

**WRRTC AUGUST 2021 MEETING MINUTES – APPROVED**

**Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission  
Commission Meeting – Friday, August 6, 2021 at 10:00 am  
Merrimac Village Hall,  
100 Cook St., Merrimac, WI 53561**

1. 10:02 AM **Call to Order** – *Alan Sweeney, Chair*
2. Roll Call. **Establishment of Quorum** – *Matt Honer, Admin*

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

\* Indicates ZOOM attendance.

Commission met quorum.

**Others present for all or some of the meeting:**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ken Lucht, Roger Schaalma – <i>WSOR</i></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kris Sommers – <i>WisDOT</i></li> <li>• Alan Anderson – <i>Pink Lady RTC</i></li> </ul> |
|---|--|

3. Action Item. **Certification of Meeting’s Public Notice** – *Noticed by Honer.*
  - o *Motion to approve meeting’s public notice – Reimann/Podzilni. Passed Unanimously.*
4. Action Item. **Approval of Amended Agenda** – *Prepared by Honer.*
  - o *Motion to approve the amended agenda. Kuhnke/Morris. – Passed Unanimously.*
5. Action Item. **Approval of draft July 2021 Meeting Minutes** – *Prepared by Honer.*
  - o *Motion to approve the draft July 2021 meeting minutes. Polyock/Kannard. Passed Unanimously.*
6. Updates. **Public Comment** – *Time for public comment may be limited by the Chair.*  
No Public Comment.

7. Updates. **Announcements by Commissioners**

Cornford introduced Mark Gilberts a new member of the County Board who will be joining the Commission.

**REPORTS & COMMISSION BUSINESS**

8. **WRRTC Financial Report** – *Huttenburg, Treasurer.*

Huttenburg reported that when he took over, the treasurer’s report used the accrual method of accounting for the monthly treasurer’s report so the Commission was always showing the bill being paid a month before it was being paid. Huttenburg stated that this has changed so that the treasurer’s report reflects the account statements, a cash-type statement. For this reason, the numbers do not match the prior month’s report. Huttenburg reported on the Checking Cash Flow and the Local Government Investment Pool. He reported on the bill for payment.

Cornford reported Crawford County is paying off its back fees this month and the check is in the mail.

- o *Motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report and payment of bills. Anderson/Cornford. Passed Unanimously.*

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

Lucht stated the transloading facility in Reedsburg is completed and has already received its first rail car. The customer in Reedsburg has already started the second phase of their project. Lucht stated a routine track inspection identified a private crossing where farm equipment damaged the rail that could have caused a major derailment on the Monroe Sub. Podzilni asked if there was an effort to contact the landowner. Lucht responded WSOR has. Honer asked if it was a farm Crossing. Lucht stated it is a crossing used for farm equipment. Reimann asked about a fatality on the Prairie Sub. Lucht stated it appears to have been a suicide and the industry does not acknowledge or give attention to suicides. Alan Anderson

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stated the Pink Lady Commission is very happy with the improvements and new businesses in Reedsburg. Anderson stated that Rail supports about 1000 jobs in Reedsburg. Huttenburg asked about the North Freedom encroachments and the encroachments in Middleton Center. Lucht stated that he is monitoring the issue in North Freedom and the Middleton Center Crossing and that part of the OTUA was for the developer to construct a fence on the north side of the rail.

Schaalma reported the phase one rehab on the Reedsburg Sub. is moving forward with ten at-grade crossings scheduled for completion this year. An additional eleven crossings are scheduled for next year. The second Continuous Welded Rail (CWR) delivery train is loaded and likely to make its way through Chicago next week. Those CWR rails will go on the Waukesha Sub. and the Prairie Sub. Lunda is half done with the bridge near Bardwell. WSOR is working on a tie deck in Waunakee. Engineering plans are 95% complete for the phase three of the Merrimac bridge. Nine thousand maintenance ties are installed on the Madison Sub between Janesville and Stoughton. Next year WSOR plans to continue maintenance ties on the Madison Sub. and on the Prairie Sub. WSOR is looking for WisDOT approval to fix the WI-78 crossing in Black Earth yet this year. Weed spraying is done. Geometry testing is scheduled to start next year and rail testing is scheduled for October. Bridge inspections are ongoing. A stream restoration project on the Black Earth Creek was done through a partnership that helped protect the stream bank. Polyock asked if there is a number to call for issues with crossings. Schaalma stated that the little blue signs at crossings have a phone numbers and it connects to WSOR's dispatch.

### **10. WisDOT Report – Kris Sommers - WisDOT.**

Kris Sommers, supervisor of railroad engineering and safety, was present from WisDOT. Sommers stated that the Merrimac Bridge funding should be ready once the phase 3 environmental is done. RAISE Grant announcements are expected in October and WisDOT is also planning to apply for the Federal Rail Administration's CRISI grant in September/ October and will request a letter from the Commission at an upcoming meeting.

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

Honer has been working with Linn Township in Walworth County to transfer the Hillside Rd bridge from the Commission to the Township.

### **12. Discussion and Possible Action on WRRTC Meeting Schedule. – Susan Storti, Iowa County.**

Storti presented items regarding the Commission's monthly meetings and proposed the Commission consider a bi-monthly meeting schedule. She stated that Ken Lucht mentioned that other Commissions meet on a quarterly basis, so it is feasible for this Commission to look at a different schedule. Honer stated that the Charter does state the Commission is required to hold monthly meetings and to amend the charter requires action from each county board. Riek mentioned that in prior years, an executive committee of the Commission would meet monthly and the full Commission would only meet quarterly and if something were to change, he could see this being an option. Storti requested this be on the agenda in September for discussion and possible action.

### **13. Discussion and Action on Utility Permits in the Village of Spring Grove, IL and Solon Mills, IL – Honer, Admin.**

Honer reported he received two permits from Com Edison for utility installations. The first permit is for an overhead installation of Fiber Optic in Spring Grove and the second is another overhead installation in Solon Mills. WSOR has reviewed these permits and approved the plans for installation. Honer stated that he has not received the fees associated with the permits as of yet and would recommend the Commission only approve the permits conditioned on receiving the permit fees. It was asked if the installations were being placed on new poles, Honer stated that the installations are being installed on existing poles and the lines are being placed above existing telecom lines and below electric lines. Ranum stated that applications fees should be received at the time of application and that in the future permits should not come before the Commission without the application fees being received.

- *Motion to approve the Utility Permits from Com Edison in Spring Grove and Solon Mills, Illinois contingent on receiving the application fee. Huttenburg/McCumber. Passed Unanimously.*

### **14. Discussion and Possible Action on 2022 Budget – Huttenburg, Treasurer and Honer, Admin.**

Huttenburg presented the proposed option E of the Budget. Huttenburg explained this budget has an increase to WSOR's operating budget of \$5000 and a \$2000 decrease in the legal budget. With the revised budget, WSOR coverage of the Commission's operating budget will increase and get closer to having WSOR's rental obligation cover the administrative costs of the Commission.

- *Motion to approve proposed 2022 budget option E. Storti/Reimann. Passed Unanimously.*

Lucht stated that he did submit a letter in support of the Budget Option E. Lucht also stated that WSOR can help manage the operational budget by taking over the private crossing duties and bringing the issues to the Commission for approval. Honer stated that what WSOR is proposing is essentially how private crossing issues are dealt with currently. In the past, WSOR has brought private crossing issues to the Commission and the Commission has approved an agreement. Honer stated that no change has been made and that WSOR has not brought private crossings recently to the Commission for approval. The major issue with crossings is the disagreements about the requirements of a crossing and the different types of crossings.

### **15. Presentation on Merrimac Bridge Rehabilitation –Lucht, Schaalma.**

Lucht presented the work that has been done to-date on the Merrimac Bridge including Phase 1 and Phase 2. Lucht explained that Phase 3 is a \$13.5M project, and was awarded a grant of \$6.75M from a federal grant for the project. The goal is to improve the bridge to allow railcars weight of #315k per rail car. Customers on the line are looking to increase the rail car weight for increased efficiencies. Schaalma stated that Phase 3 of the Bridge project addresses the very old spans that are being fully replaced. The spans will likely be floated in on barges and replaced. The existing piers will be encased in concrete, a new tie deck, and new rail will be installed. Ranum asked if the steel in piers needed attention. Schaalma stated that the piers were good just needed some concrete work. The steel connecting the spans to the piers will be replaced with the spans.

### **16. Adjournment.**

- *Motion to Adjourn at 11:10 am – Scallon/Cornford. Passed Unanimously.*