

MINUTES

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thursday, November 14, 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
Brian Holt
Natalia Minkel-Dumit
Robert Pitts
David Stroik

Donna Brown-Martin
Michael Crowley

Staff:

Stephanie Hacker
Benjamin McKay
Elizabeth Larsen
Alina Panasiuk

Executive Director
Deputy Director
Director of Administration
Accounting/HR Specialist

ROLL CALL

Chairperson Colman called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 17, 2024

Chairperson Colman asked if there were any changes or additions to the October 17, 2024, Executive Committee meeting minutes. There were none.

On a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Pitts, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on October 17, 2024, were approved as published.

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENTS (COPY OF EXHIBIT AND RESOLUTION NO. 2024-16)

Chairperson Colman asked the Commission to consider adoption of Resolution No. 2024-16, which is an amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program for Southeastern Wisconsin: 2023-2026. Mr.

McKay presented Resolution 2024-16, amending the 2023-2026 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He indicated there are four new projects and two changes to existing projects to be amended into the TIP. He stated that the projects were approved by the Commission's Advisory Committee on Transportation System Planning and Programming for the Milwaukee Urban Area.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Holt, Mr. McKay stated the new City of Milwaukee project is a complete streets project on 6th Street from North Avenue on the north to National Avenue on the south.

There being no further questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Pitts to approve Resolution No. 2024-16, seconded by Mr. Stroik, and carried by a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, Resolution No. 2024-16 was approved (copy of Resolution 2024-16 attached to Official Minutes).

CONSIDERATION OF THE 2025 OVERALL WORK PROGRAM (RESOLUTION NO. 2024-17)

Chairperson Colman asked the Commission to consider adoption of Resolution No. 2024-17, which is the 2025 Commission Overall Work Program (OWP).

Ms. Larsen explained that the OWP outlines the Commission's work, by program area and by project, which is expected to be conducted by the staff in 2025. The OWP is consistent with the 2025 budget adopted by the Full Commission in June.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Ms. Larsen explained the detailed process she goes through to establish each project budget in the OWP. She stated she reviews prior year and current year project activities based upon data available in the accounting software, speaks with each Division Head and is then able to provide a reasonable budget estimate to be allocated to each project for the budget year.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Ms. Larsen stated that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) does review the budget amounts for each project. She further stated that the Federal and State funding the Commission receives is a prescribed amount. Staff is notified of the amount of funds available to the Commission and the budget must balance to that amount.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Ms. Larsen stated that updating the service agreement fee schedule will provide additional revenue opportunities.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Ms. Larsen stated that staff charge their time to a project and that time is then used to bill against the funding stream for that project. Staff time is recorded on a weekly basis through a timecard system within the accounting software.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Mr. McKay stated that the Federal funding is formula based upon the population within the urbanized areas of the Region. As such there is not an appeal process for the amount received.

There being no further questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Stroik to approve Resolution No. 2024-17, seconded by Mr. Holt, and carried by a vote of 5 ayes and 0 nays, Resolution No. 2024-17 was approved (copy of Resolution 2024-17 attached to Official Minutes).

CONSIDERATION OF 2025 SERVICE AGREEMENT FEE SCHEDULE

Chairperson Colman asked for discussion on the proposed service agreement fee schedule.

Mr. Stroik commented on the staff rate table noted at the bottom of the schedule. Ms. Larsen stated the rates for each line item are an average of all employee hourly rates within that title band. The rate reflects the base hourly rate plus fringe and overhead costs. These numbers were presented for Committee discussion.

Mr. Stroik asked Ms. Larsen and Mr. McKay to review the service agreement fee schedule. Ms. Larsen began her review of the table by explaining how the proposed service agreement revenues align with Federal, State, and tax levy revenues that fund the Commission's work program areas. Ms. Larsen also stated that individual project agreements include a scope that specifies what work is included in the project fee. Requests for additional services that fall outside the written agreement will be provided at an additional cost. This will be done to keep the project scope in line with the quoted project cost. Mr. McKay stated that in reviewing current projects, those projects that were not completed within or close to budget were over budget primarily due to requests for additional work to be added to the project.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Mr. McKay stated the Commission does not necessarily charge the full cost of a project dependent upon the additional funding sources available to fund that project.

Mr. Holt commented that staff should broadly define the base cost of a project to provide room for some adjustment in a project scope, which would allow the Commission staff to provide useful information. Ms. Larsen noted the fee schedule does specify that requests that would take less than 20 hours to complete would not incur a charge. This would also apply to additional work efforts on a specific project that would require 20 hours or less of work.

Mr. Stroik commented that a change in project scope without additional fees may be the result of the relationship between Commission staff and the County or community. Mr. McKay acknowledged the Commission Division Heads have maintained close working relationships with county and community staff. In addition, it has been the Commission staff's long-standing practice to be flexible with project scopes to ensure the counties and communities are satisfied with Commission services. Mr. Stroik commented that the Commission's model has been to do good work regardless of the cost. He stated that the Commission needs to continue to do good work, but project cost needs to be an important consideration.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Mr. McKay stated that the proposed fee schedule is intended to adjust the current schedule, which has been in place for 10 to 15 years.

Mr. Holt also stated that the conversation regarding the fee schedule and modifying project costs should be a consideration in the Commission's communication strategy, which should express the value of the organization, plan implementation, and how seriously people take the Commission's work. He further commented that if a Commission work effort is completed and only sits on a shelf, the product will be undervalued. Ms. Minkel-Dumit suggested that the communication strategy may need to be tailored to the different counties based upon the relationships and work efforts that have been recently undertaken. Mr. McKay noted that the Commission's work between the counties can vary widely based upon their needs and unique requests.

Ms. Hacker stated that she has received requests from elected officials and staff in the Region about where they can find information about the Commission's fee schedule and funding. In addition, Ms. Hacker stated that she is not aware of municipalities notifying constituents of changes to their fees collected, rather a posting of such fees is made available on their respective websites.

Mr. Stroik commented that the hourly rates should be increased by one quarter to one third to ensure the Commission expenses are covered. Mr. Holt stated he would not be surprised to see a doubling of the hourly rates.

A discussion ensued with the Committee concluding that the hourly rates would be increased by 30 percent of the base salary and fringe benefit rate. A review of these rates would occur annually after salary adjustments.

There being no additional questions or comments, it was moved by Mr. Pitts, to accept the service agreement schedule, and seconded by Mr. Stroik, who amended the motion to increase the hourly rates 30 percent of the current rate with an annual review of the rates and that staff work to implement the service agreement fee schedule beginning in January 2025. The motion carried unanimously.

REVIEW OF REGIONAL TAX LEVY SCENARIOS

Chairperson Colman asked Ms. Larsen to review the tables detailing the regional tax levy scenarios. Ms. Larsen then reviewed the tax levy tables.

Mr. Stroik commented he would like to know what tax levy increase is palatable to the counties, but also what level of increase does the Commission need to continue to provide a high level of services to the Region. Mr. McKay commented that equating a tax levy increase to an additional staff member or maintaining the current level of staffing could make sense to the counties. Ms. Hacker stated that the counties fund just under one-third of the Commission's budget and heavily influence the Commission's work program.

Mr. Holt commented that the counties are under levy limit restrictions and stated that it may be unpalatable if the Commission were to exceed that threshold. Mr. Holt further commented that a two percent increase in the Commission's tax levy could exceed the levy limit within a County. Mr. McKay stated the Commission tax levy request is not close to the State Statute maximum request of 0.003 percent of the equalized value and the Commission should try to recognize the levy increase constraints the counties are under. Mr. Holt stated counties are likely expecting the service agreement fees to increase; however, a tax levy increase is less palatable, and the Commission should focus more on service agreement fees than the tax levy to raise revenues.

Mr. Stroik commented that the counties should have been notified about the potential need for a tax levy increase to maintain service levels through the annual certification of charges. Mr. McKay stated that this notification has been provided the last two years. Mr. Holt noted that the service agreement fee schedule discussion and the discussion on a tax levy increase are being done at this time and will continue to be done on an annual basis, which will avoid a 15 to 20 year absence of this discussion.

Mr. Colman stated that he would like a staff recommendation on a tax levy increase and if that increase will occur over several years, and what would be the effect of an increase. He further stated there needs to be an ongoing discussion between staff, Commissioners, and the counties. Mr. Holt further added that because cost increases are widely acknowledged, it may be the correct time to discuss an annual tax levy increase. Mr. Stroik stated he will address these issues in the Commission Treasurer's tax levy request letter to the counties.

Ms. Hacker stated consensus on a tax levy increase is needed by mid-April to move forward with the 2026 budget document. She noted discussion can be held at the January 2025 and February 2025 Executive

Committee meetings, with a full Commission discussion at the March Quarterly meeting. It was determined by the Committee a summary of this discussion would be provided at the December Quarterly meeting.

Further discussion ensued, ending with Ms. Larsen stating that she would recommend a one percent tax levy increase for the 2026 Calendar Year Budget, with further discussions to continue at the December Quarterly meeting and into 2025. Ms. Hacker noted she will have discussions with each of the counties regarding an increase.

CONSIDERATION OF 2025 COMMISSIONER PER DIEM

Ms. Hacker reiterated the Commission's current Per Diem that was approved in December 2023. She noted that in December 2023, it was decided this Per Diem rate would be reviewed on an annual basis.

A discussion ensued.

There being no further questions or comments, it was moved by Mr. Stroik to not change the Commissioner Per Diem rate for 2025, seconded by Mr. Holt, with the amendment to discuss on an annual basis. The motion carried unanimously.

REPORT ON 2025 COMMISSION HEALTH INSURANCE

Chairperson Colman asked Ms. Larsen to review with the Committee the group medical insurance enrollment for calendar year 2025.

Ms. Larsen referenced the "Total Cost to SEWRPC for 2025 Health Insurance" table. This table lists the Commission's Group Medical Insurance Premiums and staff health insurance selections for 2025 (copy attached to Official Minutes). Ms. Larsen stated that the Commission obtains medical insurance for staff through the State of Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds (WDETf) Group Health Insurance Program, and that Commission employees had recently completed their selection of health insurance coverage for calendar year 2025.

In reviewing this matter with the Committee, Ms. Larsen noted that 60 Commission employees participate in the WDETf insurance program, with one employee declining coverage. For 2025, 38 employees have selected Network Health Plan, the only qualified health plan available to staff in Waukesha County.

In addition, 12 employees have selected Dean Health Plan, four employees have selected Common Ground, one employee has selected Quartz Community, and five employees have selected the All Access Plan. These plans are not considered qualified health plans by WDETf due to the high premium cost or lack of providers in Waukesha County.

Ms. Larsen then noted the differences between the health plan options. Network Health Plan providers are part of the Ascension and Froedtert Medical Groups. Common Ground and Quartz Community providers are part of the Aurora Medical Group. The All Access Plan does not restrict enrollees to a specific medical network group, and Dean Health Plan is part of the Pro-Health Care provider network.

Overall, the total cost to the Commission of health insurance for current employees should approximate \$1,104,140 for the year. Ms. Larsen noted that the Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) amount to be reimbursed to employees is not included in this estimated cost. She added that the cost of health insurance for 2025 will be within the amount budgeted for 2025. Ms. Larsen further stated that the 2025 budgeted cost for health insurance was \$1,130,115 not including HRA costs. The 2025 budget assumed a 10 percent

increase in health insurance costs. The difference between the budget and actual is \$26,000, equivalent to one full time person taking family health insurance.

CONSIDERATION OF VACATION LEAVE ACCRUAL

Chairperson Colman asked Ms. Hacker to review with the Committee the proposed vacation leave accrual rates (copy of table attached to official minutes).

Ms. Hacker began her review by stating the Commission's peer organizations have higher vacation leave accrual rates than the Commission and the proposed increase to the Commission's accrual rates would better match those of the State and counties.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Ms. Hacker stated staff have commented that the current schedule holds the accrual rate steady for a period of 10 years between six and 15 years of service. She further clarified that during that timeframe, employees accrue 16.25 days a year. An increase in the accrual rate would be preferable at an employee's 10-year anniversary. The maximum amount of vacation leave that can be accrued would remain 240 hours.

There being no further questions or comments, on a motion by Ms. Minkel-Dumit, seconded by Mr. Holt, and carried unanimously, the increase in the vacation leave accrual rates was approved.

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).

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF THE STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURE FOR REPORTING PERIOD ENDING OCTOBER 20, 2024

Copies of the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures as of reporting period No. 21, ending on October 20, 2024, were distributed for Committee review.

In reviewing the Statement with the Committee, Ms. Larsen commented that the period covered represented approximately 80 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 September meeting.
2. The service agreement revenues remain unchanged from the report presented at the October meeting.
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 \$78,000, for the continuing program projects, with an overall deficit of surplus of just under \$145,000 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 4.53 percent interest, certificate of deposit accounts, and money market accounts.
6. This Statement reflects the January 2022 approved Commission Reserves Policy. The minimum and maximum reserve fund amounts have been noted. These numbers reflect the findings of the 2023 audit.

A discussion about terminating the Regional Chloride Study ensued. Mr. McKay stated that there are existing commitments to partner government agencies that need to be met prior to terminating this study. Mr. Colman stated he would like to know what the tightest timeframe is to complete this study and to push staff to finish by that deadline.

Mr. Stroik noted it was the Commission's initiative to conduct this study. Mr. Holt stated it was his impression there was novel science done and that the resulting study would be of use to governmental units in the Region. Mr. McKay stated that the study should result in a report on best practices for reducing the use of chloride in the Region and those practices may be implemented by both public and private sector interests.

Mr. Stroik then asked if staff would be able to find an additional revenue source for the Chloride Study. Mr. McKay stated there has been some funding from other agencies provided for this study. Mr. McKay reiterated that there are commitments to these agencies and the study needs to be completed. He then noted there may be efforts that staff could reduce or remove for the final deliverable.

Mr. Stroik then suggested that the agencies who have provided funding should be contacted and told the Commission is not able to continue this study without additional funds. He also suggested that Commission staff explore finding creative funding sources to finish the study. Ms. Hacker stated staff would have those conversations with other agencies.

Mr. Colman stated Ms. Hacker should review this work effort and find the best solution to complete the Chloride Study. Mr. Stroik stated that the Commission's Chief Environmental Engineer needs to be notified the Chloride Study is at a significant deficit and needs to be closed as soon as possible.

There being no further questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Pitts, and carried unanimously, the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures for the period ending October 20, 2024, was accepted to be placed on file (copy attached to Official Minutes).

CONSIDERATION OF DISBURSEMENTS

2024 Reporting Period No. 20

Copies of the Check Register for the 20th financial reporting period of September 23, 2024, to October 6, 2024, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen called attention to the highlighted payments.

- Ewald Automotive Group was payment for the purchase of the Commission's Chevrolet EV Blazer.
- Millenian, LLC, was payment for Ms. Hacker to participate in the HOAN Group. This organization connects leaders in Milwaukee and Madison to topics of planning and ensuring leaders in those regions are connected and ready to make decisions together as they continue in their careers. Ms. Hacker stated she hopes that the HOAN Group will continue to become better informed about the work of the Commission.

In response to an inquiry from Mr. Pitts, Ms. Hacker stated that in the past year she had met Ms. Kristina Boardman prior to her appointment as the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Ms. Hacker further stated that as a HOAN Group member she was invited to attend the Chicago Civic Exchange where she and Ms. Boardman sat on a panel to talk about issues of transportation and parks in their cities.

- Remix Technologies, LLC, was payment for transit planning software and a dataset that the Transportation Division uses to aid in the preparation of transit development plans.
- Signorama Pewaukee was for the purchase of the lettering used for the new Commission sign that is located in the lobby.
- White Rock Security Group, LLC, was payment for the purchase of anti-virus computer protection for a period of three years.

There being no further questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Holt, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the 20th reporting period of 2024 were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Mr. Stroik, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the Check Register for the 20th reporting period of 2024 (copy attached to Official Minutes).

2024 Reporting Period No. 21

Copies of the Check Register for the 21st financial reporting period of October 7, 2024, to October 20, 2024, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen called attention to the highlighted payments.

- Foster & Foster, Inc., previously known as Key Benefit Concepts, Inc, is the actuarial firm the Commission contracted with in April 2019 to conduct a Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) required actuarial study on Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB). This study is required under the GASB Statements 74 and 75 and was conducted to value the post-retirement health insurance benefits that are available to Commission retirees. The full actuarial study was conducted as part of the 2023 Audit and was based off of data available as of December 31, 2023.
- ICLEI, this payment is for the purchase of data within the Milwaukee Metropolitan Statistical area that was used for the Climate Pollution Reduction project. This payment was fully funded by the EPA grant for this project.
- ProHealth Care, this payment is a refund of the security deposit.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman, Ms. Larsen stated the payment to Affirm Agency was for social media posts pertaining to the CommuteWISE program.

In response to a second inquiry by Mr. Colman, Ms. Larsen stated the payment to the City of Pewaukee was for the Commission's annual stormwater management fee.

There being no further questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Holt, seconded by Mr. Stroik, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the 21st reporting period of 2024 were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Mr. Stroik, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the Check Register for the 21st reporting period of 2024 (copy attached to Official Minutes).

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. McKay stated that the next Full Commission meeting will be held on December 4, 2024, at the Bucyrus Club in the City of South Milwaukee.

In response to a request from Mr. Pitts, Ms. Hacker will work with Ms. Kristina Boardman's staff to determine if she is able to attend the Commission's December meeting.

Ms. Hacker also announced an acknowledgement by the Wisconsin Policy Forum. A Salute to Local Government award was given to the Commission, UWM, and Mobilise for their efforts in the FlexRide program.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:42 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Holt, and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Hacker
Deputy Secretary