

# Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission

X-Commission Mtg – Friday, 09 July 2010 @ 10am • Dane Co. Hwy, 2302 Fish Hatchery Rd, Madison, WI

1. Karl Nilson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.
2. Commissioners present for all or part of the meeting:

Crawford	Tom Cornford	X- Committee	X
	Rocky Rocksvold		X
	Vacant		
Dane	Gene Gray	Treasurer	X
	Jim Haefs-Fleming		X
	Forrest Van Schwartz	Advocate	X
Grant	Ivan Farness		
	Margaret Ruf	Secretary	X
	Robert Scallon	2nd Vice Chair	X
Iowa	Charles Anderson	X- Committee	X
	Gerald Dorscheid	Vice Treasurer	X
	Robert Zinick		

Rock	Ben Coopman	Alternate	
	Wayne Gustina		X
	Alan Sweeney	Vice Chair	X
	Terry Thomas		X
Sauk	Joel Gaalswijk		
	Rob Sinklair	Assistant Secretary	X
	Scott Alexander		
Walworth	Marty Krueger	Alternate	
	Jerry Grant		
	Richard Kuhnke	X- Committee	X
Waukesha	Allan Polyock		
	Karl Nilson	Chair	X
	Richard Manke		
	Fritz Ruf		

## Others present for all or part of the meeting:

Amy Seebth (SWWRPC / WRRTC Administrator); John Oimoen, Leana Wall, Ron Adams & Frank Huntington (WisDOT); Ken Lucht (WSOR); Alan Anderson & Dick Goddard (Pink Lady RTC); Ronald Weberpal at 10:35 & Charles Sweeney and Pat Strachan at 11:05 (Crossing Requests).

3. **Motion accepting Seebth's certification of Public Notice.** *Dorscheid / Van Schwartz- passed unanimously.*
4. **Motion accepting the Agenda, prepared by Seebth.** *Kuhnke / Gustina - passed unanimously.*
5. **Motion approving the draft May Minutes.** *Van Schwartz / Rocksvold – discussion: Rocksvold requested that the minutes be changed to make note of his presence - passed unanimously.*
6. **Public Comment** – None
7. **Correspondence & Communications** – 1) Nilson passed a letter in which he was cc'd about Lake Forest (they want the Hiawatha to stop there) and a letter from Dick Goddard about the Sauk County bridge issue (sent to Virgil Kasper & Allan Anderson (Pink Lady RTC), Karl Nilson (WRRTC), and Marty Kruger (Sauk County)) 2) Nilson introduced Wayne Gustina, who is new to the Commission and represents the 12<sup>th</sup> district from Beloit, he used to be a railroad engineer, 3) Seebth updated the Commission that she had sent Spring Grove a letter per the Commission's decision in May and is working on sorting out their questions, 4) Terry Thomas said that Ken Lucht from WSOR invited himself and Al Sweeney to watch a rail car of continuous welded rail be unloaded. He thanked Lucht for that educational opportunity.

## REPORTS & COMMISSION BUSINESS

8. **Wisconsin & Southern Railroad's Report on Operations** – Ken Lucht, WSOR, reported on the following:
  - *Monthly Maintenance Activities* – The WSOR weed control program on southern division has been entirely completed. During the last couple of months, WSOR has had the rail detector car out on Waukesha subdivision (they found hundreds of internal defects), and will have it on the Prairie du Chien Subdivision later this fall. MOW crews working in Elkhart Lake. In Sheboygan County they have a new customer, they are rebuilding siding and switch on Elkhart Lake. Reedsburg Sub had a lot of flash flood damage last week, WSOR is working on this.
  - *Update on 2009 & 2010 Capital Rehab Projects* – WSOR invited the Commissioners to come see welded rail be laid starting Aug. 2<sup>nd</sup>. They will organize a time for the County Board and RTC to come out and will let folks know

when. They have staff in Milton today working on the turnouts. Last year they were awarded funding for 40,000 ties for Janesville to Monroe, they have 13,000 installed, with a daily production of 1200 ties. WSOR does not know yet what funding is available in 2010 and what projects will be funded. Their applications are in – they have applied for a Phase 2 welded rail project, a project in Waukesha to realign trackage, and funding on northern division between Plymouth and Saukville. Lastly, they have encountered service issues. Route wide they are hiring 15 people to help resolve these issues, they had to lay folks off in the past year, but are now working to hire. They are training new staff right now.

9. **WRRTC Financial Report**– Jim Matzinger, Dane County CPA / WRRTC Accountant was not present but he left copies of the Treasurer’s Report and bills.
  - **Motion acknowledging receipt of report, the Commission would like more detailed information next month– Dorscheid / Scallon – passed unanimously**
  - **Motion approving Payment of Bills as presented – Van Schwartz / Sinklair - passed unanimously**
10. **WRRTC Administrator’s Report** – Amy Seeboth, SWWRPC Transportation Planner, had no report at this time.
11. **WDOT Update** – Frank Huntington reported that the WDOT is in process of finalizing evaluation of FRIPP and FRAP loan and grant programs. They have about 30 million that will be awarded, he said that much of this will be on system in south. WisDOT has received about \$40 million in applications.
12. **Request that WRRTC apply for “TIGER II” funding for 2010 funding cycle for “shovel-ready” projects in Dane, Rock & Walworth Counties.** WSOR submitted rail projects to officials for TIGER 1 – first phase of economic stimulus and it was not awarded. Since then, WSOR has been keeping alert on potential funding for shovel ready projects. TIGER 2 is one such funding source and is due at the end of August. WOSR has been talking with Rock county about these projects, most shovel ready projects are in or near Rock County. The County has agreed to submit an application on behalf of these investments in Rock County. The applicant must be a public unit of government. Their total application is \$55 million dollars for 33-35 miles of track upgrading. This price is high as they will have to use federal and state prevailing wage requirements. Lucht thanked the Rock County delegates for helping WSOR on this. WSOR will work on securing the necessary 20% local match. The WDOT grant program may be eligible to make up 80% of that 20% match.
13. **Approve Annual Insurance BID from Richgels-Schaefer Agency Inc.**
  - **Motion to approve annual insurance bid from Richgels-Schaefer Agency Inc. Sweeney / Van Schwartz – passed unanimously**
14. **Report on ARRA High Speed Rail Public Meeting– Commissioners Gray and Van Schwartz** - In June, Van Schwartz and Gray attended a WDOT open house meeting on the eastside of Madison. This was the first public WDOT meeting on this topic. The presentation was well done, he said. A lot of the discussion centered around the location of the Madison station. Most of the comments involved not putting the Station downtown, but putting it at the airport instead. Close to 100 people were present at the meeting. Van Schwartz had some concerns with how open the corridor is on the east side of Madison and that some operation life savers need to be sent out there. The meeting was at Olbrich Park, there was another one at East High School a couple of weeks earlier. The next meeting will be at the end of this month in Madison, exact date and location TBD
15. **Update, discussion and possible action regarding passenger rail service between Madison and Milwaukee** - John Oimoen presented to the RTC. Oimoen thanked Ron Adams and Leana Wall for making this project a success so far. Oimoen gave the project background: The Midwest Rail Initiative began working with Amtrack in 1996. Goals were to provide efficiencies, revenues, speed within corridors and be good stewards of funding. Hub of passenger rail for the Midwest is in Chicago. This rail being discussed is high speed intercity rail, not commuter rail. Wisconsin was the only state in this initiative that was awarded nearly all the ARRA funds that they requested. . They plan that the rail service between Madison and Milwaukee will have six daily round trips, tickets are expected to cost \$22-30 one way. Initially speeds will be 79 mph, they expect to have the speeds up to 110 mph by 2016. Proposed stations are in Madison, Watertown, Oconomowoc, and Brookfield. The Madison Station location is 101 E Wilson Street and environmental assessment on that location is beginning right now. Transportation will also serve existing stations at the Milwaukee airport, Sturtevant, Glenview and Chicago. \$24 million has been allocated for all the new stations. WDOT has said that they will meet with any communities if reasonable to meet with the public to discuss these plans. As for the corridor, they are installing 106lb welded rail and concrete ties along the route. The estimated cost to build out this corridor between Milwaukee and Madison, is over \$300 million.

Huntington, from WDOT, presented the Commission with a draft resolution in support of track and corridor changes and management of project details needed to complete improvements necessary to implement the proposed passenger rail service between Milwaukee and Madison, Wisconsin. The Commission reviewed the resolution in brief, and will bring comments to the next meeting. Huntington explained that WDOT needs something to bring to the FRA so that they know that all the key parties are in support of this project. Commissioners are invited to submit any comments to the WRRTC Administrator prior to the August meeting. The Commission will vote on this Resolution at their August meeting.

***The Commission recessed for a ten minute break at 11:10, Commissioner Haefs-Fleming left at this time.***

- 16. Update on June 30<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Sauk County Economic Development Board (re. Sauk County Rails-to-Trails) and possible vote for two WRRTC Representatives to attend future meetings of this group on this topic.** Seeboth and Van Schwartz updated the Commission on this meeting as they both attended as WRRTC Representatives. Sauk County recently convened a group of 17 organizations that had investment and interest in the issue of rails-to-trails conversion in Sauk County. The group met for their first time on Wednesday June 16<sup>th</sup> with a hired facilitator. In meeting one, the group established ground rules and topics of conversation. Notably, the group decided that they want consensus-based decisions, meaning if anyone is uncomfortable with a decision, the group will work to develop a decision that everyone can live with. About 75 people showed up to this first meeting. The WRRTC discussed who should be their representatives for the following meetings (each stakeholder organization is invited to have 2 representatives, one primary and one secondary representative). The Commission thought that they would like to ask Scott Alexander from Sauk County and a Dane County representative to attend the meetings, but as these Commissioners were not present at the meeting, they asked Van Schwartz and Seeboth to attend this next meeting.
  - **Motion that Seeboth and Van Schwartz represent the WRRTC at the next Sauk County Rails-to-Trails meeting, with Seeboth as the primary representative and Van Schwartz as the secondary representative. In the future, ask Sauk and Dane County Commissioners if they would be willing to attend these meetings on behalf of the WRRTC- Anderson / Cornford – Passed with one vote in opposition (Commissioner Sinklair)**
- 17. MH Materials, Inc., Private Crossing request, Janesville WI.** Sweeney and Strachan presented to the Commission on their request for a crossing in Janesville. MH Materials had an access agreement to a prior access point, the city of Janesville re-routed the road and had an agricultural crossing permit that lacked clarity. The attorney wanted to clear this up and apply for a new crossing with more clear language from the WRRTC. They assured the RTC that this will not become a public crossing, but it will likely become industrial after sand and gravel are gone. Lucht said that WSOR is okay with the request, but they require that the crossing be upgraded to match the standard plan.
  - **Motion to grant a private crossing permit to MH Materials, requiring that they bring the crossing up to WSOR standards and pay a \$500 permit fee to WRRTC – Grey / Sinklair – passed unanimously**
- 18. Weberpal III LLC Private Crossing request, Janesville WI.** This crossing request was removed from the WRRTC agenda as the crossing is along the Pecatonica Rail Transit Commission corridor.
- 19. Removal of billboard located on Wilmot Rd and 12 in Spring Grove, IL.** Commissioner Sinklair visited this area last month but had a difficult time determining what billboard was on the Commission property, he did not see anything in the described location that appeared to be a billboard. Due to inconclusively, the Commission made no motion.
- 20. Motion adjourning the meeting at 12:16 p.m. - Scallon / Cornford - passed unanimously.**