

## MINUTES

### SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thursday, October 17, 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  
Michael Crowley  
Brian Holt  
Natalia Minkel-Dumit  
Robert Pitts  
David Stroik (abstained from voting)

Staff:

Stephanie Hacker	Executive Director
Benjamin McKay	Deputy Director
Elizabeth Larsen	Director of Administration

#### ROLL CALL

Chairperson Colman called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 15, 2024

Chairperson Colman asked if there were any changes or additions to the August 15, 2024, Executive Committee meeting minutes. There were none.

On a motion by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Ms. Minkel-Dumit, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on August 15, 2024, were approved as published.

**REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENTS (COPY OF EXHIBIT AND RESOLUTION No. 2024-14)**

Chairperson Colman asked the Commission to consider adoption of Resolution No. 2024-14, which is an amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program for Southeastern Wisconsin: 2023-2026. Mr. McKay presented Resolution 2024-14, amending the 2023-2026 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He indicated there is one new project to be amended into the TIP. He stated that the project was approved by the Commission's Advisory Committee on Transportation System Planning and Programming for the Milwaukee Urban Area.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Pitts to approve Resolution No. 2024-14, seconded by Mr. Crowley, and carried by a vote on 6 ayes and 0 nays, Resolution No. 2024-14 was approved (copy of Resolution 2024-14 attached to Official Minutes).

**CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENT TO THE 2024 OVERALL WORK PROGRAM (RESOLUTION NO. 2024-15)**

Chairperson Colman asked the Commission to consider adoption of Resolution No. 2024-15, which is an amendment to the 2024 Commission Overall Work Program (OWP).

Ms. Larsen stated that this amendment is a proposed revision of the 2024 OWP, which includes a routine budget adjustment to the Continuing Land Use and Transportation Study (CLUTS) projects funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT). She stated that the budget estimates for the CLUTS projects are determined in the OWP in September of the previous year. As the work for the CLUTS projects proceeds during the year, the budgets for the projects within the CLUTS program area may be revised to reflect the changing work efforts of each project and are then modified toward year end due to heavier than anticipated work in certain project areas.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Ms. Minkel-Dumit to approve Resolution No. 2024-15, seconded by Mr. Holt, and carried by a vote of 6 ayes and 0 nays, Resolution No. 2024-15 was approved (copy of Resolution 2024-15 attached to Official Minutes).

**CONSIDERATION OF OUTSIDE FACILITATOR FOR THE 2024 STRATEGY**

Chairperson Colman asked Ms. Hacker to review the external facilitation memorandum. Ms. Hacker reviewed the memorandum, which includes a recommendation for the Commission to approve a not-to-exceed budget of \$24,000.

Ms. Hacker then explained the proposals outlined in the memorandum. She noted that two proposals have been received, one from CI Design and one from MRA – The Management Association. She stated that CI Design specializes in storytelling and MRA will provide the expertise to develop metrics to assess implementation of the 2024 Strategy. Ms. Hacker noted each proposal includes services that will not be needed to complete the 2024 Strategy. She then referenced the table in the memorandum that identifies tasks of each of the proposals that would assist in the completion of the 2024 Strategy and reviewed the tasks in detail.

Mr. Stroik noted the Commission's budgetary constraints and stated he is not sure if an outside facilitator is necessary given how much progress has been made already with developing the Strategy. Mr. Colman responded that he thought an outside facilitator could still be useful at this point in the process, particularly with communicating the Strategy. Mr. Pitts agreed.

Ms. Brown-Martin agreed a facilitator is needed and noted that the counties should have input to the Strategy. She further stated the Commission's Environmental Justice Task Force should also be given the opportunity to provide input, otherwise the Commission risks credibility with the work staff has done to be responsive to communities throughout the Region.

Mr. Crowley echoed Ms. Brown-Martin's comments, further noting that clarity and communication with regard to the Commission's goals and how they will be achieved is important to elected officials. He then stated that it is critical there is an opportunity to connect with the leadership of each of the seven counties, particularly if an increase to the county tax levy is requested. He further stated that it would be better to be further along in the process in relation to the timing of developing the Commission's budget; however, a facilitator brings credibility to the process and is also an appropriate method to hold staff and Commissioners accountable. Mr. Crowley also stated that more communication from government in general is needed to maintain credibility with constituents.

Mr. Stroik clarified that he initially thought a facilitator was going to be used at the beginning of the Strategy development process, but that he did not recall any discussion of using a facilitator since. Ms. Hacker referenced the February 5<sup>th</sup> draft strategy framework, noting leadership staff will receive guidance from Commissioners on external facilitation. Ms. Hacker stated she understands how external facilitation has not felt at the forefront of the process. Mr. Stroik expressed concern that the facilitator is not a budgeted item.

Mr. Holt echoed the comments made regarding communication. He also explained he is interested in the internal metrics of success, particularly as challenges arise around the budget. He noted that having an external perspective on how the Commission is viewed will be helpful. He further stated that bringing in an outside source, which may challenge leadership to look at things in a different framework, could be very valuable.

Ms. Minkel-Dumit stated she supports the intention of facilitator; however, it would be helpful to have more background from the consultants about other similar projects that they have worked on. Ms. Minkel-Dumit inquired about tabling this matter until the November meeting to allow for additional time to consider this request and to receive background on both organizations. Mr. Colman asked Ms. Hacker if tabling this decision would work within the timeframe of the Strategy development. Ms. Hacker stated that acting on this decision at the November meeting would be sufficient.

Ms. Minkel-Dumit further stated that she missed the portion of the 2024 Strategy schedule identifying the potential need for external facilitation and would like additional time to consider and digest this information. She then asked if staff has had experience in working with either of these firms.

Ms. Hacker responded that she is familiar with CI Design's work but has not worked directly with them. She then stated that the Commission has worked with MRA. Ms. Hacker then asked Ms. Larsen to describe the staff relationship with MRA. Ms. Larsen stated that MRA is a human resource consulting firm the Commission has been a member of for the past 25 years. Ms. Larsen explained they have a large staff that are experts in many different areas of human resources knowledge. In the mid 1990's, Executive Leadership at that time utilized MRA for Division Head training. MRA is also used for salary surveys, they have worked with the financial staff of the AWRPC group on personnel issues, and in 2019 they assisted with the most recent update of the Commission's Personnel Regulations.

Ms. Hacker asked if the Committee would like references from both facilitators. Ms. Minkel-Dumit said that would provide a level of comfort and insurance given this decision.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Ms. Larsen stated staff need the authorization of the Committee to move forward with engaging the facilitators because, to Mr. Stroik's previous comment, this is not a budgeted item. She also noted the budget does not need to be amended.

Mr. Pitts stated he would like to finalize this decision. Mr. Pitts made a motion, seconded by Mr. Holt, to approve a not-to-exceed budget of \$24,000 for outside facilitation to assist with the 2024 Strategy. Ms. Brown-Martin commented that she does have experience with CI Design and their work with Milwaukee County. She stated CI Design does have a story telling approach and has experience involving disadvantaged communities.

Mr. Crowley inquired if rates had been negotiated and if a government discount was available. Ms. Hacker stated that it had not yet been done and she does need to communicate with both organizations the need to modify and reduce their level of effort and to inquire if the rates and fees provided are appropriate for a government agency. Mr. Crowley stated that as long staff has negotiated the best the rates and terms, he is in favor of this proposal.

There being no additional inquiries or discussion, it was moved by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Mr. Holt, and carried unanimously, that staff work with CI Design and MRA to negotiate rates and to revise the level of effort from each firm and to formalize agreements for both CI Design and MRA to be retained to assist the 2024 Strategy facilitation process at a cost not to exceed \$24,000.

#### **SELECTION OF AUDITOR FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2024**

Chairperson Colman asked Ms. Larsen to make a recommendation regarding the selection of the Commission's auditor for the calendar year 2024. Ms. Larsen stated on July 18, 2024, the Executive Committee received the calendar year 2023 audit, which was conducted by the certified public accounting firm of CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP (CLA). She noted that the cost to the Commission for the 2023 audit was \$41,002.

Ms. Larsen said it is the staff's recommendation that CLA be retained by the Commission to conduct the audit of the Commission's calendar year 2024 operations. She reported that Mr. Jordan R. Boehm, the accountant assigned to the Commission by the firm, conducted a thorough audit; Mr. Boehm makes himself available to the Commission staff throughout the year to provide guidance and advice on financial accounting matters; and Mr. Boehm and his team at CLA have performed well, worked cooperatively with staff, and completed the audit on schedule. The staff recommended that the Commission engage the firm CLA again at a cost not to exceed \$45,000.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Ms. Larsen stated the CLA annually conducts a full audit, with the cost of the first audit being \$29,500. She then stated that as the Commission continues to work with large grants, such as the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, audit costs will continue to rise, and large grants have additional audit requirements. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Ms. Larsen stated this practice is not unusual.

Mr. Stroik commented that in the future staff should consider switching auditing firms as a matter of good business practice.

There being no inquiries or discussion, it was moved by Mr. Holt, seconded by Mr. Crowley, and carried unanimously, that the firm CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP, be retained to conduct the calendar year 2024 audit.

## **REPORT ON 2025 COMMISSION HEALTH INSURANCE**

Chairperson Colman asked Ms. Larsen to review with the Committee the group medical insurance rates for calendar year 2025. Ms. Larsen noted a table titled “Commission Group Medical Insurance Premiums: 2025”, had been provided in the meeting materials and shows the Commission’s Group Medical Insurance Premiums for 2025.

Ms. Larsen stated that the Commission participates in the Wisconsin Public Employees Group Insurance Program. That program is governed by the State of Wisconsin Group Insurance Board and is administered by the Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds (WDETf). She noted that the Commission staff had been informed of the group health insurance rates for calendar year 2025. Ms. Larsen then explained that the Deductible Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) option for the Group Health Insurance Program was selected by Committee action on September 29, 2011. At the same meeting it was also determined that the employee deductible would be reimbursed to each employee through the establishment of a Health Reimbursement Account plan.

Ms. Larsen noted that in Calendar Year 2024 employees primarily selected Network Health with 12 employees selecting Dean Health Insurance, four employees selecting Common Ground Insurance, one employee selecting Quartz Community, and four employees selecting the All Access Plan administered by Dean Health Plan. The difference between these plans are the provider networks and cost. In Calendar Year 2025, there is one Tier 1 qualified health plan available to Commission employees: Network Health.

The State of Wisconsin considers a qualified health plan as a plan that has providers within the geographic area serving the majority of the employees of the organization. In 2025, there is one Tier 2 plan, Dean Health Plan; along with four Tier 3 plans: Quartz Community, Common Ground, Health Partners Southeast, and the Access Plan-Dean.

Ms. Larsen reviewed page 2, “Health Insurance Payroll Deduction Comparison Years 2024 and 2025” explaining that while the Commission generally would pay 80 percent of the health insurance premium, these tables show the percent of cost paid by employees is greater than 20 percent for four of the health plans. Due to a rule set by the State, the Commission is not allowed to pay more than 88 percent of the premium of the lowest cost Tier 1 plan in Waukesha County. If 88 percent of the Tier 1 plan is less than 80 percent of the premium cost of a non-Tier 1 health plan, the employee is then responsible for the difference between the 80 percent and the 88 percent. As a result of this rule, four of the health insurance plans offered to the staff have an employee cost share of 25 to 31 percent, with the Commission cost share of 69 to 75 percent.

The plans with the greater than the 80/20 cost share cover the Aurora Medical network. Dean Health Insurance is a network of clinics and physicians that are covered in western Waukesha County and Dane County. Network Health Insurance is the Ascension / Froedtert network of clinics and physicians.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Ms. Larsen stated that this is an ongoing problem, which is not yet fully recognized by the local government agencies participating in the WDETf program because they may not be aware of the 88 percent rule. During meetings the WDETf has held with local government agencies on the health insurance program, Ms. Larsen stated she has offered to be the point of contact for agencies to discuss how to change this rule.

Mr. Pitts suggested that Ms. Larsen meet with State Representatives. Mr. Holt asked for a description of this issue to be e-mailed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen then indicated that the staff is currently in the process of selecting plans for 2025 with the enrollment period ending on October 25, 2024. A report on the results of the Commission staff health insurance selections and the budget impact of the selection process will be provided at the next Executive Committee Meeting.

## **DISCUSSION ON COMMISSION REVENUE SOURCES**

Mr. Stroik led the discussion by stating that several goals and actions have been discussed while developing the 2024 Strategy that could have a future fiscal impact on the Commission, and there are things the Commission could take action on in the short-term to have a positive fiscal impact. He stated that costs to the Commission should be reviewed closely when project service agreements and scopes are developed to cover Commission costs. Action can be taken to increase the Commission's revenue and becoming more fiscally responsible by utilizing the knowledge of the Committee members to assist staff in establishing a fee structure in addition to ensuring work projects are completed in a timely manner.

Mr. Holt noted the 2024 Strategy agenda item discussion related to defining the internal metrics of success. He stated that not having an understanding of when a project should be terminated is an internal metric question. An external perspective could provide boundaries on when a project should be completed and thus a cost saving measure. An external focus on how the staff works through projects may identify areas that staff may not see because they are attached to the projects.

Ms. Hacker stated that it is the intent of staff to bring forward an updated fee schedule to the November Committee meeting. She then noted that if the Commission's funding is viewed as a pie chart, there are Federal and State funds, the regional tax levy, and service agreements. The Commission's assistance to the City of Racine in overseeing a passenger rail study has been cited as a service agreement, which is based upon hourly rates. These hourly rates could be standardized. Furthermore, in looking at each type of service agreement, a comprehensive plan or park and open space plan for example, staff needs to update the fee amount that is charged to the local government.

Mr. McKay added that for some Commission work efforts, a cost estimate is determined based upon the number of hours and the hourly rate of the staff expected to work on that project. There is also a set fee schedule for certain Commission work efforts. An example is the fee schedule for comprehensive plan updates, which has not been reviewed since 2015. A review of the set fee schedule will occur, and that fee schedule will need to consider other funding sources that may be available for the various types of assistance the Commission provides.

Ms. Larsen stated another consideration is the amount of work that goes into each project. It has been the culture of the Commission to produce high quality plans no matter that the work effort has gone significantly over the anticipated budget. There is a sense of pride in the high quality of work the Commission produces, but that comes with a cost. Ms. Larsen then noted there may need to be a point where Commission staff accepts simply completing a project within the bounds of the agreed upon scope, and not providing extra work at no cost.

Mr. Stroik stated these comments are why he suggested this discussion as an agenda item. He suggested three areas to consider when establishing rates. The first would be the history of similar projects including how many hours were charged to the project and did the project have any unique aspects. The second would be establishing hours and determining a cost. The third area is considering market conditions when determining whether the Commission should provide assistance on a particular project.

Ms. Larsen reflected on the community assistance survey that was conducted with all the counties and local governments in the Region with the intent of learning of additional types assistance the Commission could provide. Staff thought that one of the outcomes could be a desire for additional types of services, which could have led to additional revenue and staff. Ms. Larsen stated the Commission is at a point where not enough is charged for its work efforts to hire additional staff to bring in additional work and get that work done in a timely manner. She reiterated Mr. McKay's comment that there are different funding sources that do support some of our work efforts and there is a cost share formula that needs to be determined.

Mr. Stroik commented that there may be room in the market for the Commission's hourly rates to be increased, when charging an hourly rate for projects.

Mr. Colman noted that he is aware of instances where additional work has been requested by those receiving Commission assistance on a project. Mr. Stroik stated that he understands it is difficult for Commission staff to tell those receiving assistance that their requests may fall outside of the project scope.

Mr. Holt noted that county and local governments may have already assumed that Commission service fees may be increasing due to inflation.

Mr. Stroik noted the letter transmitting the annual tax levy request to counties does state that a modest increase may be needed in the future for the Commission to maintain its current level of service.

Ms. Brown-Martin stated that the Milwaukee County Department of Transportation relies heavily on the Commission staff. She stated that the Department has a small planning staff and relies on the Commission staff for its knowledge and expertise. She stated that it is important for the Commission to increase revenues to retain this staff.

### **CONSIDERATION OF A SUMMER HOURS POLICY**

Chairperson Colman asked Ms. Hacker to review the proposed summer hours policy. Ms. Hacker reviewed the memorandum summarizing staff comments on the summer hours policy.

A discussion ensued. Mr. Holt commented that this policy worked in part because of the Commission's internal culture. He stated that the primary motivation of the staff is to develop quality products regardless of how much time is spent on an effort.

On a motion by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Mr. Holt, and carried unanimously, the summer hours policy has been approved beginning on or near Memorial Day through Labor Day dependent upon the payroll cycle.

### **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 two contracts.

There being no questions or comments on a motion by Ms. Minkel-Dumit, seconded by Mr. Crowley, 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 SEPTEMBER 22, 2024**

Copies of the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures as of reporting period No. 19, ending on September 22, 2024, were distributed for Committee review.

In reviewing the Statement with the Committee, Ms. Larsen commented that the period covered represented nearly 75 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 August meeting.
2. The service agreement revenues have an overall decrease of \$36,400 as compared to the August report. A decrease of \$31,500 occurred in the Transportation Planning Program due to a number of comprehensive plan updates now scheduled for completion in 2025. The Water Quality Planning Program service agreement revenues decreased \$4,900 due to project completion dates extending into 2025 rather than in 2024 as originally budgeted.
3. The projection of expenditures through the end of the year compared with the budgeted revenues, as approved in the 2024 Overall Work Program, indicates a surplus of just over \$88,000, for the continuing program projects, with an overall deficit of surplus of just under \$128,000 due to the deficit in Chloride Impact Study. The surplus may be expected to decline further due to payment of items such as the payment in lieu of taxes to the City of Pewaukee and payments for replacement equipment.
4. The liability, operating, and reserve accounts reported on the Statement reflect the findings of the 2023 financial audit.
5. Commission funds on hand are invested in the State of Wisconsin Local Government Investment Pool, which is presently paying 5.23 percent interest, certificate of deposit accounts, and money market accounts.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Crowley, seconded by Ms. Minkel-Dumit, and carried unanimously, the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures for the period ending September 22, 2024, was accepted to be placed on file (copy attached to Official Minutes).

## **CONSIDERATION OF DISBURSEMENTS**

### **2024 Reporting Period No. 16**

Copies of the Check Register for the 16<sup>th</sup> financial reporting period of July 29, 2024, to August 11, 2024, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen called attention to the highlighted payments, and noted Milwaukee Downtown, Inc., was payment for a booth to promote the CommuteWISE program.

Ms. Larsen noted the second highlight payment to Veritext Legal Solutions was for court reporting services during the public hearing for the VISION 2050 recertification.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Crowley, seconded by Mr. Holt, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the 16<sup>th</sup> reporting period of 2024 were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Mr. Crowley, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the Check Register for the 16<sup>th</sup> reporting period of 2024 (copy attached to Official Minutes).

### **2024 Reporting Period No. 17**

Copies of the Check Register for the 17<sup>th</sup> financial reporting period of August 12, 2024, to August 25, 2024, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen called attention to the highlighted payment and noted InfoUSA Marketing, Inc. was the annual purchase of business and consumer data used for the land use and economic inventory update.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman, Ms. Larsen stated the payment to Software Hardware Integration International was the partial annual renewal of the network software that allows the Commission's many different software platforms to run on the network equipment.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Ms. Minkel-Dumit, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the 17<sup>th</sup> reporting period of 2024 were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Mr. Crowley, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the Check Register for the 17<sup>th</sup> reporting period of 2024 (copy attached to Official Minutes).

### **2024 Reporting Period No. 18**

Copies of the Check Register for the 18<sup>th</sup> financial reporting period of August 26, 2024, to September 8, 2024, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen called attention to the highlighted payments.

- Aveneon was payment for documentation on how to manage SQL management tasks under the ARC GIS software program.
- CertaPro Painters was payment to paint the Commission's tenant space.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Crowley, seconded by Ms. Minkel-Dumit, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the 18<sup>th</sup> reporting period of 2024 were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Mr. Crowley, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the Check Register for the 18<sup>th</sup> reporting period of 2024 (copy attached to Official Minutes).

### **2024 Reporting Period No. 19**

Copies of the Check Register for the 19<sup>th</sup> financial reporting period of September 9, 2024, to September 22, 2024, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen called attention to the highlighted payments.

- Sock Fancy was for the purchase of crew-socks that were used as a prize during the CommuteWISE challenge.
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) for the stream gaging program, which is a pass-through program between the USGS and select municipalities in the Region. The Commission acts as the fiscal agent for this program.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Crowley, Ms. Larsen stated the payment made to Safelite Autoglass was for the replacement of the windshield on the Commission's 2014 Chevrolet Traverse.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Crowley, seconded by Mr. Pitts, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the 19<sup>th</sup> reporting period of 2024 were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Mr. Crowley, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the Check Register for the 19<sup>th</sup> reporting period of 2024 (copy attached to Official Minutes).

### **CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mr. McKay stated that the next Planning and Research Committee meeting will be held on November 5, 2024, and the next Quarterly Full Commission meeting will be held on December 4, 2024, in Milwaukee County.

Mr. Colman stated the Nominating Committee will meet prior to the November 14, 2024, Executive Committee meeting. Notices will be e-mailed.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:24 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Crowley, seconded by Mr. Pitts, and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Hacker  
Deputy Secretary