

Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission

Full Commission Mtg – Friday, 06 May 2011 @ 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		X
	Margaret Ruf	Secretary	X
	Robert Scallon	2nd Vice Chair	X
Iowa	Charles Anderson	X- Committee	X
	Gerald Dorscheid	Vice Treasurer	X
	Robert Zinck		X

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

Others present for all or part of the meeting:

Amy Seeboth (SWWRPC / WRRTC Administrator); Frank Huntington, Sheri Walz, Ron Adams, and Roger Larson (WisDOT); Ken Lucht and Steve Beske (WSOR); Virgil Casper (Pink Lady RTC); Bill Wentzel (Sauk County) and Jennifer Erickson (Sauk County UW-Extension).

3. Motion accepting Seeboth’s certification of Public Notice. Grant / Manke- passed unanimously.
4. Motion accepting the Agenda prepared by Seeboth. M. Ruf / Thomas - passed unanimously.
5. Motion approving the draft April Minutes. Dorscheid / F. Ruf – passed unanimously.
6. Motion approving the Executive Committee March Minutes. M. Ruf / F. Ruf - passed unanimously.
7. Public Comment – None
8. Correspondence & Communications – Seeboth updated the Commission on a number of correspondences received.

REPORTS & COMMISSION BUSINESS

9. WRRTC Financial Report– Jim Matzinger, Dane County CPA / WRRTC Accountant, was not present but left copies of the treasurer’s report for each Commissioner.
 - Motion accepting the treasurer’s report for May and payment of bills. – Van Schwartz / Cornford – passed unanimously
10. Presentation on Sauk County Rail Economic Impact Analysis- Jenny Erickson, Community Resource Development Agent, Sauk County UW-Extension, presented on her research on this topic. In order to help the local communities make an informed decision about whether or not the purchase of the rail in Sauk County would be a good investment, Jenny interviewed ten rail users and developed an IMPLAN economic impact assessment. The study found that, among other things, rail users pay their employees \$86.6 million/year and pay \$808,000-\$988,000/year in property taxes. The full report can be found on the WRRTC Website.
11. Wisconsin & Southern Railroad’s Report on Operations – Ken Lucht, WSOR, presented on the following:

Monthly maintenance Activities: WSOR is spraying for weed control right now along all corridors. They are also doing general track inspections to find defective ties and rail breaks. They are undertaking a number of bridge projects

including bridges in Madison and in Spring Green. They are doing some brush cutting near Merrimac and, in Cross Plains, they recently began installing some ties.

Update on 2010 Capital Projects: The welded rail installation on the Madison Sub is well-underway. They hired a contractor to install switches on the track between Milton Jct. and Stoughton. They have rebuilt a number of crossings and some switches- they have a 2-3 more crossings to complete still on this project.

Update on 2011 Capital Project Planning: WSOR is going to continue their welded rail project on the Madison Sub (16 miles). They will also be doing a Phase 1 project to install welded rail in Slinger. Waukesha will be getting some welded rail as well.

Continuing Issues / Topics: WSOR will soon be sending out their second quarter newsletter and Commissioners should receive them in the next couple of weeks. WSOR has been dealing with flooding issues in the Prairie du Chien area and are back in business now. Lucht handed out some economic information that they have developed on the rail system, system-wide: the "2010 economic profile" and also "Wisconsin's Public Freight Rail System". These handouts can be found on the WRRTC Website.

11. **WRRTC Administrator's Report** – Seeboth reported to the Commission on several ongoing issues including the Ekleberry crossing in Muscoda, PRTC is exploring adjusting their local match to WRRTC and the history of this match, the Sauk County construction projects that the Commission approved earlier, and the PRTC trail study.
12. **WDOT Update** – Frank Huntington, WDOT, reported that Feb. 1st was the application deadline for DOT Freight Rail Preservation Program (FRPP) grants. They do not yet know what is going to be the funding level for this program this year, the Governor's proposal has been reduced by the Joint Finance Committee. The DOT has applications worth about \$90 million for this program this year. The acquisition of the UP line from Madison to Reedsburg and the WSOR Bridge Study are two big WSOR applications. Ron Adams pointed out that the new Joint Finance Committee budget proposal says that in the future they will give projects with more than 20% match a greater weight in the FRPP ranking process.
13. **Discussion of WRRTC Mission and Purpose** – The Commission was provided with copies of their Mission. The entire WRRTC Charter can be found on the WRRTC Website.
14. **Consideration and possible action on developing a WRRTC response to the Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee decision to cut the Freight Rail Preservation Program to \$30 million in this next biennium.** Lucht explained that on Wednesday, the Wisconsin Joint Finance Committee decided to cut the Freight Rail Preservation Program (FRPP) biennium budget from \$60 million to \$30 million. Lucht explained that this would have a big impact on freight rail viability in the State, and on the Commission. He encouraged the Commissioners to reach out to their legislatures. Van Schwartz requested that each Commissioner meet with their representatives on this. Adams said the vote was 14-2 in favor of cutting the budget.
 - **Motion to draft and send a letter to WRRTC representatives explaining the benefits of rail to Wisconsin and asking that FRPP be funded at \$60 Million in the budget. Seeboth and Lucht are to work together on drafting this letter** - *Gustina / Grant – motion passed (one opposing vote by Sinklair)*

The Commission Recessed for a 10-minute break at 11:22

15. **Discussion of WSOR Contractual Obligations to WRRTC** – Polyock requested this agenda item. Questions have arisen at MoreAgri, a company along the line that is running at 20% capacity because they can't get enough trains into Chicago. Polyock has been in conversation with WSOR about this and is wondering what WSOR is trying to do or going to do to get more trains into Chicago. Lucht said they have restrictions into Chicago. They do have one alternate access point into Chicago but it is limited to grain. Beske added that this is something that they talk about a lot and something that WSOR is working on. WSOR is in negotiations with Class 1 railroads to get more access into this area. All of these negotiations should be resolved in the next 2-3 years, none of the options are cheap. The problem in part is that all of the Class 1's are near or at capacity themselves already. Beske also spoke about shipping bottlenecks in general; that the systems are not flowing as well as they should.
16. **Update on Sauk County Rails-to-Trails Stakeholder Group** - Krueger, Sauk County Board Chair, Presented to the group. He first pointed out that this agenda item should be called the Rails AND Trails Stakeholder Group. He explained that the goal of the Sauk County Economic Development Committee is to assure that all of the assets of the County have an economic development impact. The rail and trail issue was one of the first topics that the

economic development committee took on, and specifically, the Merrimac Bridge. The Committee asked WSOR to do a study on this Bridge and Sauk County contributed \$5,000 to this study. Then, once they knew the condition of that bridge, the Committee decided to explore how to allow various uses (trails and rails) could co-exist. A little over a year ago the Committee developed a Stakeholders Group for this issue. Krueger passed around resolution 22-11 which stated that the County will pursue the development of a Trail. The Resolution was passed unanimously by their Board and forwarded to the Governor and the Secretary of Transportation. Tentatively on May 23rd, Sauk County will have their last large stakeholder group on this subject and then may transition into a subcommittee to move this process forward.

17. Consideration of sponsoring application to purchase Union Pacific Segment from Madison to Reedsburg-

Huntington explained that The Wisconsin DOT had been negotiating with UP to buy this track as part of the High Speed Rail (HSR) project. WSOR submitted an application to WDOT to purchase this track. If and when the DOT buys the Track, the agreement would be with WRRTC, not WSOR, so it would be more appropriate that the application be coming from the Commission rather than WSOR. Frank would like the Commission to assume responsibility of this application going forward. He assured the Commission that nothing would change other than the name on the application; WSOR would continue to tack responsibility for the negotiations, etc.

- **Motion to have the Commission co-sponsor the application with the WSOR to purchase the UP line from Reedsburg to Madison – Gaalswijk / Sinklair – passed unanimously**

18. Discussion and possible action regarding Badger Army Ammunition Plant easement and Sauk City / Prairie du Sac Rail-to-Trails -

Huntington explained that if this track is not used for its intended purpose (rail or trail) within two years of the original agreement date, the easement will dissolve. The agreement was signed in October of 2009, and it has not yet been used in either way. The WDOT would like to begin this discussion at this point. Huntington asked the Commission how they want to approach this, via committee or regular commission meetings. The Commission requested that this be placed on next month's agenda, that they would like to start with initial discussion as a Commission and see if it spins off into a committee.

19. Update and possible approval of Charter Street / UW Power Plant Project Changes –

Huntington provided Commissioners with a map of the Charter Street Power Plant. Since the Plant will no longer be converted to biofuels, the Plans for track changes are being changed again. UW-Madison is re-working the plans right now- they would like some of the corridor for a parking area. Any agreement with UW-Madison would specify very clearly that the corridor would convert back to rail if it is needed in that way. Huntington asked that the Commission approve this concept today.

- **Motion that the Commission adopt the UW-Madison Charter Street Power Plant Concept allowing use of the railroad right-of-way for parking purposes, with some minor modifications possible. The corridor may revert back to the railroad if needed at anytime with one year's notice– Van Schwartz / Anderson – Passed Unanimously and WSOR expressed consent as well**

20. WRRTC 2011 Elections

- **Motion to re-elect the officers as currently exist for another year with the secretary casting a unanimous ballot– Manke / Grant – passed unanimously**

21. Motion adjourning the meeting at 12:21 a.m. - Sinklair / Scallon- passed unanimously.