

PECATONICA RAIL TRANSIT COMMISSION

20 S Court Street • PO Box 262 • Platteville, Wisconsin 53818

MEMBER COUNTIES: GREEN • IOWA • LAFAYETTE • ROCK

1:00 PM • Friday, October 25th, 2019 • Green Co. Courthouse, 2nd Floor Courtroom, 1016 16th Ave • Monroe, WI

1. 1:00 PM **Call to Order** – *Harvey Kubly, Chair*
2. Roll Call. **Establishment of Quorum** – *Matthew Honer, Administrator*

Commissioners present for all or part of the meeting:

	Commissioner	Position	Present		Commissioner	Position	Present
Green	Harvey W. Kubly	Chair	X	Iowa	Charles Anderson	Secretary	X
	Oscar Olson		X		VACANT		
	Paul Beach	Treasurer	X		Ricky Rolfsmeyer		X
Lafayette	Leon Wolfe	Vice Secretary	X	Rock	Wayne Gustina		X
	John Bartels		X		Alan Sweeney	Vice Chair	Excused
	Andy Schilling		absent		Terry Thomas		X
	Gerald Heimann	Alternate	absent				

Commission achieved quorum.

Other present for all or some of the meeting:

Matthew Honer – Admin.	- Rich Kedzior, WisDOT. - Ken Lucht, WSOR.
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3. Action Item. **Certification of Meeting's Public Notice** – *Noticed by Honer*
 - Motion to approve certification of public meeting – *Gustina/Bartles. Passed Unanimously.*
4. Action Item. **Approval of Agenda** – *Prepared by Honer*
 - Motion to approve the agenda – *Rolfsmeyer/Bartles. Passed Unanimously.*
5. Action Item. **Approval of draft July 2019 Minutes** – *Prepared by Honer*
 - Motion to approve draft July 2019 minutes – *Rolfsmeyer/Gustina. Passed Unanimously.*
6. Updates. **Public Comment** – *Time for public comment may be limited by the Chair*
No public comment.
7. Updates. **Announcements by Commissioners** – *Discussion may be limited by the Chair*
 Bartles mentioned that he ran into a couple a few days back from Oregon, Illinois that were using the trail who said they really enjoy coming to Wisconsin.

REPORTS & COMMISSION BUSINESS

8. PRTC Financial Report – *Paul Beach, PRTC Treasurer*

Beach reported on the amended July report which corrected the incorrect deposit. Beach reported \$3,343.79 in receipts and \$2,300.63 in disbursements for a total checking account balance of \$113,737.36. With the \$25K CD at Wis. Bank and Trust the total is \$138,737.36. Beach reported two bills, one from the auditor in the amount of \$1600.00 and the other from SWWRPC in the amount of \$1,797.

- Motion to approve treasurers report and payment of the bills – *Anderson/Olson. Approved Unanimously.*

9. WSOR Operation's Report – Ken Lucht, WSOR

Lucht reported on maintenance including a few grade crossings on the Prairie and Oshkosh sub. Lucht reported that the CWR (Continuous Welded Rail) rail projects between Ripon and Fisk, and the Waukesha Sub. project between Milton and Whitewater are going well. Future phases of the Waukesha Sub. CWR Project will go from Whitewater to the City of Waukesha. Lucht stated WSOR does 300 miles of brush cutting each year and they are gearing up for this season which includes the Monroe Sub..

Lucht reported that WSOR rebuilt four bridges on the Illinois section of the WRRTC system with assistance from WRRTC and PRTC. Lucht stated that WSOR is beginning to put together a funding strategy for the track in Illinois now that the bridges are completed. Lucht stated that 20K ties have been installed on this section but the rail is appearing to have more defects than previously thought. Lucht reported that there is a lot of congestion in Janesville and WSOR is looking to identify an area outside of the city where a new yard can be constructed, which would help relieve a lot of congestion. Lucht expects that it is likely to be a 10 – 15-year project, but it will have a lot of public and private benefit, including to the Monroe Subdivision.

Bartles asked about a crossing near the Ethanol plant (4th Avenue) that is in poor condition. Lucht stated that the Ethanol plant is looking at an expansion that might allow the crossing to be updated at that time but that WSOR will take a look at it and make corrections if required.

Wolfe asked how many acres the new yard in Janesville will be. Lucht stated they would be looking at around 45 acres. Lucht stated that the roundhouse in Janesville is in poor condition and will take a lot of work so there was a thought of consolidating that with WSOR's repair facilities in Janesville, and bringing it all together in a consolidated yard in the future.

Anderson asked if the mainline would be re-routed for the future yard. Lucht stated that would not be the case and there would be no significant changes to the property of WisDOT or the PRTC/WRRTC.

10. WisDOT Report – Rich Kedzior, WisDOT

Rich Kedzior stated that the Annual Freight Railroad Conference will be held on November 12th at the Sheraton Hotel in Madison and the keynote speaker is the Vice President of Canadian National.

11. Tri-County Trail Commission Report – Wolfe

Wolfe stated that the weather has been an issue. The trail between Calamine and Belmont is closed due to water and drainage issues. It will need a major rebuild. The trail between Mineral Point and Monroe is open but some areas need substantial work. Leon stated that assistance money is coming in from 2017 and 2018. Wolfe believes that they believe they will be able to get additional funding for all of the recent issues.

Anderson asked if the TCC is looking to apply for the recent grant money that is spread throughout the state. Wolfe stated that it is spread throughout the state and it often requires match. Anderson asked about the need for the trail passes that the TCTC sells. Wolfe stated that the permits are sold to vehicles that do not meet the state ATV/UTV standards but if you have a ATV/UTV permit from the DNR you do not need to buy a pass.

Lucht asked if there is an ATV/UTV rental location on the trail. Wolfe stated there is a rental location in Darlington.

12. PRTC Administrator's Report – Honer, PRTC Admin.

Honer reported that the individual who owns the old railroad depot in South Wayne, is looking for someone to remove the building. The building currently sits approximately 8 ft on PRTC property and creates a blind spot for trail users. Honer stated that it is of interest to the commission for the building to be removed because it is a safety liability. Honer stated that whoever removes the building will need an access permit.

Honer stated that he spoke with Tom Jean about funding opportunities for the Cheese Country Trail improvements. Jean is working with the WIDNR to address a large rip-rap project and it appears that they have received funding for major repair and will likely start engineering work this fall. Honer stated that Jean will keep the PRTC up-to-date on the project and will reach out to the commission if assistance is needed.

Honer spoke at length with an individual in Green County who is interested in a public access to the trail across Highway 11 from Dill Road. Honer stated that a private crossing application on behalf of the township would be the proper permit for this but that it requires approval from WisDOT. Honer spoke with WisDOT to understand the approval process. In connecting back with the

individual, they stated that the township is going to evaluate this in the future. Honer stated that the crossing makes sense for safety reasons but that other crossings in the area need to be addressed.

Honer discussed that an individual in Iowa County is looking for an easement over the trail. Honer informed the individual that the Commission does not permit easements. The reason for the easement is because the individual is trying to sell some property, which would require an easement. There is a possibility that the township can force an easement. Honer stated that counsel looked into the issue and determined that the township cannot force an easement over another government entity's property.

Honer stated that SWWRPC has done a lot of work in organizing the files that were taken from Eileen Brownlee's office. Honer stated that he is working to create a records retention schedule for the Commission that will be presented to the commission in 2020. Honer also stated that he has been working to identify all of the current and historic leases of the PRTC and intends to present this to the Commission at their next meeting in January. Honer stated that leases are often forgotten about with Commissioner and Administrative turnover and because many of these leases are for 20 years with a one-time payment making them difficult to track. Honer stated that the Burbach lease for the property in the City of Darlington is due to him on November 1st.

13. Discussion and Acknowledgement of the 2018 Audit – Kubly, Chair.

Kubly introduced the draft 2018 Audit. Kubly stated that Beach and he provided information to the auditors and answered questions. Kubly stated that there are no surprises in the Audit.

- *Motion to acknowledge the 2018 draft Audit – Thomas/Wolfe. Passed Unanimously*

14. Discussion and Possible Action on providing feedback to WisDOT regarding FRPP Application Instructions -WisDOT.

Honer stated that WisDOT has requested comments on the existing FRPP application instructions. The application instructions are the version of the instructions that have existed for several years and are not the recent revisions that were introduced earlier in the year. Honer stated that these instructions help determine where WisDOT's Freight Rail Preservation Program grant funding is directed. Honer stated that the FRPP grant program is the program that WSOR applies to make capital improvements on the system. Honer stated that he would collect comments from the Commission until November 15th and could draft a letter to WisDOT with the Commission's concerns by the deadline of November 29th. Gustina asked who will make final determination on the application instruction. Kedzior stated that the DOT Secretary will make final determination.

- *Motion to authorize Honer to draft a letter with any comments from Commissioners that are received by November 15th. – Rolfsmeyer/Bartles. Passed Unanimously.*

15. Presentation of 2018 Carload Summary -WSOR.

Lucht stated that every year the WSOR presents carload data to the Commission. Lucht presented the carload data by subdivision.

Anderson asked where ethanol goes. Lucht stated that it goes to Chicago and then to refineries. Anderson asked what happens to the byproduct of ethanol creation, the response was that it is often used as livestock feed. Beach asked what Lucht thinks the grain market to be in the future, Lucht stated that he expects it to be down. Wolfe said he feels it might be slower but might not be down as much as they thought. Gustina asked about transloading salt at the GM plan. Lucht said there are still ongoing discussions due to restructuring at Detroit Salt Company. Thomas asked about rubble or steel coming out of the old GM plan. Lucht said steel comes out but not necessarily rubble.

16. Presentation of Internal Defect Report by Subdivision, 2019 - WSOR.

Lucht stated that a rail detector identifies defects through ultra-sonic testing and is put on the track each year. Lucht provided a handout that showed the identified internal rail defects. Lucht stated that priorities for upgrade based on the defect density are the Waukesha and Prairie Subdivisions. Lucht said that the Monroe Sub. has some issues but has a lot of time left on the rail before replacement is needed. Lucht stated that for the most part the WSOR has upgraded the ties on each Sub. and is preparing for rail upgrades.

Gustina asked what the cost per mile is for CWR. Kedzior stated that if you do not need to deal with turnouts or crossings, it is probably \$400,000/mile. Yet, it can be closer to \$600K/mile. Kedzior believes that the Prairie Sub. will be a lower cost per mile because of the fewer industries. Lucht stated that it is a great investment as it is \$400K to \$600K per mile for a 100-year investment and not the \$1M price tag that comes with highways. Beach asked about how the defects occur, Kedzior stated that it the age of the

rail, the weather conditions, and the amount of traffic. Beach asked about the weight of the rail in terms of the changing weight of the rail cars. Lucht stated that for a regional railroad 115# is sufficient, higher pound rail is usually used for commuter high speed rail.

17. Adjournment

Kubly stated that he visited the old Monticello woolen mill sites outside of Monticello. It was the last woolen mill in the area until it burned. Kubly stated that in the location the Illinois Central and the Milwaukee Railroad ran side by side. Kubly stated that there were a lot of fatalities in the area because of the railroads. WisDOT ordered a trestle crossing due to the unsafe nature, but the trestles were not that great either and eventually it became a grade crossing.

- *Motion to adjourn at 2:32 pm – Gustina/Wolfe. Passed Unanimously.*