



**MISSISSIPPI RIVER
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**
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*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, April 10, 2024

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: Francis Schelfhout, WI DOT, Bob Gollnik, La Crosse County MPO, Erin Duffer, La Crosse County MPO, Dave Carlson, Trempealeau County Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator, Mary Carney, Representing Representative Derrick Van Orden, and Brian Westrate, Representing Representative Derrick Van Orden. The attendance roster is attached.

Minutes of February 14, 2024, Bimonthly Meeting

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the February 14, 2024, bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the February 14, 2024, 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 February 1, 2024, the balance in all accounts was \$564,105.25 and the March 31, 2024, the ending balance in all accounts was \$546,848.30. She reported the beginning balance on February 1, 2024, in all Revolving Loan Fund accounts was \$1,149,156.67 and the ending balance in all accounts on March 31, 2024, was \$1,160,939.93. Commissioner Cooper 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, and the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved. Mr. Bingol commented that the CARES Act RLF had an error because the bank reported on the statements that they had been receiving payments from one of our businesses via ACH when the money had not been received and then reversed those payments. He said that we are working with the bank that holds the account.

Presentation on 2023 Audit by Mike Temp, CPA, Tostrud and Temp S.C.

Mike Temp of Tostrud and Temp S.C. said his firm prepared the 2023 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 2023 to 2022 which is a snapshot of the Commission's position on December 31, 2023. Mr. Temp then reviewed the 2023 Statement of Net Position, Statement of Activities, the 2023 Balance Sheet, and the Reconciliation for Governmental Funds. He also reviewed the balance sheets for the six different revolving loan funds. Mr. Temp then opened the floor for questions. Chairman Kuhn thanked Mike Temp for his work completing the commission audits through the years.

Decision to accept the 2023 MRRPC Audit

Chairman Kuhn asked if anyone had any questions regarding the audit. A motion was made by Commissioner Hampson to accept the MRRPC 2023 audit as presented and seconded by Commissioner Twidt. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments. Commissioner Burke asked how other agencies could view the audit. Mr. Bingol replied that the full audit is posted on the Federal Clearinghouse website, and anyone can view it there. The motion was unanimously approved.

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

Mr. Bingol directed the commissioners to the handout in the meeting packet. He reported that the increases in wages were to keep the commission competitive in the job market. A motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner Twidt to approve the presented Executive and Administration Committee's 2024 Staff Salary Structure of a \$10,000 a year increase for the Executive Director, a \$3,250 a year increase for the Senior Office Manager, and a \$3,000 a year increase for the Planner beginning July 1, 2024, and an increase of up to \$4,000 in yearly salary for newly hired planners and an increase of up to \$5,000 for newly hired Senior Planner after they complete their 6 month probation period. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or discussion. Commissioner Cooper asked how close the commission was to reaching the goal. Mr. Bingol responded that the Executive Director's at other regional planning commissions in the state are in the \$120,000 to \$130,000 range. Commission Kees Winkler asked if the salary for the previous Executive Director was less than the current Executive Director and if it is a 40-hour work week. Mr. Bingol responded that the salary is more than the previous Executive Director and that staff can work more than 40 hours per week as a salaried position, but the contracts are billed on 40 hours per week in order to keep the hourly rate consistent and are charged at 2080 hours a year per employee. Commissioner Schlesselman asked if the comparables are from other regional planning commissions or other municipalities such as the city level for example. Mr. Bingol responded that the comparisons were with similar organizations but also looking at what other municipalities have to offer and found that the bigger cities and the state pay more and, in some cases, offer a few more benefits. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any other questions or discussion and hearing none the motion was unanimously approved.

Decision on Executive and Administration Committee's recommendation on 2025 County Contributions.

Mr. Bingol directed the attendees to the handout in the meeting packets. He said that the county contributions are based on the real equalized property value with the chart showing the 2022 values and the 2023 values and the county contributions from 2024 and the proposed 2025 county contributions. He reported that the average increase in valuation from 2022 to 2023 was 13 percent with some counties having a 10 percent increase and some counties had an 18 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.

2025 COUNTY CONTRIBUTION AMOUNTS				
	2022 Real Property Equalized Value	2023 Real Property Equalized Value	2024 Contributions Rate of .0004447558%	2025 Contributions Rate of .00041807399% 6% increase from 2024
Buffalo	1,440,645,800	1,584,466,300	6,407	6,624
Crawford	1,528,211,600	1,775,388,700	6,797	7,422
Jackson	1,955,550,700	2,262,561,200	8,697	9,459
La Crosse	13,394,205,500	14,832,542,800	59,572	62,011
Monroe	4,338,305,700	4,835,449,700	19,295	20,216
Pepin	820,113,900	926,044,300	3,648	3,872
Pierce	4,714,968,300	5,556,275,700	20,970	23,229
Trempealeau	2,903,304,000	3,218,934,900	12,913	13,458
Vernon	2,708,454,300	3,127,550,700	12,046	13,075
Total	33,803,759,800	38,119,214,300	150,345	159,366

A motion was made by Commissioner Borreson and seconded by Commissioner Carney to approve the presented 6% increase for the 2025 county contributions totaling \$159,366. The motion carried unanimously.

Decision to hire Simon Fichter as Planner as recommended by the Executive and Administration Committee

Mr. Bingol reported that the planner position was posted after Andrew Miller left to take another position. He said that Simon Fichter had previously been an intern for the MRRPC. He brings GIS experience and has worked on a variety of plans and projects as an intern for the MRRPC. He has also worked for a summer at the Janesville MPO. A motion was made by Commissioner Twidt to hire Simon Fichter as a Planner as recommended by the Executive and Administration Committee and seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any questions or comments, hearing none the motion was unanimously approved.

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Decision on Resolution to adopt the Jackson County Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Bingol reported that Jackson County had approved their comprehensive plan at their board meeting via resolution on January 15, 2024. When it was sent to Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA), the DOA wanted it to be passed as an Ordinance. Mr. Bingol said to make sure that the plan is accepted by the state it would need to be approved by the regional planning commission as a resolution. Commissioner Borreson made a motion to approve the Resolution approving the Jackson County Comprehensive Plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Burke. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the motion was approved.

Decision on contract for the Town of Burns Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Bingol reported that he had been contacted by the Town of Burns to update the town's Comprehensive Plan. Commissioner Seipel made a motion to approve the contract between the Town of Burns and the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission to update the town's Comprehensive Plan for \$9,000. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Krachey. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the motion was approved.

Decision on contract for the City of Arcadia Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Bingol reported the City of Arcadia has approached the commission to update their comprehensive plan. Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve the contract between the City of Arcadia and the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission to update the city's comprehensive plan for \$16,000. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sorge. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the motion was approved.

Update on the Monroe County Economic Development Conference

Mr. Bingol reported that the Monroe County Economic Development Conference was the first one the county has hosted since 2018. There were 96 registrants. The UW- Extension provided assistance with room rent and food and provided speakers. The Executive Director of the Counties Association spoke as well as the head of the WEDC. Tourism was and its impact on the economy was also highlighted. He said it was a successful event.

Update on the BUILD Grant Freight Strategy

Mr. Bingol reported that after the Federal Highway Department reviewed the grant. There was a clause that if the grant was underspent the MRRPC would have to pay the \$5,500 match. He negotiated with them to amend the contract. He said that they amended the contract to use the remaining \$17,000 in the contract to purchase another year's subscription of Placer.ai which we use in comprehensive plans and have used in the Freight Study. This will enable the commission to pay only \$5,700 for a year of Placer.ai rather than the \$18,000.

Reports from Commissioners

Commissioner Schroeder reported about a project revitalizing a defunct train yard in Hagar City which will serve area farmers to help them ship grain and fertilizer.

Director's Report

Mr. Bingol reported that the application for the Rural Partners network for the eight-county region has been submitted. He said the grant was competitive but the partners at USDA said that. He said that the Thrive grant through Rural Prosperity is available and two of our counties applied, Vernon County for energy usage and Crawford County to improve the uptown area that was created after flooding.

New Business

Commissioner Sorge discussed a USDA presentation that he had attended regarding Climate Smart Commodities and the presenter as a possible guest speaker at a future commission meeting.

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
Bruce Strnad	Crawford County
Ron Carney	Jackson County
Tom Cooper	Jackson County
Brad Chown	Jackson County
Vicki Burke	La Crosse County
Sharon Hampson	La Crosse County
James Kuhn	Monroe County
Kim Seipel	Pepin County
Chris Kees Winkler	Pepin County
Neil Gulbranson	Pierce County
Richard Purdy	Pierce County
Bill Schroeder	Pierce County
Phillip Borreson	Trempealeau County
Patrick Sorge	Trempealeau County
John Pedretti	Vernon County
Jo Ann Nickelatti	Vernon County
Nancy Jaekel	Vernon County
Jon Bingol	MRRPC Staff
Sarah Ofte	MRRPC Staff
Ken Harwood	MRRPC Staff
Francis Schelfhout	WI DOT
Bob Gollnik	Executive Director - La Crosse County MPO
Erin Duffer	Transportation Planner - La Crosse County MPO
Mary Carney	Representing Representative Derrick Van Orden
Brian Westrate	Representing Representative Derrick Van Orden
Dave Carlson	Trempealeau County Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator