an Outdoor Recreation Plan. The motion carried unanimously.

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Decision on contract to update Outdoor Recreation Plan for the Village of Ellsworth

Mr. Bingol reported that the Village of Ellsworth approached the commission to update their Outdoor Recreation Plan. The contract for their Outdoor Recreation Plan is for the same terms as the Village of West Salem with the same cost of \$1,000. A motion was made by Commissioner Gulbranson and seconded by Commissioner Seipel to approve the \$1,000 contract between the Village of Ellsworth and the MRRPC to complete an Outdoor Recreation Plan. The motion carried unanimously.

Decision on contract to update Comprehensive Plan for Buffalo County

Mr. Bingol reported that Comprehensive Plans are plans for 20 years into the future with an update every 10 years. He met with personnel from Buffalo County and the need to update the county's comprehensive plan was a result of one of the meetings. He said that the commission had not done the county's previous plan, but the county supplied a document of their previous plan as a guide. He said the cost of the County Comprehensive Plan is \$35,000. A motion was made by Commissioner Twidt and seconded by Commissioner Schlesselman to approve the \$35,000 contract between Buffalo County and the MRRPC to complete a Comprehensive Plan revision. The motion was carried unanimously.

Decision on contract to update Comprehensive Plan for Vernon County

Mr. Bingol reported that Vernon County also approached the commission to complete an update to their comprehensive plan. Currently Vernon County does not have an approved Comprehensive Plan. He said that the contract has the same language and cost of \$35,000 as the contract for Buffalo County. A motion was made by Commissioner Schroeder and seconded by Commissioner Jaekel to approve the \$35,000 contract between Vernon County and the MRRPC to complete a Comprehensive Plan revision. The motion was carried unanimously.

Decision on contract to update Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Bangor

Mr. Bingol reported that the Town of Bangor is also wanting an update to their comprehensive plan. He said that the language is similar to the other comprehensive plan contracts with the difference in cost due to the municipality being smaller and La Crosse County has just completed their comprehensive plan and is assisting the MRRPC with some information for the update. Town Comprehensive Plan updates are usually \$12,000 but since we are being assisted by La Crosse County for the update the cost was reduced to \$9,500. A motion was made by Commissioner Krachey and seconded by Commissioner Schroeder to approve the \$9,500 contract between the Town of Bangor and the MRRPC to complete a Comprehensive Plan revision. The motion was carried unanimously.

Decision on contract to update Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Utica

Mr. Bingol reported that the Town of Utica contacted the commission to update their comprehensive plan. He said that the cost of the update will be \$12,000 which is the cost for township comprehensive plan updates. He said that surveying the township residents and providing opportunities for community engagement through public hearings are key components of the plan revision process. A motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the \$12,000 contract between the Town of Utica and the MRRPC to complete a Comprehensive Plan revision. The motion was carried unanimously.

Decision on contract to administer the Vernon County RLF Fund

Mr. Bingol reported that Vernon County had approached the commission to be the administrator of their County Revolving Loan. He said that Vernon County's Revolving Loan Fund has been defederalized and they are also short staffed. Mr. Bingol said that the commission has been assisting the county with the revisions of their revolving loan fund manual and the contract has already been approved at the county. The commission would only be charging the county for staff time, costs incurred and materials used. As the administrator the commission would gather the information to present the loan to the County loan committee for loan approval and prepare all the loan documents and manage the repayments of the loans. A motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner Jaekel to approve the contract between Vernon County and the MRRPC to administer the Vernon County Revolving Loan Fund. The motion was carried unanimously.

Introduction of new MRRPC Staff

Mr. Bingol had the staff introduce themselves. Simon Fichter is an intern working on the Crawford County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Jamie Schoen is an intern working on the Vernon County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Aurora Bergeron is a Planner working on the Hazard Mitigation Plans and the Jackson County Comprehensive Plan. Ken Harwood is a Planner who is working with Transportation elements in all the plans and the Freight Study.

Reports from Commissioners

Nothing to report.

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New Business

Commissioner Seipel asked that at a future meeting information about securing funds should be addressed. Mr. Bingol replied that he was going to gather more information about adopting an investment policy for the commission.

Adjourn at 11:45 am

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.

Vicki Burke,
Secretary/ Treasurer

Date

MRRPC Bimonthly Meeting Attendees	
Name	Representing
Del Twidt	Buffalo County
John Schlesselman	Buffalo County
Gerald Krachey	Crawford County
Craig Anderson	Crawford County
Brad Chown	Jackson County
Ron Carney	Jackson County
Vicki Burke	La Crosse County
James Kuhn	Monroe County
Cedric Schnitzler	Monroe County
Toni Wissestad	Monroe County
Kim Seipel	Pepin County
Chris Kees Winkler	Pepin County
Bill Schroeder	Pierce County
Neil Gulbranson	Pierce County
Richard Purdy	Pierce County
Phillip Borreson	Trempealeau County
Patrick Sorge	Trempealeau County
George Brandt	Trempealeau County
Nancy Jaekel	Vernon County
Jon Bingol	MRRPC Staff
Ken Harwood	MRRPC Staff
Abbey Nicewander	MRRPC Staff
Sarah Ofte	MRRPC Staff
Jamie Schoen	MRRPC Staff
Simon Fichter	MRRPC Staff
Chris Smith	Northern Grain Belt Port Statistical Area
Jackie Eastwood	Transportation Planner La Crosse MPO
LeAnna Kavanaugh	Pepin County – Economic Development
Joe Folsom	Pierce County Economic Development Corporation
Bobbi Johnson	Finance Manager – Vernon County
Peter Fletcher	Executive Director - La Crosse County MPO
Charlie Handy	La Crosse County Human Development Manager
Dillon Constant	La Crosse County Planner
Francis Schelfhout	WI DOT