

MINUTES

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thursday, July 27, 2006

2:00 p.m.

SEWRPC Office Building
Commissioners' Conference Room
W239 N1812 Rockwood Drive
Waukesha, Wisconsin

Present:

Excused:

Committee Members:

Thomas H. Buestrin, Chairman
Adelene Greene
Richard A. Hansen
Allen L. Morrison
Daniel S. Schmidt
David L. Stroik
Paul G. Vrakas
Gustav W. Wirth, Jr.

William R. Drew, Vice-Chairman
Linda J. Seemeyer

Absent:

Staff:

Philip C. Evenson
Loretta Watson

Executive Director
Executive Secretary

ROLL CALL

Chairman Buestrin called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum declared present. Mr. Evenson noted for the record that Commissioners Drew and Seemeyer had asked to be excused.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 29, 2006, MEETING

On a motion by Mr. Wirth, seconded by Mr. Stroik, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on June 29, 2006, were approved as published.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT, MR. VRAKAS REPORTING

(Meeting of July 27, 2006)

Mr. Vrakas reported that the Administrative Committee, at its meeting held just before the Executive Committee meeting, had taken the following actions:

1. Reviewed and approved the Commission disbursements for two financial reporting periods: Year 2006 Nos. 13 and 14, extending over the period June 12, 2006, to July 9, 2006.

2. Reviewed the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures for the financial reporting period ending July 9, 2006. With slightly over one-half of the year completed, the projections indicate a year end surplus of about \$140,000, not including interest income and proceeds from the sale of materials.
3. Received a report that both the Wisconsin Department of Administration and the Federal Transit Administration have accepted the Commission's 2005 single audit report and that there are no issues to be resolved.
4. Received a report that the Commission's comprehensive business insurance package had been renewed at a total annual premium cost of about \$53,400. The new package includes for the first time \$1 million in coverage attendant to employment practices and errors and omissions liabilities. To keep total premium costs to a minimum, the deductible on property, general liability, inland marine, and theft coverages was raised from \$1,000 to \$5,000.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Schmidt, seconded by Ms. Greene, and carried unanimously, the Administrative Committee report was approved.

REPORT ON CONTRACTS

Chairman Buestrin asked Mr. Evenson to review the proposed contracts and agreements, noting that the Committee members had received a table listing the contracts prior to the meeting. Mr. Evenson then briefly reviewed the two contracts reported on the table. He noted that the first contract provides monies to help update the regional natural areas and critical species habitat plan, while extending that plan to include Sheboygan County under a partnership effort. A total of \$75,000 has been provided for this purpose by the Wisconsin Department of Administration under the Coastal Zone Management Program. These monies will be shared equally with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. The second contract is with Kenosha County and involves assistance in preparation of an update to the Kenosha County land and water resources plan.

There being no discussion, on a motion by Mr. Vrakas, seconded by Mr. Stroik, and carried unanimously, the report relative to the contracts was accepted and placed on file (copy of report attached to Official Minutes).

GEO 29 REVIEW

Chairman Buestrin asked Mr. Evenson to report on the Federal grants and loans and direct Federal development projects submitted to the Commission for intergovernmental review pursuant to the requirements set forth in Gubernatorial Executive Order No. 29.

Mr. Evenson noted that summaries of the four project applications were provided to the Committee members with the agenda for the meeting. There were no conflicts, he said, between any of the projects and the adopted regional plans.

Following a brief discussion, on a motion by Ms. Greene seconded by Mr. Schmidt, and carried unanimously, the following four applications were recommended to the grantor agencies for approval as being in conformance, or not in conflict, with adopted regional plans: three community action programs (CAP-2166 through CAP-2168); and one conservation program (CONSER-995) (copy of table attached to Official Minutes).

WORK PROGRESS REPORTS

Mr. Evenson recalled that at the June Executive Committee meeting he had reported on a request by Milwaukee County for a change in the formula used in the Milwaukee urbanized area to allocate Federal funds that support public transit. Presently, there are four designated recipients of Federal transit funds in the Milwaukee urbanized area – the Counties of Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha. Waukesha County, in turn, shares its allocation with the City of Waukesha. He then distributed two tables that summarized the end result of the discussions concerning this matter and the Commission staff's proposal to change the allocation formula to rely entirely upon measures relating to the provision of transit service (copies attached). Referring to the first table, Mr. Evenson noted that the final proposal involves application of the new allocation formula beginning in calendar year 2007 and that this new formula would redistribute about \$867,000 from Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha Counties to Milwaukee County. Referring to the second table, Mr. Evenson noted that, owing to the way in which the State of Wisconsin distributes State transit operating funds, the negative impacts of this allocation formula change on Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha Counties would be substantially mitigated, effectively transferring to these three counties from other parts of the State all but about \$100,000 of the amount gained by Milwaukee County. The anticipated impacts of the allocation formula change on each of the transit operators in the three counties is shown on the second table, with each of the operators incurring an overall negative effect of a 1.3 percent loss in combined Federal and State operating funds. More specifically, Ozaukee County would receive \$17,300 less than in 2006, Washington County \$19,300 less, Waukesha County \$28,100 less, and the City of Waukesha \$34,800 less.

Mr. Evenson indicated that, as expected, none of the transit operators are fully satisfied with this result. Milwaukee County wanted the change made in 2006, but making such a change after 2006 operating budgets had been adopted by the other Counties was believed to be unreasonable. The transit operators in the other three Counties would have preferred to be held fully harmless from any reduction in Federal and State funds, but this simply was not possible. This decision by the Commission as the metropolitan planning organization for the Milwaukee urbanized area will be formally announced shortly.

A discussion then ensued. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Vrakas, Mr. Evenson reiterated it is the Commission's responsibility as the Federally designated metropolitan planning organization for southeastern Wisconsin to determine how best to distribute Federal funds that are allocated to the Milwaukee urbanized area. Consequently, he said, the Commission is taking the position in this matter that the distribution of funds beginning in 2007 based totally upon measures of actual transit service provided is the fairest and most logical basis for Federal fund distribution. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Hansen, Mr. Evenson indicated that while technically a small portion of Racine County in the Town of Norway is attached to the Milwaukee urbanized area, Racine County does not receive an allocation of funds because no public transit services are provided in that area. The City of Racine, he said, receives Federal transit funding for its bus system operations through the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Noting that there appeared to be a consensus of the Executive Committee that the Commission staff position in this matter was sound and defensible, Mr. Wirth suggested that the staff formally communicate to the county executives and county administrators concerned this determination so that those individuals can reflect the changes in the forthcoming 2007 budgets.

Mr. Evenson reported that work on the proposed regional wireless communications plan is nearing completion and that the Commission is beginning to receive requests from counties and communities relative to refining and detailing Commission recommendations in subareas of the Region. Work on prior requests, from the Towns of Addison and Wayne and the Milwaukee north shore suburbs, is underway. During the past month, letters have been received from the County Administrator of Ozaukee County, Thomas W. Meaux, and the Waukesha County Executive, Daniel P. Vrakas, requesting that the Commission work with these two Counties in evaluating the potential for county-based wireless

communications networks. Mr. Evenson indicated that he intended to respond positively to those requests, but caution that Commission staff resources are very limited and that work progress on such efforts may not be as rapid as all concerned might want. In addition, while it may be possible for the Commission to accomplish the “office work” necessary to prepare county and local telecommunications plans under the regional planning budget, it likely will be necessary to advise inquiring parties that costs incurred in field testing the planned layout of wireless antenna base stations will have to be borne by the requesting party. Both of the letters received from the counties acknowledge that some costs may be incurred and ask that such costs be estimated and submitted in time for inclusion in the forthcoming 2007 budgets.

Mr. Evenson recalled that in 2004 during the period of time when the Federal transportation agencies were conducting their periodic assessment of the Commission’s transportation planning processes, a number of individuals associated with low-income and minority groups and disabled individuals expressed concerns about the need for the Commission to make greater efforts to ensure that the concerns and viewpoints of these communities of individuals are fully taken into account as Commission planning activities continue. Toward that end, the Commission staff has been periodically meeting with those individuals to discuss how best to better position the Commission to respond to the expressed concerns. While it is still in a formative stage of development, Mr. Evenson said that he wanted to alert the Executive Committee to a proposal that the Commission consider establishing, on a standing basis, an Environmental Justice Task Force. The task force would consist entirely of individuals who represent low-income, African American, Latino, Asian, Native American, disabled, and transit-dependent populations. The specific focus of the Task Force is in the process of being determined, but likely would include reviewing and making recommendations on the Commission’s specific public involvement activities; assistance in obtaining opinions and feedback from the populations being represented; helping to structure and review environmental justice analyses conducted by the Commission in its planning efforts; and identifying prospective representatives of those communities to potentially serve on program-specific Commission advisory committees. Mr. Evenson indicated that this proposal should be ready for formal Commission consideration in the months ahead. During a brief discussion following Mr. Evenson’s remarks, it was the consensus of the Committee that any such proposal should probably be tested over an initial period of, perhaps, up to two years. At the end of that initial period, the results could be evaluated and a decision made as to whether or not to continue.

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Evenson reported that the Commission had received a letter from the Kenosha County Executive, Allan K. Kehl, that his appointment of Kenosha County Board Supervisor Anita Faraone to the Commission had been confirmed by the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors. Ms. Faraone replaces Commissioner Leonard R. Johnson who was not reelected to the County Board this past spring. Mr. Evenson said that he and Chairman Buestrin would meet shortly with Ms. Faraone to orient her to the work of the Commission and that Ms. Faraone will be formally seated on the Commission at the September 13th Quarterly meeting.

Mr. Evenson reported that a study committee is being created by the Wisconsin Legislative Council for the purpose of proposing legislation next year that would build upon the agreement reached by the Governors of the Great Lakes States relative to Great Lakes water use issues. That committee, being chaired by State Senator Neal Kedzie from Walworth County, will begin to meet later in the year, and Senator Kedzie has asked that he and staff members of the Legislative Council be briefed on the progress of the Commission’s regional water supply study. Mr. Evenson reported that he and Robert P. Biebel of the Commission staff will provide that briefing at a meeting in Madison on August 1st.

Finally, Mr. Evenson reported that the Commission staff had met this week with representatives from the Pittsburgh-based Regional Water Management Task Force for the purpose of briefing those

representatives on the Commission's water resources planning work and the Commission's approach to regional planning operations, particularly including the use of advisory committees. He reported that Commissioner Schmidt joined the staff toward the end of the day and provided his own perspective on these matters to those representatives.

Following Mr. Evenson's reports, a brief discussion ensued relative to the possibility of holding a strategic planning session relative to the Commission and its mission and operating framework. It was agreed that this topic could be revisited following the next round of Commissioner appointments this fall.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m., on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Vrakas, and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip C. Evenson
Deputy Secretary

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Attachments