

## MINUTES

### SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thursday January 16, 2025

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  
Brian Holt  
Dewayne Johnson  
Trevor Jung  
Robert Pitts  
David Stroik

Michael Crowley  
Natalia Minkel-Dumit

Staff:

|                  |                            |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Stephanie Hacker | Executive Director         |
| Benjamin McKay   | Deputy Director            |
| Elizabeth Larsen | Director of Administration |
| Alina Panasiuk   | 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 NOVEMBER 14, 2024

Chairperson Colman asked if there were any changes or additions to the November 14, 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 November 14, 2024, were approved as published.

**REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENTS (COPY OF EXHIBIT AND RESOLUTION NO. 2025-01)**

Chairperson Colman asked the Commission to consider adoption of Resolution No. 2025-01, which is an amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program for Southeastern Wisconsin: 2025-2028. Mr. McKay presented Resolution 2025-01, amending the 2025-2028 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He indicated there are 27 new projects and 28 changes to existing projects to be amended into the TIP. He stated that the projects were approved by the Commission's Advisory Committees on Transportation System Planning and Programming for the Kenosha, Milwaukee, and West Bend Urban Areas.

Mr. McKay commented that several of projects in this amendment are Federal Transit Administration 5310 projects that are on a cycle that fell outside of the update of the TIP to 2025-2028 that was adopted by the Commission in December 2024.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Pitts to approve Resolution No. 2025-01, seconded by Mr. Jung, and carried by a vote of 7 ayes and 0 nays, Resolution No. 2025-01 was approved (copy of Resolution 2025-01 attached to Official Minutes).

**REVIEW OF REGIONAL TAX LEVY SCENARIOS**

Chairperson Colman introduced the tax levy discussion by asking the Committee to consider the needs of the Commission to maintain staff and equipment necessary to maintain the work of the Commission. He asked for Committee input on how to discuss the potential tax levy increase request and how to tailor the discussion to the Counties. Ms. Hacker noted that a document providing background information and scenarios for the year 2026 budget had been distributed to the Commissioners.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Ms. Hacker stated she will be meeting with the Counties to discuss regional tax levy scenarios for 2026 that focus on a 5 percent increase over the current tax levy amount, and a flat \$100,000 increase over the current tax levy amount. She will also discuss the Commission's present and historic value to the Counties, additional services the Commission could provide to the Counties, and will ask how each County allocates for the levy in their budget. She further stated these meetings will occur during the next month.

Mr. Johnson stated a parallel document explaining the new service fee schedule should also be made available to the Counties. He noted there should be a continuing conversation and a frequently asked question (FAQ) document made available to Commissioners and staff for meetings with County officials. The FAQ document should include a discussion of the impacts to the Commission and the Region if a change in the tax levy is not made. He also suggested inviting Commissioners to discussions with their County regarding the tax levy scenarios.

Mr. Johnson then referenced page 3 of the background document, the third bullet, and suggested changing "educate staff, commissioners, and seven county leadership" to "inform, discuss, and seek input."

Mr. Holt stated that input from Walworth County may include defining the scope of services the Commission provides as part of the tax levy and being prepared to explain how the Commission is an asset to the County.

Mr. Stroik noted that input from some Counties may be to continue to hold the tax levy steady and only provide the most essential services. Commission staff should be prepared to respond to this type of input.

Mr. Jung pointed out communities and counties may be eligible for Federal or State funding opportunities by leveraging resources provided by the Commission's studies.

Ms. Brown-Martin stated staff should continue to reinforce the high quality work the Commission does for the Counties. She further stated there is no question about the reliability of data or information the Commission shares with Milwaukee County Staff. There is a level of credibility the Commission has established due to the high quality of work conducted by Commission staff. The Commission represents the Region as a whole in their work. Mr. McKay stated the Commission develops background data that is used in-house and is available to all Counties and communities in the Region. He stated that the value of this work should be emphasized.

Mr. Johnson noted that the Commission has many supporters in the Region; however, the Counties do have budgetary constraints. He stated that the Commission may need to explore ways to increase efficiencies if an increase to the tax levy is not supported.

Ms. Hacker then referenced the document with the graphs that compare the equalized value and the actual tax levy request from the years 2000 to 2025. She noted the Region doubled in equalized value during this time period, while the tax levy remained the same for most of this time period. Mr. Holt stated that not taking advantage of a potential rate increase in the year available means those funds are gone. The Commission's worth is re-set annually. The graphs are useful information, but this is about what is palatable for this year. Mr. Stroik commented that this an opportunity to say the Commission is serving a larger economy. Mr. Colman stated during this time efficiencies were gained; however, those efficiencies have been maximized.

Ms. Larsen stated for the years between 2006 and 2015 there were valid reasons for not increasing the tax levy. During this time, the Commission paid for the building in full, and thus the Commission does not have an annual mortgage or rent payment. In addition, Act 10 was implemented, which resulted in cost savings due to retirement cost share.

A discussion ensued on strategies for a tax levy increase request and assurances associated with tax levy increases beyond the calendar year 2026.

Mr. Jung summarized the discussion by stating the Commission should identify its needs and should provide predictability in future tax levy requests. Ms. Hacker stated the staff's next steps are to meet with the Counties and to report back to the Executive Committee.

## **REVIEW OF COMMISSIONER E-MAIL ACCOUNTS**

Mr. Colman asked Ms. Hacker to introduce the Commissioner e-mail accounts discussion. She stated the Commission added a sewrpc.org e-mail account for each Commissioner that currently uses e-mail. She stated that as the Commission is subject to *Wisconsin Statutes* relating to public records, communications sent or received by Commissioners are subject to these laws unless such correspondence is exempt from public record requests. State law notes that senders and receivers of Commission e-mails should presume that the e-mails are subject to release upon request and the State record retention requirements. She noted as Commissioners are currently using their personal or business account(s) for Commission e-mails, the Commission is now providing the option of having an e-mail address with the Commission should they choose. A Commission e-mail account would simplify Commission correspondence via e-mail from a

legitimate domain and if subject to an open records request would have one portal for electronic mail from which the information could be retrieved.

A discussion concerning Commissioner e-mails ensued.

In response to a comment from Mr. Stroik regarding the need for this policy, Ms. Hacker stated that all correspondence that mentions the Commission is subject to open records request, no matter what e-mail addresses are used. She then stated that a Commission email account will allow Commissioners to have proper representation of the Commission.

In response to a comment from Mr. Holt, Ms. Hacker agreed that Commission matters e-mailed from a County e-mail address could be subject to an open records request of the County.

Mr. Johnson stated all Commissioners should have the option to use a Commission e-mail address with accommodations made for those that do not want a Commission e-mail address.

Ms. Hacker closed the agenda item by stating that staff will work to set up Commissioner e-mail addresses for those Commissioners wanting a sewrpc.org e-mail account. There will be an e-mail opt out form for those that do not want a Commission e-mail address.

#### **CONSIDERATION COMMISSION 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 10 contracts.

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

#### **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 EXPENDITURES FOR REPORTING PERIOD ENDING JANUARY 12, 2025**

Copies of the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures as of reporting period No. 1, ending on January 12, 2025, were distributed for Committee review.

In reviewing the Statement with the Committee, Ms. Larsen commented that the period covered the beginning of the calendar year, and no attempt was made to show actual expenditures or to project expenditures for the year given this very short period of time. She then called attention to the following items:

1. The revenue entries on the Statement reflect the budgeted amounts set forth in the Commission's Overall Work Program approved in November 2024. She noted that with respect to Federal and State Transportation Funds, a final approval letter securing these funds was received in December from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. The Wisconsin Department of Administration

revenue for the Coastal Management Program has also been secured and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources revenue for the Water Quality Planning Program is expected to be secured within the first quarter of the year.

2. With respect to service agreement revenues that support work activities in the planning program areas of land use, water quality, floodland management, economic development, and community assistance, many of the funds identified in the Statement already have been secured or are expected to be secured within the next few months. She noted that the \$71,518 in building program revenues identified in the service agreement column represents the annual rent to be paid in 2025. As the tenant space remains empty, the amount received for rental revenue can be expected to decrease by about \$5,900 per month until it is rented.
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 January 12, 2025, approximately \$5.0 million. This includes about \$151,000 of unearned revenue provided to the Commission in advance of expenditures. The funds on hand are invested in the State of Wisconsin Local Government Investment Pool, which is presently paying 4.61 percent interest, and certificate of deposit accounts.
5. 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.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Jung, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously, the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures for the period ending January 12, 2025, was accepted to be placed on file (copy attached to Official Minutes).

## **CONSIDERATION OF DISBURSEMENTS**

### **2024 Reporting Period No. 22**

Copies of the Check Register for the 22<sup>nd</sup> financial reporting period of October 21, 2024, to November 3, 2024, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen reviewed and discussed the payments that have been highlighted on the Check Register for the 22<sup>nd</sup> financial reporting period.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman, Ms. Larsen stated that the payment to Inova, (page 3) was the payroll processing fee for the November 8, 2024, payroll.

There being no further questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Holt, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the 22<sup>nd</sup> reporting period of 2024 were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Ms. Brown-Martin, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the Check Register for the 22<sup>nd</sup> reporting period of 2024 (copy attached to Official Minutes).

### **2024 Reporting Period No. 23**

Copies of the Check Register for the 23<sup>rd</sup> financial reporting period of November 4, 2024, to November 17, 2024, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen reviewed and discussed the payments that have been highlighted on the Check Register for the 23<sup>rd</sup> financial reporting period.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman, Ms. Larsen stated the capital outlay accounts for equipment and furniture purchases. She then stated the payment to Dell Marketing LP. was for a laptop for the Chief Environmental Engineer.

There being no further questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Jung, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the 23<sup>rd</sup> reporting period of 2024 were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Ms. Brown-Martin, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the Check Register for the 23<sup>rd</sup> reporting period of 2024 (copy attached to Official Minutes).

### **2024 Reporting Period No. 24**

Copies of the Check Register for the 24<sup>th</sup> financial reporting period of November 18, 2024, to December 1, 2024, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen reviewed and discussed the payments that have been highlighted on the Check Register for the 24<sup>th</sup> financial reporting period.

In response to an inquiry to Mr. Colman, Ms. Larsen stated that the payment to Independence First (page 1), was for the conduct of an ADA training program with staff and interested parties. In addition, a sign language interpreter had to be hired for this meeting.

There being no further questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Holt, seconded by Ms. Brown-Martin, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the 24<sup>th</sup> reporting period of 2024 were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Ms. Brown-Martin, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the Check Register for the 24<sup>th</sup> reporting period of 2024 (copy attached to Official Minutes).

### **2024 Reporting Period No. 25**

Copies of the Check Register for the 25<sup>th</sup> financial reporting period of December 2, 2024, to December 15, 2024, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen reviewed and discussed the payments that have been highlighted on the Check Register for the 25<sup>th</sup> financial reporting period.

There being no further questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Holt, seconded by Ms. Brown-Martin, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the 25<sup>th</sup> reporting period of 2024 were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Ms. Brown-Martin, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the Check Register for the 25<sup>th</sup> reporting period of 2024 (copy attached to Official Minutes).

### **2024 Reporting Period No. 26**

Copies of the Check Register for the 26<sup>th</sup> financial reporting period of December 16, 2024, to December 29, 2024, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen reviewed and discussed the payments that have been highlighted on the Check Register for the 26<sup>th</sup> financial reporting period.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman, Ms. Larsen stated the payment to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), (page 2) is 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. Johnson, Ms. Larsen stated that the Commission has provided a sub-contract with Kenosha County for the County to access the Inrix data under the Commission's contract.

There being no further questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Jung, seconded by Mr. Holt, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the 26<sup>th</sup> reporting period of 2024 were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Ms. Brown-Martin, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the Check Register for the 26<sup>th</sup> reporting period of 2024 (copy attached to Official Minutes).

### **CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Hacker distributed materials containing information about MRA and CI Design, the firms' staff will work with to conduct the external portion of the 2024 Strategy.

Mr. McKay stated that the next Planning and Research Committee meeting will be held on February 4, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. at the Commission office.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Brown-Martin, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Hacker  
Deputy Secretary