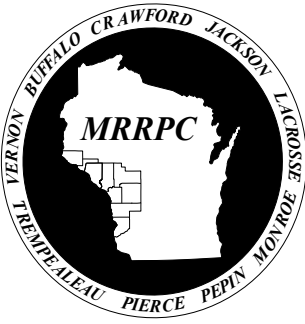




**MISSISSIPPI RIVER
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**
811 Monitor Street, Suite 201
La Crosse, WI 54603
Phone: (608) 785-9396
Email: plan@mrrpc.com
Website: mrrpc.com

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, June 10, 2026

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 guests in attendance: Ken Pearson, Economic Development and Tourism Director - Jackson County, Roxie Anderson, Monroe County Land Conservation Department, Rebecca Giroux, WHEDA, Jason Leis, Executive Director – Kickapoo Valley Reserve, and Kathryn Schmeling – Viaro Health. The attendance roster is attached.

Minutes of April 8, 2026, Bimonthly Meeting

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the April 8, 2026, bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the April 8, 2026, bimonthly meeting minutes and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Sorge. 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 April 1, 2026, the balance in all accounts was \$702,024.74 and on May 31, 2026, the ending balance in all accounts was \$622,736.97. She reported the beginning balance on April 1, 2026, in all Revolving Loan Fund accounts was \$1,115,703.71 and the ending balance in all accounts on May 31, 2026, was \$1,160,633.42. Commissioner Cooper 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 Kathryn Schmeling, Viaro Health

Kathryn Schmeling, Viaro Health, presented information about Viaro Health and the health care model of a direct primary care clinic. She reported that this primary care model is a membership-based healthcare model where patients pay a flat monthly or annual fee for a wide range of primary care services, bypassing traditional insurance billing. She said that the focus of the program was on prevention which makes employees or families healthier and provides better long-term cost control. This model is also available to employers to complement high-deductible insurance plans.

Decision on Election of Officers

Commissioner Twidt as part of the nominating committee reported that every two years elections are held for the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer of the commission. He presented a slate of candidates, James Kuhn, Chair, Bill Schroeder, Vice-Chair, and Vicki Burke, Secretary/Treasurer, who are all willing to serve for an additional two-year term. There were no nominations from the floor and Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve the slate of officers as presented with James Kuhn, Chair, Bill Schroeder, Vice Chair, and Vicki Burke, Secretary/Treasurer and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Schlesselman and the motion was unanimously approved.

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

MRRPC Bimonthly Meeting Minutes – June 10, 2026

Decision on Approval of MOU for WI Northern Grain Belt Ports between MRRPC, Joint Harbor Commission (LC city/county), City of Prairie du Chien Chamber of Commerce and the La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Bingol reported that in 2023 the counties along the Mississippi River were designated as a Ports statistical area called the Northern Grain Belt Ports. By adding this designation, it made it possible to collect data about the tonnage of freight moving through the ports. The designation was the initial move forward and now the goal is to create a regional designation that would assist the region in applying for grants. The Grain Belt Ports are working with the already existing organizations such as the Joint Harbor Commissions for the Port of La Crosse, the City of Prairie du Chien, La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Prairie du Chien Chamber of Commerce governing boards. He said that by creating and signing the Memorandum of Understanding it creates a regional port identity and regional port voice to apply for grants. A motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the MRRPC signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the WI Grain Belt Ports. The motion carried unanimously.

Update Clean Cities Grant

Mr. Bingol reported that the work is progressing on the Clean Cities grant which Clean Cities had been awarded through the American Lung Association. The grant's focus is inventorying the availability of the 7 alternative fuels along the Great River Road from Pierce to Grant County. He reported that we are currently working on a survey and inventory of fueling sites as well as planning 4 public engagement sessions with a goal of 500 people attending the sessions. He said that we are also working with different organizations and partners such as the Vernon County Energy District.

Update AWRPC Summit and AWRPC Annual Meeting

Mr. Bingol reported that personnel from all the regional planning commissions in Wisconsin met at the Oneida Casino in Green Bay for the AWRPC Summit. He said that one of the key sessions was about the new Truth in Planning Bill that was passed in the state legislature that will be going into effect January 1, 2028.

Placer.ai Update

Mr. Bingol reported that the Placer.ai software had been renewed and a new feature to the software had been added to track the dollars spent in an area. He said that he is working with Explore La Crosse and other partners are interested in the reports.

Update on La Crosse County HMP

Mr. Zabrowski reported that the La Crosse County HMP was progressing. He said that the GIS hub website identifying disasters and sharing information to residents is getting ready to go live to the public and the written report will be finished within the next month. He said that Jackson County is still waiting for the go ahead from the Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) about their Hazard Mitigation Plan update.

Decision on Trempealeau County Outdoor Recreation Plan Contract

Mr. Bingol reported that Trempealeau County approached the commission about updating their outdoor recreation plan. He said that we would be able to begin the plan in 2026 and have it completed in 2027 before the WDNR grant cycle which makes the county ready to apply for available grants. After discussion a motion was made by Commissioner Cooper and seconded by Commissioner Sorge to approve the \$4,950 contract between Trempealeau County and the MRRPC to complete an outdoor recreation plan. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any questions or comments and hearing none the motion was unanimously approved.

Decision on Partnering with 7 Rivers Alliance on Regional Study of Industrial Parks

Mr. Bingol reported that 7 Rivers Alliance had received a grant through WEDC to create an inventory of industrial parks and look at the amenities and capacity of the infrastructure for each park. He said that this grant would also be looking at future appropriate sites and expansion of existing industrial parks. After discussion a motion was made by Commissioner Burke and seconded by Commissioner Treu to enter into a contract with 7 Rivers Alliance for a Regional Study of Industrial Parks. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none the motion was unanimously approved.

Update on Transportation Activities

Mr. Harwood reported that the annual workplan for 2027 will be submitted to the WisDOT for review and will be presented at the August bimonthly meeting for approval by resolution. He said that the MRRPC is also renewing its Title VI plan this year. He said that he continues to serve on the La Crosse Area MPO Technical Advisory Committee, the Mississippi River Parkway Commission, and promotes the ports. He also continues to monitor the Lansing Bridge progress and is currently researching app options for paratransit. The La Crosse Area MPO is pursuing a grant to create a regional transportation authority.

MRRPC Bimonthly Meeting Minutes – June 10, 2026

Update on WEDC SBDG Grant (Business Plan & Pitch Contest)

Mr. Bingol reported that the WEDC SBDG Grant of \$250,000 with the \$44,000 match that the commission was awarded has until the end of the year to award all the funds. He said that the business plan and pitch contest portion of the award had 24 entries and 7 of the business plans were selected. He said that the Business Pitch Contest was held on May 4th and \$21,000 was awarded to businesses for the pitch and business plan contests with \$18,000 from WEDC and \$3,000 from local contributors (Pierce County Economic Development Corporation \$2,000, Old National Bank \$500, and the Idea Fund \$500). The Small Business Development Center has also been able to complete some trainings to fulfill their in-kind contributions. He also reported that he and Sarah were able to meet with WWBIC leadership and met the person designated for our area. They also provided training courses and have them scheduled in the area such as the LADCO offices. He also said that \$115,000 dollars have been awarded to businesses who were working with a bank and one of our revolving loan funds. Vernon County has fulfilled their match requirements and now he is working with Monroe County and La Crosse Counties. Mr. Bingol also reported that the WEDC is requiring a separate section for the WEDC SBDG grant in our annual audit and he said that we are working with the auditors to complete this two page addition to the audit but the auditors will be completing it for an additional cost.

Commissioner's Reports

Commissioner Schroeder asked if we completed our audit later in the year when it could be completed? Mr. Bingol responded that he had been in conversation with some of the local firms and asked if we could complete it in June and have it approved at the August meeting. Mr. Bingol said that he's continuing to explore other options.

Commissioner Anderson updated the group about the potential 765 line going through Vernon and Crawford Counties

Directors Report

He is also working on creating planning workshops for strategic planning. Mr. Bingol reported that the Village of Norwalk has received a Thrive Grant and he is working with them to utilize the funds for a comprehensive plan.

No Old Business

New Business

Commissioner Schroeder suggested that there be a social hour 45 minutes before the commission meeting starts for commissioners to network with each other.

Adjourn at 11:59 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 – in person
John Schlesselman	Buffalo County – in person
Michael Taylor	Buffalo County – online
Craig Anderson	Crawford County – in person
Gerald Krachey	Crawford County – in person
Ron Carney	Jackson County – in person
Brad Chown	Jackson County – in person
Tom Cooper	Jackson County – in person
Leonardo Silva	La Crosse County - online
Vicki Burke	La Crosse County – in person
James Kuhn	Monroe County – in person
Dennis Treu	Monroe County – in person
Cedric Schnitzler	Monroe County – in person
John Andrews	Pepin County – in person
Neil Gulbranson	Pierce County – in person
Bill Schroeder	Pierce County – in person
Rich Purdy	Pierce County - online
Patrick Sorge	Trempealeau County – in person
Phil Borreson	Trempealeau County – in person
Charles Jacobson	Vernon County – in person
JoAnn Nickelatti	Vernon County - online
Jon Bingol	MRRPC Staff – in person
Sarah Ofte	MRRPC Staff – in person
Ken Harwood	MRRPC Staff – in person
Jack Zabrowski	MRRPC Staff – in person
Kia Kling	MRRPC Staff – in person
Josh Stratman	MRRPC Intern – in person
Michael Jensen	MRRPC Intern – in person
Magnus Davidson	MRRPC Intern – in person
Ken Pearson	Economic Development and Tourism Director - Jackson County
Rebecca Giroux	WHEDA
Roxie Anderson	Monroe County Land Conservation
Jason Leis	Kickapoo Valley Reserve
Kathryn Schmeling	Viaro Health