



**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, August 14, 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: Erin Duffer, La Crosse County MPO, Rebecca Giroux, WHEDA, Gregg Wavrunek, Representing Senator Tammy Baldwin, and Roxie Anderson, Monroe County Land Use Planner. The attendance roster is attached.

#### **Minutes of June 12, 2024, Bimonthly Meeting**

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the June 12, 2024, bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the June 12, 2024, 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 approved.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Secretary Burke reported that on June 1, 2024, the balance in all accounts was \$478,559.69 and the July 31, 2024, the ending balance in all accounts was \$467,763.99. She reported the beginning balance on June 1, 2024, in all Revolving Loan Fund accounts was \$1,166,112.04 and the ending balance in all accounts on July 31, 2024, was \$1,211,308.96. 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, and the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

#### **Presentation by Sarah Sippl, USDA Rural Partners Network**

Sarah Sippl, Community Liaison, USDA Rural Partners Network discussed the various programs and tools rural communities are able to access through USDA. She reported that USDA has community programs to help fund libraries, fire stations, and broadband and that there are both grant and loan programs for example grants for equipment and loans for construction. She gave some examples of projects in our region including the City of Osseo wastewater treatment plant, a meat processing plant in Pierce County and a fertilizer plant in Pepin County. She said that there are over 70 programs available at [rural.gov](http://rural.gov).

#### **Decision on contract for the Ho-Chunk Nation Comprehensive Plan**

Mr. Bingol reported that the Ho-Chunk Nation is moving forward with sending out an RFP for completion of a Comprehensive Plan for the nation. He said that the comprehensive plan would follow the state framework with the nine elements with possibly a tenth element to address any specific needs of the Nation. Mr. Bingol reached out to other regional planning commissions in the state who have completed plans for the Nations in their planning region and they have also used the nine elements for comprehensive planning. He reported that he submitted a proposal for \$37,500 to complete the plan and is looking for approval is the commission is selected to complete the plan. Commissioner Burke made a motion to approve the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission to enter a contract with the Ho Chunk Nation to complete a comprehensive plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carney. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments, and the motion was unanimously approved.

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### **Decision on contract for City of Osseo Housing Study**

Mr. Bingol said he had been in contact with the Mayor of Osseo and their Housing Task Force committee about conducting a housing study for them for \$5,000. He said that the community has interested developers but wanted to have a study to verify demand before they invest in the project. The study will incorporate county specific data, Realtor's Association data, tax data, and an inventory of their existing housing stock to assist with the housing needs in the area. Commissioner Burke made a motion to approve the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission entering a \$5,000 contract with the City of Osseo to conduct a housing study. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schnitzler. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments, and the motion was unanimously approved.

### **Decision on contract to assist the City of Arcadia with a CDBG Grant Administration**

Mr. Bingol reported that the City of Arcadia had received a CDBG Public Facility Grant to complete water and sewer street work. The project is set to begin next Spring. He reported that the city doesn't have staff to do all of the administration tasks for the grant. He said that there are funds budgeted for grant administration with a maximum dollar amount of \$35,000. A motion was made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Twidt to approve a contract between the City of Arcadia and the MRRPC to complete the administration of the CDBG Public Facility Grant. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Update of 8 County USDA RPN and RBDG**

Mr. Bingol reported that we are continuing to work with the Rural Partners network to complete the Outdoor Recreation Plan for the eight counties involved which will have a tourism emphasis to get visitors to see the region as a destination location for outdoor activities.

### **Update on HMPs---Ho Chunk Nation, Monroe, Pierce, Trempealeau, Crawford, and Vernon Counties**

Mr. Bingol reported that the HMPs are moving forward. He said that Pierce County is the furthest along in the process. He said that Mr. Zabrowski has been meeting with the committee in Pierce County and that the Emergency Management Department is also having a booth at the county fair where people can look through and comment on the draft plan. In Trempealeau County we are about 75 percent complete with the process and working to have surveys and risk assessments completed. Mr. Fichter is working on the Monroe County HMP and there are informational meetings planned in the county. He said that the Ho Chunk Nation HMP is also well on its way. He said that the final steps for all HMPs is to then have them approved by the county by resolution and then approved by each municipality in the county. He said that each municipality needs to approve the resolution in order to be included by FEMA when a disaster occurs.

### **Update on Transportation Activities**

Mr. Bingol reported that the first round of funding for the Agricultural Roads Program has been completed and 8 projects out of the 37 projects awarded were in our region. He said that there will be a second round of funding. He reported that Mr. Harwood has been working with the La Crosse MPO to work with existing groups to promote the ports. Mr. Gollnik from the La Crosse MPO and Mr. Harwood will be presenting in Madison about the Northern Grain Belt Ports.

### **Reports from Commissioners**

Commissioners discussed the pros and cons of TID districts to create workforce and senior housing without losing the tax base in their municipalities.

### **Director's Report**

Mr. Bingol reported on projects he's been involved in around the region. He said that open house input sessions are going on around Vernon County at different times of day to promote the comprehensive plan. Gays Mills is getting ready to submit their application for the Thrive Community grant. The City of Hillsboro is also a pilot community for the program, Rural Entrepreneurial Ventures (REV), to help entrepreneurs in the rural areas.

### **New Business**

Mr. Bingol introduced the new commissioner from La Crosse County, Leonardo Silva.

**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.

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Vicki Burke,  
Secretary/ Treasurer

\_\_\_\_\_  
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
Gerald Krachey	Crawford County
Craig Anderson	Crawford County
Bruce Strnad	Crawford County
Ron Carney	Jackson County
Tom Cooper	Jackson County
Vicki Burke	La Crosse County
Leonardo Silva	La Crosse County
James Kuhn	Monroe County
Cedric Schnitzler	Monroe County
Kim Seipel	Pepin County
John Andrews	Pepin County
Neil Gulbranson	Pierce County
Richard Purdy	Pierce County
Bill Schroeder	Pierce County
Jo Ann Nickelatti	Vernon County
Nancy Jaekel	Vernon County
Jon Bingol	MRRPC Staff
Sarah Ofte	MRRPC Staff
Ken Harwood	MRRPC Staff
Roxie Anderson	Monroe County Land Use Planner
Mark Tallman	WEDC
Sam Bachmeier	La Crosse County – Community Development Specialist
Dave Carlson	Trempealeau County – Economic Development & Tourism Director
Joe Folsom	Pierce County Economic Development Corporation – Executive Director
Sarah Sippl	USDA Rural Development