



**MISSISSIPPI RIVER  
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
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**James Kuhn, Cashton, WI  
Chairman**  
**Margaret Baecker, Independence, WI  
Vice Chairman**  
**Vicki Burke, Onalaska, WI  
Secretary & Treasurer**  
**Greg Flogstad, Onalaska, WI  
Director**

**MINUTES  
MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRRPC)  
BIMONTHLY MEETING**

**10:00 a.m., December 13, 2017**

**AmericInn (formerly Best Western Riverfront Hotel), 1835 Rose Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin**

**Call to Order**

Chairman Kuhn called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked for the roll call. A quorum was present. The attendance roster is attached.

**Minutes of October 11, 2017 Bimonthly Meeting**

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion on the October 11, 2017 bimonthly meeting minutes. Commissioner Twidt made a motion to approve the October 11, 2017 meeting minutes and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Ehram. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the minutes were unanimously approved.

**Treasurer's Report**

Secretary-Treasurer Burke gave the treasurers report. Ms. Burke said the September 30, 2017 balance in all MRRPC accounts was \$231,569.14 and the October 31, 2017 ending balance was \$234,118.28. She reported the beginning balance in November 2017 was \$234,118.28 and November 30, 2017 ending balance was \$248,981.38.

Ms. Burke said the Business Capital Fund (BCF) began with a September 30, 2017 balance of \$306,709.23. Activity from October 1, 2017 through November 30, 2017 included loan repayments of \$12,764.70, interest earned of \$105.11, and administrative expenses of \$922.63, leaving a November 30, 2017 balance on hand of \$318,656.41. The BCF Sequester Account began with a September 30, 2017 balance of \$454,383.57. Activity from October 1, 2017 through November 30, 2017 included interest earned of \$226.57, and an interest payment of \$321.11 to the EDA, leaving a balance on hand of \$454,289.03.

Ms. Burke said the Business Capital Fund 2 began with a September 30, 2017 balance of \$42,952.23. Activity from October 1, 2017 through November 30, 2017 included loan repayments of \$1,480.00, interest earned of \$14.58, and administrative expenses of \$406.00 leaving a November 30, 2017 balance of \$44,040.81. Ms. Burke said the Business Capital Fund 2 Sequester Account began with a September 30, 2017 balance of \$160,686.32. Activity from October 1, 2017 through November 30, 2017 included interest earned of \$80.12 and an interest payment of \$139.30 to the EDA, leaving a November 30, 2017 balance on hand of \$160,627.14.

Ms. Burke said the CMV Growth Development Fund began with a September 30, 2017 balance of \$53,523.31. Activity from October 1, 2017 through November 30, 2017 included loan repayments of \$4,563.66, interest earned of \$9.35, administrative expenses of \$869.20, and a \$5.00 bank fee, leaving a September 30, 2017 balance of \$57,222.12. Ms. Burke said the CMV Growth Development Fund Sequester Account began with a September 30, 2017 balance of \$104,096.58. Activity from October 1, 2017 through November 30, 2017 included interest earned of \$17.97 and an interest payment of \$44.10 to the EDA leaving a balance of \$104,070.45.

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***• 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***

The La Crosse County Economic Development Fund began with a September 30, 2017 balance of \$21,783.74. Activity from October 1, 2017 through November 30, 2017 included loan repayments of \$2417.00 and interest earned of \$5.52, leaving a November 30, 2017 balance of \$24,206.26.

Chairman Kuhn asked for a motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Commissioner Borreson made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schroeder. Chairman Kuhn asked if there were any questions or comments and hearing none, the treasurer's report was unanimously approved.

### **Report on Buffalo County Zoning Ordinance Update**

Mr. Bonifas reported that the Buffalo County Zoning Ordinance is three fourths completed. He said that the working draft of the text has been finished and the committee is reviewing it and modifying it where needed. He said that the county also wants to update other ordinances at the same time which are similar to the zoning ordinance including the Tower Siting Ordinance, Nonmetallic Mining, Tourism and Recreation Overlay District, and the Bluff Land and Steep Slopes. He said that the towns are in the process of completing their mapping and that they are waiting for only one town to complete their map. Each town was given a blank map and asked to draw where they would like to see their zoning districts instead of having the county creating their zoning districts. Once all the maps are completed they will be consolidated into one county map. He said the next step is to schedule public information hearings. These hearings will be scheduled from mid-January into February where the residents can make comments on the zoning ordinance text and the maps. The county will be broken into 5 districts and each district will have 3 towns present per meeting. Once the public hearings have taken place, the public comments will be brought back to the committee and the individual towns will work through how they would like to address the comments. Once the input from the public meetings have been incorporated into the plan, then the plan will go to the county board for approval and adoption. Commissioner Borreson asked if there was any trouble with individuals making islands during the mapping process. Mr. Bonifas responded that he didn't see that at the town committees. He said that most of the pockets were residential areas and commercial areas near highways. He said that could change after the public hearings where town residents can see the map and where their property fits into the zoning. Commissioner Leys asked if there was a lot of opposition to the concept of zoning. Mr. Bonifas responded that the county had zoning in place previously but there was one town chairman who was opposed but decided to go through the process. Once they go through the process and the county board adopts it, the town has a year to adopt the plan. If the town doesn't adopt the plan, they won't have any zoning, or they would have to go through the process on their own at the town's own expense. Mr. Fletcher commented that after the public hearings take place we'll have more feedback, but he said that in the initial stages there had been some concerns, but they were relatively minor. Mr. Bonifas responded that during the initial meetings the towns were concerned because they thought the county was going to come in and tell them what to zone. When the towns were told that they would be the ones to draw on the maps and submit their maps to the county of what they would like to see for zoning, it made them more receptive to the process. Commissioner Jaekel commented that giving the townships local control of the process was great and that not having zoning in place is dangerous. Commissioner Nickelatti commented that she also liked the local control since geography in counties varies so much. Commissioner McMillan Urell asked which township had concerns about participating. Mr. Bonifas responded that it was a rural town and the town board felt there wasn't a need since they don't have any development going on or foresee any future development, and the geography seemed too hilly for a corporate farm to come in a build. They have since decided to go through the process and will have a year to decide to adopt the plan.

### **Public Comments on MRRPC's update to its Title VI and Non-Discrimination Program / Limited English Proficiency Plan**

Mr. Fletcher said that the Title VI plan is an update to the plan that was originally adopted in 2014. He said that this plan is a requirement of the Department of Transportation since we are recipients of federal money. He said that as a subrecipient of federal dollars we must have on file a Title VI plan which assures that we aren't discriminating against people based on race, the language they speak, etc. He listed the updates that were made to the plan. He said that pages 5 and 6 were updated with a list of the current meetings of the commission, the table of commissioners on page 8 was updated, the American Community Survey data on page 9 was updated, the assurances within the document was updated, and Appendix 8 identifying the population that doesn't speak English well was updated. When that numbers reach over 1000 individuals in your area who do not speak English well, this happened in La Crosse County for those whose first language is Hmong or Spanish. He said that interpretive services need to be provided for those individuals. He said that this is the public comment portion and the notice was published in the local newspapers. He said that there is a resolution that would need to be adopted today at the meeting to approve the document with the changes and the assurances. He said that there are forms in the office if someone has a complaint and the document is also posted on our website with the forms. It is a requirement to have it posted on our website with the documents if someone would like to file a complaint.

### **Decision on resolution approving MRRPC's update to its Title VI and Non-Discrimination Program / Limited English Proficiency Plan**

Chairman Kuhn asked if there was anyone who would like to make a motion to approve the MRRPC's update to its Title VI and Non-Discrimination Program / Limited English Proficiency Plan. Commissioner Schnitzler made a motion to approve the MRRPC's update to its Title VI and Non-Discrimination Program / Limited English Proficiency Plan. Commissioner Ehram seconded the motion. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any discussion. Commissioner Leys commented that discrimination against gender and religion should be included in the resolution. Commissioner Leys made a motion to amend the resolution to include gender and religion, so it reads that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, gender, or religion be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any MRRPC program or activity, regardless of funding source. Commissioner Purdy seconded the amendment. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any discussion on the amendment. Commissioner Ross asked about services for those individuals who need an interpreter. Mr. Fletcher responded that we would need to provide the service if it was needed. The amendment was approved unanimously. A vote was then called for on the motion as amended. The motion as amended was approved unanimously.

### **Decision on amendment to 2017 Wisconsin DOT Work Plan.**

Mr. Fletcher said that the 2017 workplan that was approved contained 6 work elements and each work element is assigned a percentage of time. In 2017 the dollar amount for work element 5 was exceeded. He said that when a work element exceeds costs by 10% it needs to be amended. The DOT required that the 2017 work plan be amended to reflect the expended costs. He said that the time in elements 1, 2, and 4 was reduced and time was added to elements 5 and 6. Mr. Fletcher said that the amendment modified the original plan to reflect the actual time spent in these categories. Commissioner Burke made a motion to approve the amendments to the 2017 Wisconsin DOT Work Plan. Commissioner Nickelatti seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

### **Decision on 2018 Wisconsin DOT Work Plan.**

Mr. Fletcher said the Draft Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission Transportation Planning Annual Work Program for 2018 was completed and sent to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. He said this work program is required to receive Wisconsin (DOT) funding. He continued by reviewing the Work Program in detail. Commissioner Ross asked if the time distribution would be different. Mr. Fletcher responded there were special projects that needed more attention with the new SMRT Bus route beginning in 2017 so he felt comfortable with the numbers for the 2018 plan. Upon completion of Mr. Fletcher's presentation of the Work Program Commissioner Krachey made a motion to approve the MRRPC Transportation Planning Annual Work Program for 2018 pending final approval by WisDOT. Commissioner Ross seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

### **Report on the October 2<sup>nd</sup> launch of the Scenic Mississippi River Regional Transit's (SMRT) bus service from La Crosse to Tomah.**

Mr. Fletcher said the October 2<sup>nd</sup> launch of the SMRT bus from La Crosse to Monroe County along the I-90 corridor was a pilot project that Gundersen Health Systems and La Crosse County helped to fund. He said that currently there is one bus running 2 round trips per day. He said that this route mainly addresses those individuals going to work. He said that they are working on getting approval from DOT to add an additional route. This expansion would include a midday route which would benefit those individuals who are going shopping or to medical appointments. Mr. Fletcher said that the current route has 98 riders per month. He said that there have been timing changes that needed to be made due to congestion at certain times of the day as well as making some pick up location changes. Commissioner Leys commented that there was a common council member in Prairie du Chien who said that it was difficult to get to work on time using the Prairie du Chien to La Crosse route. Mr. Fletcher responded that he would look at the route and contact the common council member and thanked Mr. Leys for the feedback. Commissioner Jaekel asked if the route was going well. Mr. Fletcher responded that the route hasn't been running long enough to get enough real solid data. He said that after six months they will be able to get more data. Commissioner Burke asked if there was a schedule posted online. Mr. Fletcher responded that the schedule is posted on the SMRT Bus website.

### **Discussion on initiatives involving the regional goal of greater utilization of the region's overstocked woody biomass resources for generating heat and electricity as an economic development, energy saving and environmental initiative, a "3E Win".**

Mr. Flogstad presented information about how the use of solid biomass for heating and electricity could improve the economy, renewable energy opportunities, and environmental conditions in the Mississippi River Region. Mr. Flogstad presented information about why we should look for opportunities to build renewable energy resources from the region's rich woody biomass resources including its ability to compete with fossil fuels like coal, propane and heating oil. He discussed what we can do to help support this

initiative. He said the region can harvest, process and distribute this fuel which would also reduce its reliance on imported fossil fuels and be a simple way of cutting the region's carbon footprint. Commissioner Schlesselman commented that he believes it is a good idea to promote biomass as a fuel and that getting the marketing tools to get the message out is important. He said that using crop residue has a downside by taking nutrients out of the soil, so this should be sustainably managed. Mr. Flogstad said that he had written a letter to Dairyland Power Cooperative about the advantages of using biomass. Commissioner Borreson asked if there had been any response from the letter to the President and CEO of Dairyland Power Cooperative inquiring about the technology of cofiring wood pellets with coal. He stated no response has been received. Mr. Flogstad said that one of the economic recovery options after the closing of the coal power plant in Buffalo County was the use of the county's rich biomass resources. Commissioner Leys commented that coal plants are closing all over the country. Commissioner Ross commented that Dairyland Power Cooperative might need a little more time before responding. Mr. Flogstad concluded the presentation with a short video of how biomass is being harvested, processed and distributed in the state of Upper Austria for heat and electricity.

**Old, Business, New Business and Adjourn**

Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any old business. Chairman Kuhn asked if there was any 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

MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING ATTENDANCE ROSTER

DATE: 12-13-17

PLACE : AmericInn

	NAME	REPRESENTING
1.	Cory Flogstad	MRRPC Staff
2.	Mary Anne McMillan Urell	Buffalo
3.	John Schlesselman	Buffalo
4.	Del Twardt	Buffalo
5.	James Ekstrom	La Crosse
6.	Sharon Falcey	Monroe
7.	<del>Sharon Falcey</del>	monroe
8.	<del>Sharon Falcey</del>	Jackson
9.	Della R. Miller	Racine
10.	Barbara Cornell	Vernon
11.	Sarah Ofte	MRRPC staff
12.	Peter Plotkin	"
13.	Steve Bonifas	"
14.	James Juehl	Vernon Co.
15.	Todd Hattley	Jackson City
16.	Phillip Borreson	Franklin County
17.	Rich Pardy	Pierce Co
18.	Bill Schweder	Pierce Co.
19.	Arnold Kuehn	Crawford Co.
20.	RON LEYS	CRAWFORD
21.	James E. Ross	Pierce County
22.	JoAnn Nickelatti	Vernon Co.
23.	Vicki Burke	La Crosse County
24.	Janna B. Kuhn	MONROE CO.
25.		