

WRTC OCTOBER 2021 MEETING MINUTES – APPROVED

Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission Commission Meeting – Friday, October 8th, 2021 at 10:00 am Waunakee Public Library, Waunakee, WI

1. 10:00 AM **Call to Order** – Robert Scallon, 1st Vice Chair
2. Roll Call. **Establishment of Quorum** – Matt Honer, Admin

Crawford	Carl Orr, 2 nd Vice Chair	X	Jefferson	Mary Roberts	Excused
	Mark Gilberts	X		John Kannard	X
	Tom Cornford	Excused		Kathy Bahner	X
				Karl Zarling, Alternate	Absent
Dane	Kevin Potter	X	Rock	Russ Podzilni	X
	Jeff Huttenburg, Treasurer	Excused		Wayne Gustina	X
				Alan Sweeney, Chair	Excused
Grant	Gary Ranum	X	Sauk	Brian Peper	X
	Mike Lieurance	X		Dave Riek, 2 nd Vice Treasurer	X
	Robert Scallon, 1 st Vice Chair	X		Marty Krueger	X
				Tim McCumber, Alternate	Excused
Green	Harvey Kubly, 1 st Vice Treasurer	X	Walworth	Al Stanek	Excused
	Oscar Olson	X		Richard Kuhnke, 2 nd Vice Secretary	X
	John Buol	Excused		Allan Polyock	Absent
Iowa	Charles Anderson, Secretary	X	Waukesha	Dick Mace	X
	Kate Reimann	X		Richard Morris	Absent
	Susan Storti	X		Karl Nilson, 3 rd Vice Treasurer	Excused

Commission met quorum.

Others present for all or some of the meeting:

Ken Lucht, Roger Schaalma – WSOR	Todd Wojciuk – WisDOT
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3. Action Item. **Certification of Meeting's Public Notice** – Noticed by Honer.
 - Motion to approve meeting's public notice – Kuhnke/Reimann. Passed Unanimously.
4. Action Item. **Approval of Agenda** – Prepared by Honer.
 - Motion to approve the agenda. Lieurance/Ranum – Passed Unanimously.
5. Action Item. **Approval of draft September 2021 Meeting Minutes** – Prepared by Honer.
 - Motion to approve the draft September 2021 meeting minutes. Mace/Reimann. Passed Unanimously.
6. Updates. **Public Comment** – Time for public comment may be limited by the Chair.
7. Updates. **Announcements by Commissioners**

REPORTS & COMMISSION BUSINESS

8. **WRTC Financial Report** – Honer, Admin.

Honer provided an overview of the Cash Flow Statement and the revenue/expense statement. There was one disbursement for legal fees and two receipts for utility permits approved at previous meetings. Honer reported one bill for payment, \$7,625 for Q3 Management and accounting. The commission has a surplus of funds within in the LGIP- WRTC account due to the unexpected payment from Crawford County for back contributions. Ranum asked if it makes sense for the Commission to look at additional investment options. Ranum and others suggested we keep the money in its current location at this time.

- Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report, payment of bills, and keep Crawford's unplanned for contribution in the WRTC Account where it is. Anderson/Reimann. Passed Unanimously.

9. **Wisconsin & Southern Railroad's Report on Operations** – Ken Lucht, Roger Schaalma – WSOR

Lucht stated the Waukesha Sub's final Continuous Welded Rail (CWR) phase is being completed between Palmyra and Waukesha. The Waukesha Sub. had the greatest number of defaults per mile prior to the CWR project. The Madison Sub. between Janesville and Madison is finalizing a maintenance project which includes tie replacements and surfacing. Bridge work is ongoing on the Prairie Sub. for two bridges and seven culverts replacing bridges, two of which will be done this year. Grant agreements from WisDOT for capital improvement projects were provided to WSOR, including three bridges on the Prairie Sub., three bridges on the Reedsburg Sub., and three bridges on the Monroe Sub.

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Anderson asked if CWR projects required additional ties. Lucht stated CWR has a greater tie density. Mace asked if there is savings over time with the use of culverts versus bridges. Lucht stated that the culverts are designed to last over a hundred years similar to bridges, so the savings is in the initial cost and the culverts do not cost more to maintain or have a shorter life span than bridges.

Lucht provided an update on the Merrimac Bridge. Lucht stated WSOR is looking for a Phase 3 agreement from WisDOT. Lucht stated that the delayed timing is going to affect the 2022 construction season. The new timeline might not have construction happening until the end of 2022. Lucht stated the bridge engineer that reports to the FRA provided WSOR four years to fix the bridge. Additionally, the businesses north of the Reedsburg Sub are looking to do heavier cars. WSOR is concerned about the delay because the delay may require a further weight restriction. Lucht stated that any outreach the Commission can do will help. Lucht stated that WSOR needs a Grant Agreement before they can solicit bids or order materials.

Lucht provided an update on the Reedsburg Phase 1 Rehabilitation. Lucht stated WisDOT purchased this line from the Union Pacific in 2015 but WSOR has been operating on the line since the 1990s. Not much work had been done on the track 10 – 15 years prior to state acquisition. Lucht explained the Phase 1 rehabilitation project which was a typical first phase of a rehab project which includes ballast, ties, surfacing, and crossings. Ten crossing rehabs were completed in 2021 and ten are scheduled for 2022.

10. WisDOT Report – Todd Wojciuk - WisDOT.

Wojciuk introduced himself as the new property manager with WisDOT. Wojciuk was not able to speak to the Merrimac Bridge Grant Agreements. Wojciuk stated that he was not sure why Stern was unable to attend. Wojciuk stated that he will talk with Stern on Monday and ask if she can provide an update to Honer to share.

11. WRRTC Correspondence/Communications and Administrator's Report – Honer, Admin.

Honer stated that he is still working with the Town of Linn to finalize the sale of the Hillside Rd Bridge but everything appears to be moving forward and expects it to be completed in the next week or two. Huttenburg, Anderson, and Honer attended WSOR's presentation to WisDOT on Carloads and Financials for the past two years. Honer stated that Chris James from Dane County was unable to continue on the Commission because he had moved from Dane County to Sauk County. Honer stated that if anyone knows someone who might be interested in participating in the WRRTC or the SCWRTC they should contact him with questions or contact the County offices. Honer also stated that he does not expect the Commission will be allowed to return to the Dane County Highway Garage until January and asked the Commissioners to provide him their comments on the meetings location in Waunakee.

12. Discussion and Action on Property Sale in Edgerton, WI – Wojciuk, WisDOT.

Wojciuk reintroduced the property sale in Edgerton. Wojciuk stated there has been trespassing in the location for many years. Wojciuk stated the prospective buyer is looking to develop the area which WisDOT believes will do more to prevent trespassing. Wojciuk stated WisDOT is neutral to the issue but believes that what the prospective buyer is proposing will manage the property to the benefit of the railroad. Wojciuk stated that WisDOT also that by selling the property and requiring delineation between the proposed parking lot and the corridor makes the most sense.

Anderson stated he does not like the precedent being set of selling railroad land. The land underneath the building is ok. Potter stated the Commission needs additional information regarding Burnow's site plan. Kate thought the commission could use more information regarding who will take over after Mr. Burnow is no longer the owner.

Storti stated the Commission has experience with encroachments and the existing business owner is encroaching on the property. Storti believes the Commission should purchase the property if it is necessary. Gustina stated he believes the land under the building is ok to sell but the land for the parking lot is important not to sell because of the safety issues associated with the vision triangle. Anderson, Mace, and Ranum asked if WisDOT would consider selling the property to the Commission.

Honer clarified that this agenda item is an offer for the commission to purchase the property from WisDOT, as they are required to do prior to selling the property. Honer stated that the Commission has 30 days to respond and if it does not respond in 30 days, WisDOT can continue in the process of selling the property. Honer stated that WSOR can request the Commission purchase the property and compensate the Commission for the purchase.

Peper said he does not understand how the prices are being arrived at on the offer letter provided by WisDOT.

- *Motion to postpone action and request legal counsel at the next meeting. Peper/Mace. Passed Unanimously.*

Lucht stated the WisDOT had been working on an offer-to-use with Mr. Burnow and because of that WSOR did not address the trespass issues if the issue is resolved by not selling the property, WSOR will work to delineate the property and prevent trespass. Kate asked if the City of Edgerton had provided any comments on the issue. Wojciuk stated he had not heard from the city but can reach out. Wojciuk stated that WisDOT will extend the deadline until the November meeting.

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13. Discussion and Action on CRISI Letter of Financial Commitment and Support – Honer, Admin.

Honer reported this is letter of support and financial commitment for a WisDOT grant to rehab the Janesville bridges.

- *Motion to approve the letter of financial commitment and support for WisDOT CRISI Grant Submission. Storti/Kannard. Passed Unanimously.*

14. Adjournment.

- *Motion to Adjourn at 11:35 am – Gustina/Peper. Passed Unanimously.*