

MINUTES

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thursday, August 15, 2024

1:30 p.m.

Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Commissioners' Conference Room
W239 N1812 Rockwood Drive
Waukesha, WI 53188

Meeting Occurred in Person and Virtually via Video and Telephone Conference

Present:

Excused:

Committee Members:

Charles Colman, Chairperson
Donna Brown-Martin
James Dwyer
Brian Holt
Natalia Minkel-Dumit
Robert Pitts
David Stroik

Thomas Buestrin
Michael Crowley

Staff:

Stephanie Hacker
Benjamin McKay
Elizabeth Larsen
Alina Panasiuk

Executive Director
Deputy Director
Director of Administration
Accounting Specialist

ROLL CALL

Chairperson Colman called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present. Chairperson Colman noted for the record that Commissioners Buestrin and Crowley had asked to be excused.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 18, 2024

Chairperson Colman asked if there were any changes or additions to the July 18, 2024, Executive Committee meeting minutes. There were none.

On a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Dwyer, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on July 18, 2024, were approved as published.

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF 2024 STRATEGY DRAFT ACTIONS

Chairperson Colman asked Ms. Hacker to review the potential actions for the 2024 Strategy. Ms. Hacker noted the Committee had last viewed these actions at the May 16, 2024, Committee meeting. The Committee tabled this discussion at that time.

Mr. Pitts noted the discussion must be motioned to be moved off the table.

On a motion by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Mr. Dwyer, the discussion on the 2024 Strategy draft actions was removed from the table for further discussion.

Ms. Hacker then noted all Commissioners had just received a power point presentation that reviews the working goals and further details how to achieve each goal. She then stated she will review each slide and ask for discussion of the slide.

Working Goals for a 5-Year Horizon:

- > *People* Foster skilled, diplomatic, and engaged employees
- > *Projects* Generate output and outcomes that safeguard the Region's future
- > *Partners* Engage in clear and consistent communication with the Region
- > *Place* Cultivate a productive, inspirational, and educational workplace
- > *Perspective* Act as stewards of the Region's health
- > *Prospering* Secure sustainable and versatile revenue sources

A discussion pertaining to each slide follows.

Slide 1 Working Goals for a 5-Year Horizon

Mr. Stroik commented on Perspective, inquiring about "health", and stated the Commission is a steward of everything in the Region. Ms. Hacker noted "health" references the Region's economic, environmental, and public health. Mr. Stroik further commented the statement seemed narrow.

Mr. Dwyer noted these goals are condensed. Under each goal will be a list of sub-goals and ideas. Mr. Dwyer also stated that Perspective is not only physical health, but also the health of everything the Commission does.

Slides 2 & 3 People: Foster skilled, diplomatic, and engaged employees *PARTS ONE & TWO*

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Ms. Hacker clarified the leadership training program would be a training program that would be extended to Commissioners so they are aware of the principles of leadership to which staff aspire.

Mr. Stroik stated the tone of this slide sounds like there is a deficit in employee satisfaction.

Ms. Hacker stated she did not wordsmith the slide with a deficit mindset.

Mr. McKay stated that the intent of the draft actions is to take advantage of all the opportunities we can to help our employees grow in their jobs and their careers as opposed to addressing a deficit.

Mr. Holt stated he agrees with Mr. Stroik and further noted this slide feels like a corrective action. Instead of being aspirational, the statement is worded such that a change is needed to current practices.

Mr. Colman then commented on the leadership training program as noted on Slide 1. Ms. Hacker clarified this point by stating that if leadership training is offered to division heads, it should also be extended to Commissioners, as Commissioners need to be aware of the principles of leadership to which staff aspires.

Mr. Holt then stated that in the final version of this document, it should be determined if leadership training would be offered to Commissioners and thus make this a definitive statement.

Mr. Stroik stated he felt each bullet could be summarized into a brief statement, such as “Commit to leadership training.”

Ms. Hacker reiterated the direction to simplify the actions so they are not verbose.

Mr. Holt stated that simplifying actions also eliminates tone.

Ms. Brown-Martin observed that the title of Slide 2 sounds heavily internally focused, and from a regional standpoint, it does not describe how the agency staff is reaching out to communities, neighborhoods, and counties: engaging these communities and pulling them into the process. Ms. Hacker stated the section on partners covers some of this sentiment and can be woven into the people section. In doing so, it is explicit that enriching the employee base comes with understanding of and conversing with the Region.

Ms. Brown-Martin also asked staff to consider projects that generate outputs and outcomes that safeguard the Region’s future. She further noted this sounds internally focused and if the partners slide is where you're capturing how you're working with the seven counties and those communities within, you will need a combination of the people and partner slide because the way Counties work with the Commission is through projects and programming.

Ms. Hacker noted she will simplify and connect these slides.

Mr. Colman asked for clarification on the “Evaluate the creation of an agency alumni resource team.” Ms. Hacker stated evaluate is the key verb and noted there are devoted former employees who have expressed to her they would like to participate.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Ms. Hacker stated former employees have expressed an interest in sharing their experiences with current staff about specific projects and places in the Region.

Ms. Brown-Martin then asked about “Conduct recurring meetings in each Division and deliver the meeting purpose of the mission, vision, and idea sharing,” being different than “Routinely discuss the agency’s mission, vision, and the benefits of regional plan recommendations” bullet on Slide 1. Ms. Hacker stated the statements are redundant and will determine if both statements are needed.

Mr. Stroik commented on the last bullet concerning the number of staff, noting administratively the Commission would staff appropriately. He recommended eliminating this bullet. Ms. Brown-Martin noted Counties are trying to make themselves more stealth, and this sounds like you are trying to

grow the number of Commission employees. Ms. Minkel-Dumit suggested that “appropriate level of staffing” language be added to a different bullet. Mr. McKay then asked the Commission’s if achieving the other actions under this goal would help staff in getting their work done in a timely manner along with maintaining a high level of quality. Ms. Brown-Martin noted a balance is needed between acknowledging and working on these bullets and the demand for work and the ability to get the work done.

Mr. Holt suggested removing indications of timelines on the actions.

Ms. Hacker noted the actions should be revisited annually and has yet to determine if publishing an annual update is needed or if staff can internally advance with the Executive Committee’s guidance.

Mr. Holt clarified that all these items could happen within the next year.

Slide 4 Projects: Generate outputs & outcomes that safeguard the Region’s future

Mr. Stroik commented that it would be helpful to Commissioners to have an understanding of the types of studies the Commission conducts and what each study is trying to achieve.

Mr. McKay responded to this comment by stating that Commission staff produces several different types of reports. A few examples include planning reports, which are regional in scope and may include supporting technical reports, which present data and analyses to support preparing the planning report. Mr. Dwyer commented that some planning reports have multiple editions and that it would be helpful to understand what has changed between the editions.

In response to a comment by Mr. Colman concerning the creation of an online clearinghouse action, Ms. Hacker stated this can be re-worded, but the idea was to maintain a database of all recommendations noted in all Commission planning reports.

Mr. McKay noted that regional plans typically have a monitoring or implementation section that summarizes the plan recommendations and identifies a potential implementing entity.

Slide 5 Partners: Engage in clear and consistent communication with the Region

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Brown-Martin, Ms. Hacker stated she recognizes an action on how staff receives information from the community is missing and will incorporate such language into this document.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman, Ms. Hacker stated in the past there had been a regular convening of regional planning directors in the Region. She further stated that convening planning directors would be returning to a practice that was undertaken for the purpose of exchanging information about issues across the Region and for those planning directors to exchange ideas. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Dwyer, the planning directors would be from County and local units of government. Mr. McKay stated that when a regional plan has been completed, county and local planning directors or often invited to discuss plan recommendations and implementation processes.

Mr. McKay further stated the Commission has held workshops on regional issues, such as environmental. Members of both the public and private sectors were invited to attend. The workshop discussion focused on explaining what corridors and how they relate to planning and development projects.

Ms. Larsen noted that in the past the Commission regularly held day-long conferences on various aspects of planning. Staff or individuals from other state and local government agencies would hold various sessions. She stated such a conference would accomplish the bullet, “Convene planning directors throughout the Region on a regular basis to discuss industry practices and approaches to recent issues.”

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Dwyer, Mr. McKay noted that developers will often consult local government plans and ordinances when looking for sites to develop.

In response to a second inquiry by Mr. Dwyer, Mr. McKay stated that the Commission does have records of all comprehensive plan amendments that occur within the Region. All units of government within the Region are required by State Statutes to provide these amendments to the Commission.

Slide 6 Place: Cultivate a productive, inspirational, and educational workplace

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman regarding the phrase “get to be” on the first action, Mr. McKay stated that staff is trying to make the office a place employees want to be. Mr. Stroik stated the space in which the Commission staff works is not commensurate with the high-quality work of the staff.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman, Ms. Hacker stated that the building amenities would be the offerings of the building and furnishings and features that are available to employees.

Ms. Minkel-Dumit commented on the wording in the second action, “office location(s)” and suggested that text be added to reflect the ability for employees to work remotely or revise that action to make it clear that Commission’s physical office spaces are being referenced. Ms. Hacker responded that we do need to be mindful of recommendations about the office that tie to staff experience and working from home. The intent of the “office location(s)” wording was to acknowledge the Global Water Center office and the Commission main Rockwood drive location. Ms. Hacker stated the action can be revised to distinguish reference the Rockwood Drive and Global Water Center locations. Ms. Minkel-Dumit also noted that some employees work in the field.

Slide 7 Perspective: Act as stewards of the Region’s health

Ms. Hacker noted that based on earlier comments, Perspective should be shortened to “Act as stewards of the Region,” with the intent of tweaking the actions under the intent of the goal.

Ms. Brown-Martin commented on the last action, “Curate an outdoor office landscape comprised of indigenous, biodiverse plant species and designed for educational interaction with employees and visitors,” stating that staff does not have the ability to sit, read, or work outside.

Slide 8 Prosper: Secure sustainable and versatile revenue sources

Ms. Hacker stated the first action regarding increasing the tax levy will be simplified. Ms. Brown-Martin stated the Commission should be reimbursed for their work. Ms. Larsen stated the Commission is now at a point where maintaining the current level tax levy funding is not sustainable. She then noted there have been a number of factors have helped the Commission to not have to raise the tax levy for the past 19 years. Those factors include Act 10, which changed the cost share for the

contribution to the Wisconsin Retirement System to 50 percent employee and 50 percent Commission. The Commission also increased the cost share for the health insurance contribution from a 90 percent Commission share to an 80 percent Commission share. In addition, the Commission fully owns the building, which was purchased in 2000 and paid off in 2011, thus there have not been mortgage payments for the past 13 years.

Mr. Dwyer stated in looking at the tax levy from a County viewpoint, the State mandates the Counties deliver a certain level of services, that have an annual cost increase. Yet the Counties have limited ability to raise revenues. Mr. Dwyer recommended that the Commission Executive Director should meet with County Executives and Administrators, County Boards, or County Finance Committees, and state the reasons why the Commission has not had to raise the tax levy for the last 19 years, and note that the Commission is now at the point where tax levy must be raised a certain percent on an annual basis until a point in time where staffing is at level to meet the demand for the Commission's services. He further stated a tax levy increase should not come as a shock to any County, but the key is communication with the County Executive/Administrator and County Board Supervisors.

On a motion by Mr. Stroik, and seconded by Mr. Dwyer, the Committee directed staff to revise actions as discussed.

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF PAINTING CONTRACTOR FOR ROCKWOOD DRIVE TENANT SPACE

Ms. Larsen stated the Commission's tenant space does need to be painted prior to re-leasing that space. Ms. Larsen then reviewed three quotes for painting the tenant space.

On a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Dwyer, staff is directed to hire Certa Pro Painters to paint the tenant space with Certa Pro adding to the proposal that clean up and disposal of materials is included in the cost.

WORK PROGRAM REPORT

Chairperson Colman asked Mr. McKay to review the Work Program Progress Report. Mr. McKay reviewed the report and noted that the report identifies key regional and selected community and county assistance efforts (copy of report attached to Official Minutes).

CONSIDERATION OF CONTRACTS

Chairperson Colman asked Ms. Larsen to review the proposed contracts. Ms. Larsen noted that the report the Committee members received prior to the meeting listed one contract.

There being no questions or comments on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Ms. Minkel-Dumit, and carried unanimously, the contract report was accepted, and the report was placed on file (copy of report attached to Official Minutes).

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF THE STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURE FOR REPORTING PERIOD ENDING JULY 28, 2024

Copies of the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures as of reporting period No. 15, ending on July 28, 2024, were distributed for Committee review.

In reviewing the Statement with the Committee, Ms. Larsen commented that the period covered represented just under 60 percent of the calendar year. She then called attention to the following items:

1. The Federal and State revenue entries remain unchanged from the report presented at the July meeting.
2. The service agreement revenues remain unchanged from the report presented at the July meeting.
3. The liability, operating, and reserve accounts reported on the Statement reflect the findings of the 2023 financial audit.
4. The Commission had on hand as of July 28, 2024, approximately \$5.45 million. This includes about \$151,000 of unearned revenue provided to the Commission in advance of expenditures.
5. The funds on hand are invested in the State of Wisconsin Local Government Investment Pool, which is presently paying 5.42 percent interest, certificate of deposit accounts, and money market accounts.

In response to a comment by Mr. Stroik, Ms. Larsen stated she will work with the Auditor to amend the budget.

[Secretary's note: Ms. Larsen does conduct a thorough budget review in September of each year and will report on this review at the October Committee meeting.]

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Colman, and carried unanimously, the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures for the period ending July 28, 2024, was accepted to be placed on file (copy attached to Official Minutes).

CONSIDERATION OF DISBURSEMENTS

2024 Reporting Period No. 14

Copies of the Check Register for the 14th financial reporting period of July 1, 2024, to July 14, 2024, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen called attention to the highlighted payments, noting the payment to the City of Milwaukee was for the work of the Environmental Collaboration Office on the Metropolitan Milwaukee Pollution Reduction Action Plan. The City is a sub-recipient of the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant that is funding this work.

Ms. Larsen noted the second highlight payment to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) for the stream gaging program. Ms. Larsen then noted that the stream gaging program is a long running program where 15 stream gages have been placed in various locations in the Milwaukee River, the Kinnickinnic River, the Root River, the Pike River, the Bark River, the Fox River, and the Mukwonago River. This is a cooperative program with the Commission acting as the fiscal agent. The USGS and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, the City of Delafield, the Kenosha Water Utility, the Racine Water Utility, Upper Nemahbin Lake Management District, and Waukesha County cost share this program.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Dwyer, Ms. Larsen stated that the payments to the Wisconsin Department of Revenue listed as garnishment were incorrectly coded to health insurance. These amounts are wage

garnishments that have been directed for payment by the Wisconsin Department Revenue, that have been deducted from employee payroll checks.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Pitts, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the 14th reporting period of 2024 were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Mr. Stroik, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the Check Register for the 14th reporting period of 2024 (copy attached to Official Minutes).

2024 Reporting Period No. 15

Copies of the Check Register for the 15th financial reporting period of July 15, 2024, to July 28, 2024, were distributed to the Committee.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Dwyer, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the 15th reporting period of 2024 were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Mr. Stroik, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the Check Register for the 15th reporting period of 2024 (copy attached to Official Minutes).

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. McKay stated that this Committee will meet on September 19, 2024, and the next Quarterly Full Commission meeting will be held on September 11, 2024 in Ozaukee County.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:09 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Pitts, and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Hacker
Deputy Secretary