



**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 9, 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: Brock Geyen CPA CLA, Roxie Anderson, Monroe County Land Use Planner, Mark Tallman, WEDC, Francis Schelfhout, WIDOT, Gregg Wavrunek, Representing Senator Tammy Baldwin, Alora Fitzgerald, Sherry Quamme, Mississippi River Parkway Commission. The attendance roster is attached.

Minutes of February 12, 2025, Bimonthly Meeting

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the February 12, 2025, bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Gulbranson made a motion to approve the February 12, 2025, bimonthly meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. 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, 2025, the balance in all accounts was \$517,740.08 and on March 31, 2025, the ending balance in all accounts was \$486,013.10. She reported the beginning balance on February 1, 2025, in all Revolving Loan Fund accounts was \$1,380,090.18 and the ending balance in all accounts on March 31, 2025, was \$1,406,469.87. 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 of 2024 Audit – Brock Geyen, CPA, Clifton Larson Allen

Mr. Geyen presented the audit to the commission. He reviewed the General Fund Balance with trends from 2021 to 2024, the revolving loan funds, the MRRPC administers and the long-term liabilities. After the presentation, Mr. Geyen responded to questions from the commission.

Decision on 2024 Audit

Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any other questions for Mr. Geyen and hearing none, a motion was made by Commissioner Jacobson and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the MRRPC 2024 Audit as presented, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Presentation by Francis Schelfhout, WI DOT – Mississippi River Trail (MRT)

Francis Schelfhout, WI DOT presented about the Mississippi River Trail (MRT). He said the goal for the MRT is to be made a formal designation through the 8 Wisconsin Great River Road Counties with signage along the route. He said that identifying and confirming the route through your municipality is the first step and then passing a formal resolution to support your local route and Statewide effort and then sign and designate the MRT. Sherry Quamme from the Mississippi River Parkway Commission also shared a few words about the impact this designation would have on the Great River Road and presented the 2025 Travel Guide for the Great River Road.

Decision on 2026 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 2023 values and the 2024 values and the county contributions from 2025 and the proposed 2026 county contributions. He reported that the average increase in valuation from 2023 to 2024 was 10 percent. The recommendation of the Executive and Administration Committee was to increase the total county contribution amount by 8 percent. He said that the uncertainty at the federal level led to the increase of funding in order to be proactive.

2026 COUNTY CONTRIBUTION AMOUNTS				
	2023 Real Property Equalized Value	2024 Real Property Equalized Value	2025 Contributions Rate of .0004447558%	2026 Contributions Rate of .00041611001% 8% increase from 2025
Buffalo	1,584,466,300	1,764,811,100	6,624	7,344
Crawford	1,775,388,700	1,965,030,500	7,422	8,177
Jackson	2,262,561,200	2,412,168,400	9,459	10,037
La Crosse	14,832,542,800	15,912,207,700	62,011	66,212
Monroe	4,835,449,700	5,315,812,600	20,216	22,120
Pepin	926,044,300	1,067,565,900	3,872	4,442
Pierce	5,556,275,700	5,842,521,900	23,229	24,311
Trempealeau	3,218,934,900	3,526,476,900	13,458	14,674
Vernon	3,127,550,700	3,557,936,300	13,075	14,805
Total	38,119,214,300	41,364,531,300	159,366	172,122

A motion was made by Commissioner Borreson and seconded by Commissioner Cooper to approve the presented 8% increase for the 2026 county contributions totaling \$172,122. The motion carried unanimously.

Decision on 2025 Staff Salaries

Mr. Bingol directed the commissioners to the handout in the meeting packet. He reported that the increases in wages were recommended by the Executive and Administration Committee. A motion was made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Burke to approve the presented Executive and Administration Committee's 2025 Staff Salary Structure of a \$10,000 a year increase for the Executive Director, a \$1,973 a year increase for the Senior Office Manager, a \$2,200 a year increase for the Planner, and \$1,400 increase for the Senior Planner beginning July 1, 2025. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or discussion. Commissioner Cooper made an amendment to the motion to increase the annual salary of the Senior Office Manager's by \$2,100. Commissioner Strnad seconded the amended motion to approve increasing the Executive Director's salary by \$10,000 a year, the Senior Office Manager's salary by \$2,100 a year, the Planner's salary by \$2,200, and the Senior Planner's salary by \$1,400 beginning July 1, 2025. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any other questions or discussion and hearing none the motion was unanimously approved.

Decision on Hiring Kia Kling

Mr. Bingol reported that the Executive and Administration Committee interviewed two candidates to replace Simon Fichter who took a position in Texas, and Kia Kling was selected as the replacement. Mr. Bingol said that she has had experience working with another regional planning commission in the state. A motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner Schroeder to approve the hiring of Kia Kling as a Planner. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any other questions or discussion and hearing none the motion was unanimously approved. Mr. Bingol said that she will begin on April 28th in her new position.

Discussion on MRRPC Bylaws for Update Consideration in June

Mr. Bingol reported that June is the annual meeting of the commission and an opportunity to update the Commission's Bylaws. He said that due to the 10 days advance notice needed to review the Bylaws the commission asked the Executive and Administration Committee to review the Bylaws and send the updated document to the commissioners prior to the June commission meeting. It will be sent to commission members 10 days prior to the June Bimonthly Meeting for review and then acted on at the June meeting.

Decision on MRRPC Personnel Manual Updates

Mr. Bingol reported that the Executive and Administration Committee reviewed the Personnel Manual to update the mileage paid at the IRS rate, including days off for a death in the family as separate from annual and sick leave days and an increase of vacation days for years worked. After discussion a motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner

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Schlesselman to update the MRRPC Personnel Manual with presented changes including travel reimbursement at the IRS mileage rate, bereavement leave of 1 to 5 days as needed for immediate family members as listed in the personnel manual, an additional 3 days of vacation added to vacation leave granted at each tier of fulltime years worked for the commission. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any other questions or discussion and hearing none the motion was unanimously approved.

Decision on \$16,000 Contract for Town of Arcadia Garbage Plan

Mr. Bingol reported that the Town of Arcadia applied and was awarded a grant to conduct a Garbage Feasibility Study to economize their garbage disposal and asked the MRRPC to create the plan for \$16,000. A motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve a \$16,000 contract between the MRRPC and the Town of Arcadia to create a Garbage Feasibility Plan. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or discussion and hearing none the motion was unanimously approved.

Decision on Contract for WEDC SBDG Grant - \$250,000

Mr. Bingol reported that the MRRPC was awarded a \$250,000 grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to assist in economic development in the region. He said that the WEDC Grant will work in conjunction with our existing revolving loan funds and financial institutions, and provide cash prizes for a regional business plan contest and pitch event to help businesses grow. After discussion a motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner Strnad to approve the MRRPC to enter into a contract with WEDC to administer a \$250,000 economic development grant in the MRRPC regional. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any other questions or discussion and hearing none the motion was unanimously approved.

Update of 8 County USDA RPN and RBDG

Mr. Bingol gave an update of the 8 County USDA RPN and RBDG. The counties included from our region include Buffalo, Pepin, Trempealeau, and Jackson Counties. He said that work on the plan is continuing and now the focus is on branding the area to assist with marketing the available outdoor recreational opportunities. He said that the plan should be completed by August.

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

Mr. Bingol reported that the Ho Chunk Nation HMP is awaiting the final step in adopting the plan by approving an ordinance. Monroe, Pierce, and Trempealeau County HMPs are in their final stages of adoption. He said that FEMA has ended its BRIC Program which funds Hazard Mitigation Plan updates. He said that La Crosse County has decided to fund their Hazard Mitigation Plan update without the BRIC funds, and he is working with La Crosse County to create a contract to update the plan.

Update on Transportation Activities

Mr. Bingol reported that work on the Transportation Work Plan is continuing, and he and Mr. Harwood just attended the WI DOT quarterly meeting. He said that there were some funding questions about the Infrastructure Bill funds. Mr. Harwood added that he serves in an advisory position on the La Crosse MPO board and on two of the technical committees. He said that the La Crosse MPO is exploring forming a transit authority and an RFP is being sent out to conduct a feasibility study.

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. He said that 6 commissioners have volunteered to serve on the committee and welcomed any others who would like to be involved in the process. 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 Anderson reported that there are certain grants that are having their funds clawed back to Madison. Commissioner Chown commented that there will be a webinar on this CDBG RLF topic soon from the state.

Commissioner Schroeder reported that the grain terminal in Hager City is open and transporting 500,000 bushels of corn.

Commissioner Cooper reported that Jackson County is working to hire an Economic Development Director for the county.

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 Schroeder and seconded by Commissioner Anderson. The motion was unanimously approved.

MRRPC Bimonthly Meeting Attendees	
Name	Representing
John Schlesselman	Buffalo County
Mary Anne McMillan Urell	Buffalo 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
Neil Gulbranson	Pierce County
Bill Schroeder	Pierce County
Patrick Sorge	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
Zephrey London	Grant Writer
Brock Geyen	CLA CPA
Roxie Anderson	Monroe County Land Use Planner
Francis Schelfhout	WI DOT
Sherry Quamme	Mississippi River Parkway Commission
Sam Bachmeier	Community Development Planner – La Crosse County
Gregg Wavrunek	Representing Senator Tammy Baldwin
Mark Tallman	WEDC
Alora Fitzgerald	La Crosse Area Development Corporation (LADCO)
Harish Patel	?