



**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, December 11, 2024

Altra Federal Credit Union Operations Building, 1700 Oak Forest Drive, Onalaska, WI 54650

**Welcome: Steve Koenen – President and CEO of Altra Federal Credit Union**

#### **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: Karla Sparks, Army Corps of Engineers, Rebecca Giroux, WHEDA, Roxie Anderson, Monroe County Land Use Planner, Sam Bachmeier, La Crosse County Community Development Specialist, Erin Duffer, La Crosse County MPO, Bob Gollnik, La Crosse County MPO, Larkin Breckel, Vernon County Economic Development and Tourism, Lauren Highfill, Pierce County Economic Development Corporation, and Dave Carlson, Trempealeau County Economic Development and Tourism Director. The attendance roster is attached.

#### **Minutes of October 9, 2024, Bimonthly Meeting**

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the October 9, 2024, bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the October 9, 2024, bimonthly meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brandt. 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, 2024, the balance in all accounts was \$467,763.99 and on November 30, 2024, the ending balance in all accounts was \$378,478.01. She reported the beginning balance on October 1, 2024, in all Revolving Loan Fund accounts was \$1,253,237.84 and the ending balance in all accounts on November 30, 2024, was \$1,356,043.83. Commissioner Schlesselman made a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Anderson. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments, and the Treasurer's Report was unanimously approved.

#### **Presentation by Karla Sparks, PMP Project Manager – St. Paul District Army Corps of Engineers**

Karla Sparks, PMP Project Manager – St. Paul District Army Corps of Engineers gave an overview of the various programs of the Army Corps of Engineers. She highlighted the Silver Jackets Program which works to reduce flood risk at the state level.

#### **Presentation by Rebecca Giroux, Community & Economic Development Officer, WHEDA**

Rebecca Giroux, Community & Economic Development Officer, WHEDA gave a presentation about the various new and ongoing housing programs that are available to assist with housing shortages in communities.

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

Mr. Bingol reported that the 8 County Regional Outdoor Recreation Plan is progressing. He said that it is a USDA Rural Business Development Grant. He said that the information from outdoor recreation plans that we have completed is being combined for the counties. He said that the next step is to create the survey, and the work group has been editing it, and it will go live this week. He said that it is being sent out electronically and using the snowball effect by asking those who receive the survey to pass it on to others that they know in order to get more responses. Once the survey data has been collected and reviewed, outreach meetings will be scheduled to gain more input.

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

Mr. Fichter reported that FEMA and WEM have experienced some delays due to the natural disasters occurring in the Southeastern portion of the United States. He said that the Monroe County HMP Plan is 80 to 90 percent completed. The Vernon County HMP Plan has been completed and adopted. The Crawford County HMP has been adopted. He said that the Jackson County HMP and the La Crosse County HMP will be beginning soon, and we are waiting for the award letters to be issued. Mr. Zabrowski reported that Pierce County HMP and the Trempealeau HMP have been submitted to WEM and FEMA following WEM's approval and now we are waiting for their feedback. The Buffalo County application process has also begun for the next grant cycle.

### **Update on Transportation Activities**

Mr. Bingol reported that work on the Transportation Work Plan is continuing and there are a few specific projects that he has been working on. He reported that the Black River Falls Transit Feasibility Study has just been completed, and he is also working on a TAP Grant to connect trails in the Black River Falls area. Mr. Harwood reported that he is working with the MPO regarding freight movement on the river in the region and created a newsletter for the Mississippi River Parkway Commission to highlight the Great River Road. The Mississippi River Parkway Commission is also pursuing a grant for a visitor center.

### **Update on MRRPC Comprehensive Plan**

Mr. Bingol reported that the MRRPC Region Comprehensive Plan is due for an update. He said that an intern has been working on updating the tables and that he would like to get representation from across the region to work on the update to provide feedback. He said more information will be coming at the beginning of next year. A survey will be created and sent out next year along with scheduled public engagement hearings in the region.

### **Update on Auditor Search**

Mr. Bingol reported that our previous accounting firm that completed our audits has decided to retire from doing government audits. He said that he had been talking with other accounting firms and the one who responded was CliftonLarsonAllen who also completes audits for five of the nine regional planning commissions in the state. Their cost is \$21,000. A motion was made by Commissioner Cooper to approve the accounting firm, CliftonLarsonAllen to complete the commission's 2024 audit for \$21,000, seconded by Commissioner Strnad and the motion was unanimously approved.

### **Update on Revolving Loan Fund Annual Meetings**

Mr. Bingol reported that the Annual Meetings were held for the Business Capital Fund and the CMV Growth Development Fund this week. He said that at the meetings the bylaws were reviewed and updates to the loan manual and loan application were discussed using the model of the Vernon County Revolving Loan Fund Manual.

### **Director's Report**

Mr. Bingol reported on projects he's been involved in around the region. He said that he is exploring administering Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and has completed the training. The WEDC Small Business Development Grant that was applied for is being considered by WEDC. He said that the partners for the grant included the SBDC, WWBIC, and La Crosse County Economic Development. A region wide business plan competition is being planned as part of the project. He also reported that he will be having shoulder surgery sometime in January.

### **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   |
| Sharon Hampson                           | La Crosse County   |
| Leonardo Silva                           | La Crosse County   |
| James Kuhn                               | Monroe County  |
| Cedric Schnitzler                        | Monroe County  |
| Dennis Treu                              | Monroe County  |
| Kim Seipel                               | Pepin County   |
| Neil Gulbranson                          | Pierce County  |
| Bill Schroeder                           | Pierce County  |
| Patrick Sorge                            | Trempealeau County   |
| George Brandt                            | Trempealeau County   |
| Charles Jacobson                         | Vernon County  |
| JoAnn Nickelatti                         | Vernon County  |
| Jon Bingol                               | MRRPC Staff  |
| Sarah Ofte                               | MRRPC Staff  |
| Ken Harwood                              | MRRPC Staff  |
| Jack Zabrowski                           | MRRPC Staff  |
| Karla Sparks                             | Army Corps of Engineers                                      |
| Rebecca Giroux                           | WHEDA  |
| Roxie Anderson                           | Monroe County Land Use Planner                               |
| Bob Gollnik                              | La Crosse County MPO   |
| Erin Duffer                              | La Crosse County MPO   |
| Sam Bachmeier                            | La Crosse County – Community Development Specialist          |
| Dave Carlson                             | Trempealeau County – Economic Development & Tourism Director |
| Larkin Breckel                           | Vernon County Economic Development Coordinator               |
| Lauren Highfill                          | Pierce County Economic Development Corporation               |