



**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, Holmen, WI
Secretary & Treasurer*
*Jon Bingol, La Crosse, WI
Executive Director*

MINUTES

MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRRPC) BIMONTHLY MEETING

10:00 a.m., Wednesday, December 13, 2023

Altra Federal Credit Union Operations Building, 1700 Oak Forest Drive, Onalaska, WI 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: Dan Baumann, WI DNR, Francis Schelfout, WI DOT, Sam Bachmeier, La Crosse County Community Specialist, Erin Duffer, La Crosse County MPO, Bob Gollnik, La Crosse County MPO – Executive Director, Lynette Gates, Jackson County – ADRC Director, Roxie Anderson, Monroe County – Land Use Planner, Dave Carlson, Trempealeau County Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator. The attendance roster is attached.

Minutes of October 11, 2023, Bimonthly Meeting

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the October 11, 2023, bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the October 11, 2023, bimonthly meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cooper. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report

Secretary Burke reported that on October 1, 2023, the balance in all accounts was \$483,872.92 and the November 30, 2023, ending balance in all accounts was \$463,064.41. She reported the beginning balance on October 1, 2023, in all Revolving Loan Fund accounts was \$1,126,362.21 and the ending balance in all accounts on November 30, 2023, was \$1,087,973.80. Mr. Bingol reported that the Village of Oakdale had received the funds they borrowed from the CMV Growth Development Fund to prepay the expenses for a DNR grant that they had received. He said that the loan will be repaid within a year at 3% once the grant funds are released to the Village. Commissioner Borreson 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, West Central Wisconsin Director, WI DNR

Dan Baumann, West Central Wisconsin Director of the Wisconsin DNR gave a presentation regarding drinking water. His presentation focused on three different points of interest. He discussed the Well Compensation Grant Program which can be applied for through the WI DNR website. He stressed the importance for private well owners to have their water tested through their counties or through a private company to ensure the safety of their drinking water. He also gave an update about the how the state is trying to work through PFAS contaminations in well water across the state. He ended his presentation with an update on Lead Service Line replacement efforts in the state. His PowerPoint presentation was sent to the commissioners to share in the information in their counties.

Update on County Regional Coordinated Public Transit Plans

Mr. Harwood reported that the meeting of transportation providers across the region was held in October and personnel from all nine counties were represented. From the meeting, goals were created for all nine counties. He said that these plans have been updated and submitted to the state for approval. He said that the main goal of the document was to make it a living document and guide integration and cooperation of transportation services throughout the region.

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Update on WI DOT 2024 Work Program

Mr. Harwood reported that there have been some changes in personnel at the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the yearly transportation work program that was submitted to the state was returned in order to make some significant changes to be made before being submitted to the state by November 30th. A resolution approved before November 30th was one of those requirements. Mr. Harwood and Mr. Bingol thanked everyone for their quick response to approve the resolution via email to make the work program submission by the November 30th deadline.

Decision to hire Jack Zabrowski as Senior Planner as recommended by the Executive Committee

Mr. Bingol reported that at the October bimonthly meeting one of the planners that we had made a job offer decided to stay in Western Minnesota and the position was then reposted. The Executive Committee then interviewed this individual who has planning experience and has worked with La Crosse County and the City of La Crosse and lives locally. He interviewed well and also has the AICP planning certification. He is planning to start on January 3, 2024. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the Executive and Administration's recommendation to hire Jack Zabrowski as a Senior Planner. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the motion was approved.

Decision on Village of Merrilan Comprehensive Plan Contract

Mr. Bingol reported that he had been contacted by the Village of Merrilan to update the village's comprehensive plan. He said that the contract is for \$7,000 and their plan commission will be assisting with the plan. Commissioner Schnitzler made a motion to approve the contract between the Village of Merrilan and the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission to update the village's comprehensive plan for \$7,000. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McMillan Urell. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the motion was approved.

Decision on Village of Merrilan Outdoor Recreation Plan Contract

Mr. Bingol reported the Village of Merrilan has approached the commission to update their outdoor recreation plan. He said that their plan commission has already approved the contract at their board meeting, and work on the plan has started. Commissioner McMillan Urell made a motion to approve the contract between the Village of Merrilan and the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission to update the village's outdoor recreation plan for \$1,000. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Anderson. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the motion was approved.

Decision on applications for 2024-2025 HMPs for Jackson and La Crosse Counties

Mr. Bingol reported that Hazard Mitigation plans are on a five-year cycle and Jackson and La Crosse Counties are eligible for their Hazard Mitigation Plan updates at the end of 2024 or beginning of 2025. Those applications will need to be submitted soon. Commissioner Carney made a motion to approve the application submissions to Wisconsin Emergency Management to complete the updates to the Hazard Mitigation Plans for Jackson and La Crosse Counties. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cooper. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the motion was approved.

Decision on Ho Chunk Hazard Mitigation Plan Contract

Mr. Bingol reported that the Ho Chunk Nation had approached the commission to assist them with their Hazard Mitigation Plan update. Their plan update is funded by a different revenue stream and the contract is written differently from the other county Hazard Mitigation Plans we have done in the past. Mr. Bingol reported that the total contract is not to exceed \$59,668.50 with a 12.5% match of \$7,458.56 from the commission rather than the 25% match required in the county hazard mitigation plans. He also said that there is an additional 12.5% the commission will receive for administration of the plan update. Commissioner Anderson made a motion to approve the contract between the Ho Chunk Nation and the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission to update the Ho Chunk Nation's Hazard Mitigation Plan not to exceed \$59,668.50 with a 12.5% match of \$7,458.56 from the commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Twidt. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the motion was approved.

Decision on Trempealeau County Hazard Mitigation Plan

Mr. Bingol reported that the contract to update the Trempealeau County Hazard Mitigation Plan is for an amount not to exceed \$59,024.40 with a 25% match of \$14,756.10 for commission hours and county personnel. He said that the goal is to complete the plan by next year. Commissioner Brandt made a motion to approve the contract between Trempealeau County and the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission to update Trempealeau County's Hazard Mitigation Plan not to exceed \$59,024.40 with a 25% match of \$14,756.10 from the commission and county personnel. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sorge. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the motion was approved.

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Decision on Pierce County Hazard Mitigation Plan Contract

Mr. Bingol reported that the contract to update the Pierce County Hazard Mitigation Plan is for an amount not to exceed \$59,997.90 with a 25% match of \$14,994.49 for commission hours and county personnel. He said that the goal is to complete the plan by next year. Commissioner Gulbranson made a motion to approve the contract between Pierce County and the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission to update Pierce County's Hazard Mitigation Plan not to exceed \$59,997.90 with a 25% match of \$14,994.49 from the commission and county personnel. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schlesselman. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the motion was approved.

Decision on Monroe County Hazard Mitigation Plan Contract

Mr. Bingol reported that the contract to update the Monroe County Hazard Mitigation Plan is for an amount not to exceed \$59,999.90 with a 25% match of \$14,999.98 for commission hours and county personnel. He said that the goal is to complete the plan by next year. Commissioner Schroeder made a motion to approve the contract between Monroe County and the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission to update Monroe County's Hazard Mitigation Plan not to exceed \$59,999.90 with a 25% match of \$14,999.98 from the commission and county personnel. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Strnad. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the motion was approved.

Update on Main Street Bounce Back Audit

Mr. Bingol reported that the Main Street Bounce Back Grant contract wasn't interpreted correctly by the former director. Mr. Bingol explained that the commission was the grant recipient and received the \$5.6 million dollars with \$20,000 for startup and administration and then there was an additional 2.5% of the total amount of the grant for the commission for the commission to use for grant administration. The contract stated that if all of the money was not used for administration it would need to be returned to WEDC. He said that we are working with the auditors and have determined that approximately \$31,000 was not spent on administration. He said that he has contacted WEDC leadership for clarification.

Update on BUILD Grant...Regional Freight Study

Mr. Harwood reported that the BUILD Grant Freight Study was completed and submitted to the WI DOT. He said that the plan included Tech Memo #1 and #2 drafted by the consultants and Tech Memo #3 drafted by the commission which addressed the issues from transit providers in the region including survey data and individual interviews. He said that the information will be valuable to the region since there is a transportation element in every comprehensive plan.

Update on County Broadband Committees

Mr. Bingol reported that Pierce, Pepin, Buffalo, and Trempealeau Counties are well versed in expanding broadband through their counties by working with local Internet Service Providers (ISP). He said that these counties have committees in place to be able to act on grants that are available and being able to provide high speed internet to rural counties can contribute to growth.

Update on RLFs

Mr. Bingol reported that the Business Capital Fund Annual Meeting will be taking place this week in Arcadia and the CMV Growth Development Fund Annual Meeting will be happening next week in Westby. The Vernon County Revolving Loan Fund that we are administering for the county has had two loans approved and one of the businesses is building in the Westby Industrial Park. He also reported that the CARES Act Revolving Loan Fund is now in the revolving phase and has collected enough funds to be able to make loans.

MRRPC Staffing Update

Mr. Bingol had the staff introduce themselves and tell a little about their backgrounds and projects that they are working on.

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

Commissioner Anderson asked about the Stewardship event being hosted in Crawford County. Mr. Bingol responded that the Stewardship Event was being held at the end of February 2024 and the commission staff will be one of the presenters and help to market the event. Commissioner Sorge raised concerns about the number of children living in poverty in our area school districts.

Director's Report

Mr. Bingol reported that he is in negotiations with the Family and Children's Center where we currently rent office space. He said that it was cost prohibitive to rent from another organization. He said that the Family and Children's Center is not charging triple net and would provide snow and garbage removal. The rent currently is \$8/sq ft and would increase to \$14/sq ft. The Family and Children's Center has not selected a contractor yet but the move in date would possibly be in the spring.

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He also reported that WHEDA has a new housing program with the requirement that communities need a current comprehensive plan or an updated housing section of their plan to be eligible for the program. The Jackson County Comprehensive Plan is going to their board for final approval and the Vernon County Economic Development Plan is in its final stages.

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
Mary Anne McMillan Urell	Buffalo County
John Schlesselman	Buffalo County
Gerald Krachey	Crawford County
Craig Anderson	Crawford County
Bruce Strnad	Crawford County
Ron Carney	Jackson County
Brad Chown	Jackson County
Tom Cooper	Jackson County
Vicki Burke	La Crosse County
Sharon Hampson	La Crosse County
James Kuhn	Monroe County
Cedric Schnitzler	Monroe County
Kim Seipel	Pepin County
Bill Schroeder	Pierce County
Neil Gulbranson	Pierce County
Richard Purdy	Pierce County
Phillip Borreson	Trempealeau County
George Brandt	Trempealeau County
Patrick Sorge	Trempealeau County
John Pedretti	Vernon County
Nancy Jaekel	Vernon County
Jon Bingol	MRRPC Staff
Sarah Ofte	MRRPC Staff
Ken Harwood	MRRPC Staff
Andrew Miller	MRRPC Staff
Abbey Nicewander	MRRPC Staff
Simon Fichter	MRRPC Staff
Dan Baumann	WI DNR
Francis Schelfhout	WI DOT
Erin Duffer	Transportation Planner - La Crosse County MPO
Bob Gollnik	Executive Director – La Crosse County MPO
Sam Bachmeier	La Crosse County Community Development Specialist
Roxie Anderson	Monroe County – Land Use Planner
Dave Carlson	Trempealeau County Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator
Lynette Gates	Jackson County – ADRC Director