

MINUTES

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thursday, March 20, 2008

2:00 p.m.

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

Present:

Excused:

Committee Members:

Thomas H. Buestrin, Chairman
William R. Drew
James T. Dwyer
Adelene Greene
Michael J. Miklasevich
Daniel S. Schmidt
David L. Stroik
Gustav W. Wirth, Jr.

Richard A. Hansen

Staff:

Philip C. Evenson
Loretta Watson

Executive Director
Executive Secretary

ROLL CALL

Chairman Buestrin called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum declared present. Mr. Evenson noted for the record that Commissioner Hansen had asked to be excused.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 28, 2008, MEETING

On a motion by Ms. Greene, seconded by Mr. Drew, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on February 28, 2008, were approved as published.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT, MR. STROIK REPORTING

(Meeting of March 20, 2008)

Mr. Stroik 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 one financial reporting period: Year 2008 No. 5, extending over the period February 18, 2008, to March 2, 2008.
2. Reviewed the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures for the financial reporting period ending March 2, 2008. With about 20 percent of the year completed, the projections indicated a year end surplus of about \$250,000, a figure that is expected to continue to decline as the year goes on.
3. Reviewed and approved the 2007 audit report prepared by certified public accountants from the firm David L. Scrima, S.C. The audit report indicates that the Commission had a year-end fund equity balance of about \$2.66 million. This amount compares with a fund equity balance of \$2.56 million at the end of 2006. The auditors found no material weaknesses in the Commission's internal fiscal control procedures.
4. Received a staff report that the Commission's "experience modification" factor relative to claims involving workers compensation increased slightly this year despite the fact that there were no claims last year.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Ms. Greene, seconded by Mr. Miklasevich, 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 and agreements prior to the meeting. Mr. Evenson then briefly reviewed the two contracts reported on the table. Both contracts, he said, relate to additional work for Kenosha County relative to the acquisition and removal of floodplain structures along the Fox River floodplain in the western portion of the County. These acquisitions, he recalled, were recommended by the Commission in the Fox River watershed plan adopted in the late 1960's. Using various Federal funds, the program is designed to remove one additional structure in the Village of Silver Lake and several additional structures in the adjacent Towns of Salem and Wheatland.

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

CONSIDERATION OF PERSONNEL MATTER

Chairman Buestrin recalled that Mr. Evenson had reported to the Committee at its last meeting that he would not be seeking an extension of his employment contract which expires on December 31, 2008. He further noted that the Commission recently had concurred with the position of the Executive Committee that it proceed to select and appoint a new Executive Director following the same basic procedure as was used when Mr. Evenson succeeded Dr. Kurt W. Bauer in 1997. He noted that the agenda for the meeting allowed the Executive Committee, should it choose to do so, to go into a closed session on this matter at an appropriate time.

Mr. Dwyer commented that before consideration is given to going into a closed session, it would be appropriate to discuss in open session the process to be used in selecting a replacement for Mr. Evenson. Mr. Drew concurred with Mr. Dwyer. Mr. Miklasevich noted that the full Commission, at a meeting held recently in the Town of Sharon, explicitly authorized the Executive Committee to act for the full

Commission on the selection for a new Executive Director, endorsing in so doing the process that has historically been used to fill key management positions, namely, promoting from within if at all possible.

A lengthy discussion then ensued relative to the process to be followed in this matter. The following summarizes the substantive comments made during that discussion:

1. In response to a request from Mr. Buestrin, Mr. Evenson reviewed the succession process with respect to the Executive Director position as that process has been followed to this point. Mr. Evenson noted that in its long history, the Commission has selected new Executive Directors only twice: once in 1961 shortly after the creation of the Commission and once in 1996 when he succeeded Dr. Bauer. He noted that over the Commission's entire history, a culture has been nurtured to develop talent within the organization, promoting from within to management positions whenever possible. Only on rare occasions, he said, has the Commission sought to obtain professional talent from outside its organization to fill positions in the management structure. He cited himself as an example of internal talent growth, beginning as a planner in the Commission's Land Use Division, then promoted to be the Commission's Chief Community Assistance Planner, and then promoted to the position of Assistant Director before being named the Executive Director in late 1996. He recalled that discussions with Commission leadership about his promotion to Executive Director began about two years prior to the actual occurrence, with those discussions resulting in a good-faith commitment on his part to serve the Commission for about a 10-year period, thus foregoing any early retirement. He indicated that fairly early during his tenure as Executive Director, Chairman Buestrin had approached him about the desirability of beginning to think about succession when his 10-year commitment would expire. The ongoing succession discussions resulted in a determination that an orderly succession likely would require an additional commitment of three years on his part given an extra-ordinary Commission workload in the mid-2000's attendant to undertaking the regional water supply study and a series of county-based comprehensive planning partnerships intended to meet the requirements of Wisconsin's new planning law. He then pointed to a number of management positions at the Commission in the various operating divisions where internal promotion has proven to be very successful. The Commission recruits new talent primarily out of graduate schools, he said, and then prepares that talent for increasingly responsible assignments. In many cases, good talent has moved on to responsible management positions elsewhere in the public and private sectors of employment, with the Commission having many alumni from its staff in key positions today. In some cases, that talent matures and stays with the Commission, becoming good candidates for internal positions, including ultimate promotion to be Executive Director.
2. Mr. Dwyer commented that from his perspective, it is important to select a process and then follow it. His major concern is that whatever is done be transparent. While he might prefer a broad search for candidates for a high level management position, he fully understands that strong internal candidates have very positive advantages in any search selection process. Sometimes, he said, bringing in outside candidates provides an opportunity to obtain ideas that might help the Commission do better what it already does.
3. Mr. Stroik indicated that as a professional managing a firm in the architectural and design field he, too, prefers promoting from within whenever possible. A broad search process that relies heavily on oral interviews, he said, sometimes fails to uncover the best candidate for a job.

4. Mr. Drew indicated that he recalled leadership conversations several years ago where an informal consensus had been reached on an internal succession plan. If there are one or more good internal candidates, he noted, promotion from within tends to be a better process than a broad external search.
5. Mr. Schmidt indicated that, as a professional public administrator, he is very familiar with widespread searches for manager positions. He recalled helping a local community in the Region replace its administrator, with that community going through four administrators selected on a national search basis over a three-year period before finally determining to promote an individual from within who has now served that community very well for about 20 years. He indicated that he favors promotion from within whenever that is possible.
6. Ms. Greene, reporting in her capacity as Chair of the Commission's Environmental Justice Task Force, indicated that the Task Force had met recently and asked that she convey to the Executive Committee the position of the Task Force that it wished to be consulted on this matter in terms of commenting on the list of candidates that may be considered for the Executive Director position.
7. Mr. Buestrin reported that he had received a letter from Commission Vice-Chair Richard Hansen, who was traveling and unable to attend the meeting, that supported a process to fill the Executive Director position from within.

At the conclusion of that lengthy discussion, it was moved by Mr. Stroik, and seconded by Mr. Miklasevich, to go into closed session for the purpose of considering the selection of an Executive Director, such closed session being permitted by the provisions of Sec. 19.85(1)(c) of the Wisconsin Statutes. This motion was adopted on a vote of 7 to 1, with Messrs. Buestrin, Drew, Miklasevich, Schmidt, Stroik, and Wirth, and Ms. Greene voting aye, and Mr. Dwyer voting nay. The closed session began at 3:20 p.m.

APPOINTMENT OF A SUCCESSOR TO THE PRESENT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Without objection, the Committee returned to open session at 4:00 p.m. It was then moved by Mr. Drew, seconded by Mr. Stroik, and carried unanimously, to authorize the Commission Chairman, Treasurer, and the Chairman of the Administrative Committee, to negotiate an employment agreement with Mr. Kenneth R. Yunker, the Commission's present Deputy Director, to become the Executive Director of the Commission staff effective January 1, 2009, succeeding Mr. Evenson, with the terms of the proposed employment agreement subject to ratification by the Executive Committee at the next opportunity. Mr. Dwyer suggested that, as may be desirable, the ratification of the agreement could be handled through a teleconference meeting.

WORK PROGRAM REPORTS

Mr. Evenson indicated that he had no work program reports at this time.

CORRESPONDENCE/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Evenson reported that there were no announcements or correspondence to be brought to the attention of the Committee.

-5-
(Executive Committee)
March 20, 2008

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m., on a motion by Mr. Miklasevich, seconded by Mr. Schmidt, and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip C. Evenson
Deputy Secretary

PCE/lw
#135857 v1 - ExeMar08Min
Attachments