



**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, October 9, 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: John Fick, UW-Platteville, EDA University Center, Dennis Treu, Monroe County, Roxie Anderson, Monroe County Land Use Planner, Francis Schelfhout, WisDOT, Sam Bachmeier, La Crosse County Community Development Specialist, Dave Carlson, Trempealeau County Economic Development and Tourism Director, Gregg Wavrunek, Representing Senator Tammy Baldwin, Lucita Zoya, UW-La Crosse Student, Luci Ramacher, UW-La Crosse Student, and Rebecca Glewen. The attendance roster is attached.

#### **Minutes of August 14, 2024, Bimonthly Meeting**

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the August 14, 2024, bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the August 14, 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 August 1, 2024, the balance in all accounts was \$467,763.99 and the September 30, 2024, the ending balance in all accounts was \$419,841.71. She reported the beginning balance on August 1, 2024, in all Revolving Loan Fund accounts was \$1,211,308.96 and the ending balance in all accounts on September 30, 2024, was \$1,253,237.84. Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brandt. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments, and the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

#### **Presentation by John Fick, UW-Platteville – EDA University Center**

John Fick, University Center Coordinator at UW-Platteville gave an overview of the public and private partnerships through the University Center that allow UW-Platteville's students enrolled in the Mechanical and Industrial Engineering programs to work with area companies and gain experience solving real world problems of area businesses.

#### **Decision on Resolution regarding the WI DOT 2025 Work Program**

Mr. Harwood reported that the Rural Transportation Program requires a Work Program document every year with six different elements where the transportation planner allocates his time. He said that the work program has been submitted to WisDOT and been approved and now needs approval by resolution through the commission to finalize the plan. Commissioner Schnitzler made a motion to approve Resolution 202410 to adopt the 2025 Transportation Work Program and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Strnad. The motion was unanimously approved

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***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 Applying for WEDC SBDG \$250,000 grant as lead for the Region**

Mr. Bingol reported that the WEDC has created a \$2 million grant program with a maximum grant award amount of \$250,000. It is an expansion of the Main Street Bounce Back Grant program with the purpose of helping small businesses which are defined as having less than 25 employees. He said that it is a competitive grant and the WEDC is looking for creativity and innovation in the grant application. He said that there was a meeting with the region's economic development partners and the focus was on assisting entrepreneurs and business startups. Mr. Bingol said that there were no dollars set aside for administration so our time to assist with the application would be the contribution. A motion was made by Commissioner Schlesselman and seconded by Commissioner Twidt to approve the MRRPC applying for a \$250,000 WEDC SBDG Grant for the region. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Decision on contract for La Crosse County Outdoor Recreation Plan**

Mr. Bingol said he had been in contact with La Crosse County to update their Outdoor Recreation Plan. Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission entering a \$4,000 contract with La Crosse County to revise their Outdoor Recreation Plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Silva. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments, and the motion was unanimously approved.

### **Decision on contract for Town of Scott Comprehensive Plan**

Mr. Bingol reported that the Town of Scott in Crawford County had been in contact with him to update their Comprehensive Plan. A motion was made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Twidt to approve a contract between the Town of Scott in Crawford County and the MRRPC to revise their Comprehensive Plan. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Decision on contract for Crawford County Land and Water Resource Management Plan**

Mr. Bingol reported that he was contacted by Crawford County to update their Land and Water Resource Management Plan. He said that the commission had assisted Crawford County with the plan in the past. A motion was made by Commissioner Krachey and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the MRRPC entering into a contract with Crawford County to revise their Land and Water Resource Management Plan. The motion was carried unanimously.

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

Mr. Bingol reported that this grant was a grant where the commission partnered with the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. He said that currently we are working on creating a survey to send out to the eight counties involved in the grant. He said that the only areas not included are the metro areas around the Cities of Eau Claire, Altoona, and Chippewa Falls with populations above 10,000 people. He reported that UW-River Falls was initially going to help with the survey but having UW River Falls do the survey will be cost prohibitive and instead we will be doing the survey with our resources. He said that one of the current interns, Courtney, has been compiling data from our previous outdoor recreation plans in the region and planning the public engagement piece will be next.

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

Mr. Fichter reported that Hazard Mitigation plans submitted to FEMA help communities mitigate natural and man-made disasters. Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) assists with the planning process. He said the plans identify risks from natural and man-made hazards, vulnerabilities, and cost-effective projects that can reduce those risks to life and property and assess what has been done in the past. He said that for counties and communities to be eligible for FEMA funding they need to have an approved Hazard Mitigation Plan. Hazard Mitigation plans are on a five-year update cycle and currently the commission is working on the Pierce, Monroe, and Trempealeau County Hazard Mitigation Plans and also the Ho Chunk Nation's plan. The Ho Chunk Nation plan has been submitted to Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) for review. The other plans are about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way to completion. He said that public engagement meetings are being scheduled for the plans. Vernon and Crawford Counties have completed plans and now the commission is helping them gather their approved resolutions from the municipalities.

### **Update on Transportation Activities**

Mr. Bingol reported that the commission has been working on a Feasibility Study for a Shared Ride Taxi service in the City of Black River Falls. He also reported that Black River Falls is also working to connect all the trails within the city. He said that this will require a bridge being built over the Black River and another WisDOT grant is being used for that project. Mr. Fichter reported that HMPs now have a new requirement of including bridge conditions in the plan.

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### Update on “the office move”

Mr. Bingol reported that the office has moved to the new address of 811 Monitor Street, Suite 201 La Crosse, WI 54603. The move happened after the Family and Children’s Center (FCC) staff moved. Due to the Family and Children’s Center being under HIPPA law the commission needed to have a separate internet connection and the commission’s portion of the building was all rewired. The cost of the move was approximately \$11,000 with \$8,800 the cost of the wiring and networking. The phone system was also upgraded and EO Johnson moved the copy machine to the new office location.

### Reports from Commissioners

- Commissioner Cooper reported that Jackson County had an Economic Development Meeting with their committee.
- Commissioner Schlesselman reported that Buffalo County received 2 grants, \$4 million for library in Alma and Fountain City received a grant for \$1.7 million for updates to their community building.
- Commissioner Kuhn asked about the status of the SMRT Bus. Mr. Bingol and Mr. Harwood responded that the SMRT Bus is currently running at a deficit with La Crosse County willing to take on the deficit this year, but public/private partnerships are being pursued to keep the program running in future budgets.

### Director’s Report

Mr. Bingol reported on projects he’s been involved in around the region. He said that the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) meeting was held in September at the La Crosse Center. The Association of Regional Planning Commissions (AWRPC) had a booth there and 4 of the states’ Regional Planning Commission (RPCs) manned the booth. He said that he is hoping to do more partnering with the League of Municipalities and the Township Association in the future.

He reported that an update for the regional comprehensive plan is in progress. He said that Chase, one of the interns, has been working on updating the data tables in the plan. He said that the next steps will include organizing stakeholder meetings in the nine counties and creating a survey to be administered in all nine counties.

He said that he is also submitting an RFP for the City of Viroqua to complete a comprehensive plan revision, outdoor recreation plan, and a historic preservation plan.

He said that he attended the WEDA conference in Eau Claire and gained some valuable information.

He reported that La Crosse County was sending out their Tri State Workforce Survey and they are hoping for a better response rate this year.

The next Monroe County Economic Development Conference will be April 10-11, 2025, at the Three Bears Lodge in Warrens, WI. Last year there were 100 participants and next year they are hoping to build off that and have more attendees in the bigger space. Crawford County is working on a housing study with Prosperity Southwest and the SWWRPC and forming a housing task force.

### 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

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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
Brad Chown	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
George Brandt	Trempealeau County
Phillip Borreson	Trempealeau County
Nancy Jaekel	Vernon County
Jon Bingol	MRRPC Staff
Sarah Ofte	MRRPC Staff
Ken Harwood	MRRPC Staff
John Fick	UW-Platteville – EDA University Center
Dennis Treu	Monroe County
Roxie Anderson	Monroe County Land Use Planner
Francis Schelfhout	WI DOT
Sam Bachmeier	La Crosse County – Community Development Specialist
Dave Carlson	Trempealeau County – Economic Development & Tourism Director
Gregg Wavrunek	Representing Senator Tammy Baldwin
Lucita Zoya	UW-La Crosse Student
Luci Ramacher	UW-La Crosse Student
Rebecca Glewen	UW-La Crosse Student