



**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*
*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, June 14, 2023

Family and Children's Center Building, 1707 Main Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601

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: Mark Tallman, Regional Economic Development Director, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), Dan Baumann, Secretary's Director – WI DNR, Sam Bachmeier, Community Development Specialist – La Crosse County, Dave Carlson, Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator – Trempealeau County, LeAnna Kavanaugh, Economic Development – Pepin County, Peter Fletcher, Executive Director - La Crosse County MPO, Erin Duffer, Transportation Planner – La Crosse County, Amanda Elliott. The attendance roster is attached.

Adding a new agenda item.

A motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner Twidt to modify the agenda and add agenda item 7.5 to approve hiring a new employee which was recommended by the Executive Committee. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any discussion and hearing none the motion was unanimously approved.

Minutes of April 13, 2023, Bimonthly Meeting

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the April 13, 2023, bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the April 13, 2023, bimonthly meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the minutes were approved with Commission Schmidt abstaining from the vote.

Treasurer's Report

Secretary Burke reported that the April 30, 2023, ending balance in all accounts was \$375,005.52 and the May 31, 2023, ending balance in all accounts was \$544,320.61. She reported the beginning balance on April 1, 2023, in all Revolving Loan Fund accounts was \$1,152,540.69 and the ending balance on May 31, 2023, was \$1,022,826.12. Commissioner Borreson made a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Seipel. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments. Commissioner Hampson asked about the \$21,000 in the Business Capital Fund that had been taken out and the Executive Director Jon Bingol responded that there had been a loan that had been approved through the Business Capital Fund committee for a business in Osseo. With no other discussion the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

Presentation by Mark Tallman, Regional Economic Development Director, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

Mark Tallman, Regional Economic Development Director, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) shared the different programs that are offered through the WEDC. He emphasized the importance of communities having an updated Comprehensive Plan to be prepared for any potential community projects and how government agencies can work together.

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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Decision on \$1,000 Contract to update Outdoor Recreation Plan for the City of Black River Falls.

Mr. Bingol reported that Outdoor Recreation Plans are \$1,000 this year and the City of Black River Falls needed an update to their plan. Chairman Kuhn asked if anyone had any questions regarding the audit. A motion was made by Commissioner Burke to accept the \$1,000 contract between the MRRPC and the City of Black River Falls to complete an Outdoor Recreation Plan update seconded by Commissioner Nickelatti. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions. The motion was approved with Commissioner Chown abstaining from the vote.

Decision on \$16,000 Contract to update Comprehensive Plan for the City of Black River Falls

Mr. Bingol reported that the City of Black River Falls would like to update their Comprehensive Plan which is very timely since Jackson County is also updating their Comprehensive Plan. A motion was made by Commissioner Gulbransen to accept the \$16,000 contract between the MRRPC and the City of Black River Falls to complete a Comprehensive Plan update seconded by Commissioner Hampson. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions. Commissioner Borreson asked if there was any advantage for the County and the City of Black River Falls to be working on the same plan. Mr. Bingol responded that the two plans complement each other and provide consistency with the city plan providing more detail for the city and creating their separate goals. The motion was approved with Commissioner Chown abstaining from the vote.

Decision on contract for Vernon County Economic Development Strategy

Mr. Bingol reported that there has not been a contract drawn up between Vernon County and the MRRPC for completion of the Economic Development Strategy yet, but the Vernon County Economic Development Committee has approved up to a \$50,000 maximum to complete the economic development strategy. The committee would like to do a hybrid plan with the consultants, Place Dynamics, who completed their plan in 2017 and who responded to their RFP. He said that he had sent them an RFP of \$29,731. The Vernon County Economic Development Committee liked parts of both RFPs and the committee asked us to put together a plan to work with Place Dynamics. He said that the portion of the plan that the MRRPC would be most involved in would be the community meetings and survey work. The county would like to see this in place by July 1, 2023. A motion was made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Twidt to approve the MRRPC entering into a contract with Vernon County to update their Economic Development Strategy with Place Dynamics. Commissioner Schmidt asked if there needed to be a dollar amount in the motion. Mr. Bingol responded that even if the MRRPC only received the \$10,000 of the \$50,000 we are committed to helping Vernon County with their plan and it is a great experience in this partnering approach and for staff to work with a firm that does this everyday as well and adding to our future capabilities. The motion carried unanimously.

Hiring a new employee

Mr. Bingol reported that Jamie Schoen had previously applied for a position as a planner but did not qualify since she had not yet finished her degree. She was then hired as one of our interns while attending college and has been working for the commission since January. She has since graduated and went through the interview process with the Executive and Administration Committee in May, and they decided to offer her a position in May. He said that the planner position was approved in the budget. A motion was made by Commissioner Seipel and seconded by Commissioner Twidt to approve the Executive and Administration's decision to hire Jamie Schoen as a Planner for the MRRPC. The motion carried unanimously.

Update on Ho Chunk Nation Hazard Mitigation Plan

Mr. Bingol reported that in the fall of 2022, Ms. Nicewander had done all the preliminary work for the Ho Chunk Nation's Hazard Mitigation Plan update just like she had for the other three counties that are in the process of applying for the grant through Wisconsin Emergency Management FEMA dollars. She hadn't heard from the Ho Chunk Nation since they applied last fall and then was contacted by WEM about the Ho Chunk Nation since they listed the MRRPC as the author of the plan. He said that the staff have been gathering all the information that WEM needs to continue to process their application. He reported that they will most likely be approved and once that approval goes through the contract will be presented at another commission meeting. He said that there is no decision today but will be brought to another commission meeting when a contract has been drafted.

Update on BUILD Grant

Mr. Bingol reported that the BUILD Grant, also called the Regional Freight Study, was started in 2020 and wasn't officially approved until September of 2021. He reported that most of the work had been done by a consulting group called SRF and our involvement has not been as intense. There is a matching component to this grant and the grant comes through the US DOT. Our matching share is \$60,000 and we are negotiating this match with time and software that has been purchased and can be used in this plan such as Qualtrics (survey and data analysis), Placer.ai (cellphone data points software), and Data Axle (list of businesses). He said that the Freight Study data has been compiled through regional surveys in order to make the strategy specific to our region.

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Update on Public Service Commission (PSC) Broadband Grants

Mr. Bingol reported that he, Mr. Harwood, and Ms. Bergeron attended a PSC listening session at the La Crosse Public Library with the PSC. He said that there is money coming to the states from the Federal Government which could be between \$700,000 and \$1 billion for broadband. The state wants to create a 5-year plan for broadband expansion with all 72 of the counties involved. The counties had the opportunity to do a regional approach or to do the plan individually. There were additional dollars for the regional approach, but it needed to be done with a Redo which is 7 Rivers Alliance in our region. Our area Redo didn't have enough staff to cover our region. He said that MRRPC is working with the individual counties in our region to complete these plans to be eligible to receive \$18,000 for their planning efforts. Finding the underserved and unserved areas of the counties is key in each plan.

Update on status of insured Bank Deposits

Mr. Bingol reported that after the audit it was noted that we had \$92,000 that wasn't technically insured by the FDIC but after doing more research with River Bank there is actually a designation for governmental entities that increases the deposit insurance from \$250,000 to \$650,000 which covers our deposits. He said that in discussion with the Executive and Administration Committee it was mentioned that in building a relationship with Altra Credit Union we could explore using their credit union to deposit funds.

Update on contracts to be the administrator of the Vernon County RLF Fund

Mr. Bingol reported that we are moving forward, and Vernon County had sent letters to all of their loan participants informing them that the administration was moving to the MRRPC. He then reported that letters had been sent introducing the MRRPC staff to the loan participants. He said that we are beginning in July with collecting their payments. The Vernon County Economic Development Committee has finalized the details for their new manual for the fund and by the end of the month the MRRPC can begin accepting applications for new loans.

Introduction of new MRRPC Staff

Mr. Bingol introduced Cole Remack as the new intern for the MRRPC.

Reports from Commissioners

Nothing to report.

Director's Report

Mr. Bingol reported that the Family and Children's Center who we rent office space from will be moving into a new building on Monitor Street and the building is for sale. He said that the Family and Children's Center will need to do some remodeling of the building and won't be ready until next spring to move into their new building. There is an option of moving with them to their new building and they also gave us an addendum to our lease which allows us to go somewhere else by giving them a 60-day notice. He said that he will keep the commission updated.

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
Mary Anne McMillan Urell	Buffalo County
Gerald Krachey	Crawford County
Craig Anderson	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
Kim Seipel	Pepin County
Chris Kees Winkler	Pepin County
Bill Schroeder	Pierce County
Neil Gulbranson	Pierce County
Phillip Borreson	Trempealeau County
George Brandt	Trempealeau County
Nancy Jaekel	Vernon County
Jon Bingol	MRRPC Staff
Sarah Ofte	MRRPC Staff
Jamie Schoen	MRRPC Staff
Aurora Bergeron	MRRPC Staff
Peter Fletcher	Executive Director – La Crosse County MPO
LeAnna Kavanaugh	Pepin County – Economic Development
Mark Tallman	Regional Economic Development Director (WEDC)
Dan Baumann	Secretary's Director – WI DNR
Sam Bachmeier	Community Development Specialist – La Crosse County
Erin Duffer	Transportation Planner – La Crosse County
Dave Carlson	Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator – Trempealeau County
Amanda Elliott	