

Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission

Executive Committee Mtg – Friday, 4 January 2008 at 10:00 a.m.
Dane County Highway Garage, 2302 Fish Hatchery Road, Madison, WI

- WRRTC Chair Karl Nilson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.
- Roll Call (present for all or part of the meeting):

| County | Commissioner | | XCOM | Jan. |
|----------|--------------|----------------|---------------|------|
| Crawford | Tom | Cornford | Advocate | X |
| | Phillip | Mueller | | |
| | Rocky | Rocksvold | | |
| Dane | Gene | Gray | 1st Treasurer | X |
| | Jim | Haefs-Flemming | | X |
| | Forrest | Van Schwartz | Advocate | X |
| Grant | Julia | Clark | | |
| | Robert | Scallon | | X |
| | Velma | Weadge | 2nd Secretary | X |
| Iowa | Charles | Anderson | Advocate | X |
| | Ron | Berg | | |
| | Mark | Masters | | |

| County | Commissioner | | XCOM | Jan. |
|-----------|--------------|------------|---------------|------|
| Rock | William | Agnew | 1st Secretary | X |
| | Steve | Eager | | |
| | Alan | Sweeney | | |
| | alternate | Ben | Coopman | |
| Sauk | Joel | Gaalswijk | | |
| | Rob | Sinklair | 2nd Treasurer | X |
| | Larry | Volz | | |
| alternate | Marcy | Huffaker | | |
| Walworth | Jerry | Grant | | |
| | Richard | Kuhnke | Advocate | X |
| | Allan | Polyock | | |
| Waukesha | Richard | Manke | | |
| | Karl | Nilson | Chair | X |
| | Robert | Thelen, II | | |

Others present for all or part of the meeting: Susan Sloper (SWWRPC Planner); Jim Matzinger (Dane County CPA / WRRTC Accountant); Ken Lucht (WSOR); Ron Adams and Roger Larson (WisDOT).

- Motion certifying Graves' public notice of the meeting / Kuhnke / Cornford / Passed unanimously.
- Motion approving the Agenda, prepared by Graves / Agnew / Anderson / Passed unanimously.
- Action on the *draft December Minutes* – the draft Minutes were not available prior to the meeting and approval was forwarded to the February meeting.
- Public Comment – NA
- Correspondence & Communications (referenced on the Agenda):
 - Haefs-Flemming reported on recent communications regarding coal transport – he had spoken with the lawyer from the Sierra Club, asked whether he would like to be added to the Commission's interest list, and had extended an invitation to attend WRRTC meetings; he said the lawyer had declined.
 - The Walworth County bridge issue on the Agenda had also referenced Polyock's request that the February Agenda include discussion related to ownership and responsibility for maintaining the timber bridges on Town roads. Lucht said the ownership of the two bridges is in question and it was suggested that this item be on the agenda for the next full Commission meeting.
 - Scallon reported that one of his constituents is upset over parked rail cars in front of their home (the home is near Boscobel and located in close proximity to Olsen Grain facility). Sloper routed pictures that were sent to Graves by the constituent. Scallon said the constituent has called him twice. He asked the Commission whether this is a WRRTC issue or an Olsen Properties issue. Lucht said the rail cars are parked on private property and that he believed Olsen had an agreement with them that rail crews were to leave 1.5 rail car lengths away from the home's window view. He said he had been contacted too and had told the resident that the cars are on private property. He said he was not sure what else could be done because the cars are not within the WRRTC / WisDOT ROW. Lucht was asked how long the cars are typically sitting in front of the individual's property and said typically it was not for very long. In discussion, it was noted that the residents have valid concerns, although it is not a matter over which the WRRTC, WisDOT, or WSOR have authority.
 - Grant County Snowmobile Trail / Hwy 133 Prairie Protection Project forwarded to the next agenda.

FOLLOW-UP: Include 1) ownership and responsibility for maintaining timber bridges and 2) Grant County Snowmobile Trail / Hwy 133 Prairie Protection Project on the next Agenda.

REPORTS

- 8. Wisconsin & Southern Railroad's Report on Operations** – Ken Lucht said WSOR will have the rail detector test car out in January and will conduct system-wide tests, starting with the Fox Lake Sub, the Milwaukee Sub, continuing through the Southern Division, and finishing in the Northern Division. The rail detector test car will provide a report on broken rails and where the troubles in the track lie. WSOR is conducting tests in response to the derailment in Edgerton (on the Madison subdivision). Lucht will provide the WRRTC the results from this search once it is done. He also noted that WSOR has stepped up track inspections – most subs have daily inspections, noting the conditions and identifying issues. WSOR production totals for 2007 will be ready in February, which will report on maintenance activities performed by WSOR in 2007, including ties laid in 2007, miles or feet of rail laid in 2007, etc. WSOR's pending capital projects include the Madison tie replacement project, with replacement of 40,000 ties between Milton Junction and Madison, and Lucht expects this project to be approved sometime in February (although it could be as late as July. He said the Horicon to Hartford tie project is almost complete. WSOR has several other projects pending for 2008: starting Monday, January 7, 2008, they will be conducting a class for ten (10) new hires -- both engineers and conductors and, by April 1st, 2008, each individual will be eligible for an engineering or conducting job. Lucht says the new hires are in response to new business generated on the Prairie Du Chien/Boscobel line, with some hires coming from a different railroad and others making a career change. Lucht said WSOR partnered with the City of Hartford and the Village of Burnett to bring Santa Claus to town. Kids were able to get their pictures taken with Santa in front of the WSOR train. He estimated that almost 7,000 people came to see Santa – a “grand event!” The WSOR train circled the Christmas tree at the Capitol too. In discussion, Sinklair asked how many miles are included in the Milton to Madison tie replacement project and Lucht said there are about 40 miles in this Phase II project, with every tie being replaced. Gray requested a comparison of ties laid in 2006 and 2007, which Lucht stated he would provide at an upcoming meeting.

FOLLOW-UP: Lucht will provide a comparison of the number of ties laid in 2006 and 2007.

It was noted that former Commissioner “Doc” Martin had died, with the funeral on January 12th in Kansas. Nilson said, “He was a very good man who had a positive influence on this Commission and he will be missed.”

- 9. WisDOT Report** – Ron Adams and Roger Larson said Feb. 1st is the due date for the grants and loan program.
- 10. WRRTC Financial Report** – Jim Matzinger, Dane County CPA, distributed the Treasurer's Report and said there were no bills for the month.
- Sloper noted that she was substituting for Graves, who was ill, and said she had asked if there could be consideration and possible action on payment for the SWWRPC 2007 Staff Services Contract. Matzinger said he had not received an invoice and Sinklair said he did not agree with making payment without a bill. Van Schwartz said he would support making payment, up to a set-amount, contingent on getting proper documentation before making disbursement.
- ***Motion approving payment, up to \$20,000, for the 2007 SWWRPC Staff Services Contract, contingent on receiving an invoice prior to disbursement, and with any balance to be addressed at the February meeting / Van Schwartz / Gray / Passed with one Nay vote.***
- The draft 2006 Audit had been mailed to Commissioners and Matzinger said everything appeared to be fine and “the Auditor's opinion is a standard approval of our statements.” Nilson asked, “Does the Audit meet the requirements of all of the people that are handing money out?” and Matzinger said “Yes.” Nilson asked what the next steps were, and Matzinger said once the Commission approves the Audit, he would get hard copies bound and would send a copy to each of the WRRTC's member counties.
- ***Motion approving the Audit of the Commission's 2006 Financials / Sinklair / Gray / Passed unanimously.***

- 11. WRRTC Administrator's Report** – Susan Sloper, SWWRPC Planner, substituted for Graves, who was ill, and provided an update on several issues: **a)** Both Crawford County and Rock County have vacancies on the Commission, due to County Board resignations. Gray said “Shouldn't we get ahold of these counties and talk to them about the Commission? We should contact any County that has existing vacancies and provide them with the WRRTC's ‘Job Description for Commissioners’.”
- ***Motion directing Graves to contact Counties that have existing WRRTC vacancies and send them the WRRTC's ‘Job Description for Commissioners’ / Gray / Sinklair / Passed unanimously.***

FOLLOW-UP: Contact and send information to Counties that have Commission vacancies.

b) Renewal of Staff Services Contracts was forwarded to the February 2008 WRRTC meeting.

FOLLOW-UP: Have renewal of staff services contracts on the next Agenda.

c) Lucht provided an update on the Kattner request (Spring Grove, IL) for a permit to access the ROW for maintenance, as part of a prairie project, and said Graves had been working with the requestor; **d)** Sloper said Graves and Weeden have been

adding to the Commission's www.wrrtc.org website and routed copies of the website usage report; Van Schwartz commented on the nice job being done on the website; e) recommendations for the next Agenda follow.

FOLLOW-UP: Matzinger asked for discussion and possible action on the option of moving interest into the Commission's operating fund, rather than putting the accrued interest back into the project.

FOLLOW-UP: Request by Matzinger to have action initiating an audit of the Commission's 2007 financials on the next Agenda.

12. **Bridge Issues in Walworth County Towns of Linn and Darien** – Lucht said a bridge on North Road in the **Town of Dairen** on North Road has been closed to vehicular traffic and the Town is anxious to have it reopened. The bridge goes over a creek within the railroad ROW and there have been questions of ownership. He said the bridge appears to be owned by the WRRTC, according to discussions a few years ago, although responsibility for maintenance / reconstruction is less clear. Lucht said there was a cost estimate of \$60,000.00 for replating the bridge, but he didn't know the estimate for replacing the bridge structure with a box culvert.

The second bridge issue was in the **Town of Lind**, which wants to repair an overhead bridge. Adams said WisDOT has been contacted with questions about ownership and maintenance responsibilities. Lucht said the Commission took up the issue of bridge ownership a few years ago and believes that it found that the Commission owns the bridge. Larson questioned whether the County has looked into its bridge money accumulated over the years and said it comes down to prioritization by counties as to where they want to spend money. There was further discussion about the bridge issues, which was forwarded to the next meeting.

13. **Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium** – Lucht reported on a meeting he had attended re Jefferson County's possibly joining the WRRTC. With the Consortium's anticipated support, it would go to the full County Board in January 2008. He said the County has a lot of rail issues that are not associated with the WRRTC rail system, but they feel that becoming a WRRTC member may benefit them, noting that they have one of the largest ethanol plants in Wisconsin but it can't get rail service because the cost is too high.

14. Prior to adjournment, Nilson noted that this WRRTC meeting was less than an hour! ☺

- **Motion for adjournment at 10:55 am / Sinklair / Van Schwartz / Passed unanimously.**