



**MISSISSIPPI RIVER
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**
811 Monitor Street, Suite 201
La Crosse, WI 54603
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, February 12, 2025

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: Allison Madison, Salt Wise Wisconsin, CARPC, Rebecca Giroux, WHEDA, Roxie Anderson, Monroe County Land Use Planner, Travis Key, La Crosse County MPO, Bob Gollnik, La Crosse County MPO, Mark Tallman, WEDC, Francis Schelfhout, WIDOT, Christian Ullsvik, Representing State Senator Brad Pfaff, Kyle Martz, and Dave Carlson, Trempealeau County Economic Development and Tourism Director. The attendance roster is attached.

Minutes of December 11, 2024, Bimonthly Meeting

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the December 11, 2024, bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the December 11, 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 December 1, 2024, the balance in all accounts was \$378,478.01 and on January 31, 2025, the ending balance in all accounts was \$517,740.08. She reported the beginning balance on December 1, 2024, in all Revolving Loan Fund accounts was \$1,356,043.83 and the ending balance in all accounts on January 31, 2025, was \$1,380,090.18. 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 Ken Harwood and Sarah Ofte, MRRPC Staff – MRRPC News and Great River Road Notes & MRPC Partnership

Mr. Harwood and Ms. Ofte presented the MRRPC biweekly online newsletter. Their presentation included information about where they aggregate and choose articles and the regional topics highlighting workforce development, housing, environmental, and businesses in the region. They said that it is also a way to highlight events in the region for example the Monroe County Economic Development Conference and other programs from economic development partners and grants that become available from various state agencies.

Presentation by Allison Madison – Salt Wise Wisconsin, CARPC

Allison Madison from Salt Wise Wisconsin gave a presentation about the history and consequences of using salt on our roads during the winter and best practices to reduce salt use in the future.

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

Decision on 2025 Budget

Mr. Bingol presented the 2025 Budget outlining the revenues and expenses. After discussion a motion was made by Commissioner Twidt and seconded by Commissioner Schnitzler to approve the 2025 MRRPC Budget and the motion was unanimously approved.

Support to submit proposal for City of Arcadia Comp Plan

Mr. Bingol reported that the City of Arcadia has hired a new planner for the city, and they have sent out a request for proposals for creating a comprehensive plan, historical preservation plan, and outdoor recreation plan. He said that it is similar to the City of Viroqua's request. He said that the deadline is at the end of the month and that he would be submitting a proposal.

Update of 8 County USDA RPN and RBDG

Mr. Bingol gave an update about the 8 County USDA RPN and RBDG. The counties involved from our region include Buffalo, Pepin, Trempealeau, and Jackson Counties. He said that the West Central Regional Planning Commission used ESRI's ArcGIS software to create a survey which was made available to residents in the eight counties and the MRRPC used Qualtrics software to create a survey to go out to businesses in the 8 County region. There were 1750 results for the residential survey and 80 responses from the business survey which has only been live for a week. He said that public engagement will be critical to the development of the plan. He reported that the Wisconsin Department of Tourism has also helped to promote the survey by forwarding it to outdoor recreational businesses. He said that the group is in the process of planning public engagement meetings in the region.

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

Mr. Bingol reported that the Ho Chunk Nation HMP is in the final stage of adoption. Monroe, Pierce, and Trempealeau County HMPs are being reviewed by WEM and La Crosse and Jackson County HMPs are slated to begin this year. The preapplication for the Buffalo County HMP has been submitted for the plan revision to begin in 2026.

Update on Transportation Activities

Mr. Bingol reported that work on the Transportation Work Plan is continuing. He reported that the SMRT Bus is operating in a \$70,000 deficit this year which La Crosse County has been able to assist but other forms of revenue are being pursued. For those who use it, it has been a great resource for the region. Francis Schelfhout reported that he is working with the Mississippi River Trail (MRT), and more information will be presented at the next bimonthly meeting.

Update on MRRPC Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Bingol reported that work on the MRRPC Region Comprehensive Plan is progressing. He said the existing conditions will be completed soon and then a committee will be formed to review the material and create a survey. He thanked Commissioner Jacobson from Vernon County and Commissioner Sorge from Trempealeau County for volunteering to serve on the committee. He encouraged other commissioners to volunteer and was hoping to have one commissioner from each county to serve on the committee. A survey will be created and sent out and public engagement scheduled public engagement hearings in the region once the existing conditions are completed and reviewed.

Reports from Commissioners

Commissioner Schroeder reported that the grain terminal in Hager City is moving forward with an open house on March 12 at the facility.

Chairman Kuhn reported that the Monroe County Economic and Tourism Conference will be at the Three Bears Lodge in Warrens, WI on April 11-12.

Director's Report

Mr. Bingol reported on projects he's been involved in around the region. He said that he has been working with the Executive Director of the Pierce County Economic Development Corporation, Lauren Highfill, who is organizing a community event, and he has been asked to be a speaker. He said that he has been selected as the president of the Coulee Region Business Center (CRBC) and the committee is working on making the CRBC a regional incubator and a resource center was created in the CRBC to assist small businesses. He said that he is looking at summer interns and working with the Geography Department at UW-L to recruit possible interns and for staff development in GIS skills. He also said that he is on the Work Force Development Board (WBD) and is the treasurer. He said the WBD is developing a strategic plan to connect employers with potential employees. He said that the commission has been awarded a WEDC Small Business Development Grant and is going through the underwriting process with WEDC. Our proposal is one of nineteen possible projects that have made it through the award process. More information will be shared at the next 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
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
Vicki Burke	La Crosse County
Sharon Hampson	La Crosse County
Leonardo Silva	La Crosse County
James Kuhn	Monroe County
Cedric Schnitzler	Monroe County
Kim Seipel	Pepin County
Richard Purdy	Pierce County
Neil Gulbranson	Pierce County
Bill Schroeder	Pierce County
Patrick Sorge	Trempealeau County
George Brandt	Trempealeau County
Phil Borreson	Trempealeau County
Charles Jacobson	Vernon County
JoAnn Nickelatti	Vernon County
Nancy Jaekel	Vernon County
Jon Bingol	MRRPC Staff
Sarah Ofte	MRRPC Staff
Ken Harwood	MRRPC Staff
Jack Zabrowski	MRRPC Staff
Jordan Carvenough	MRRPC Staff
Allison Madison	Saltwise WI - CARPC
Rebecca Giroux	WHEDA
Roxie Anderson	Monroe County Land Use Planner
Bob Gollnik	La Crosse County MPO
Travis Key	La Crosse County MPO
Francis Schelfhout	WI DOT
Dave Carlson	Trempealeau County – Economic Development & Tourism Director
Christian Ullsvik	Representing Senator Brad Pfaff
Mark Tallman	WEDC