

## **MINUTES**

### **SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Thursday February 20, 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  
Michael Crowley  
Donna Brown-Martin  
Brian Holt  
Dewayne Johnson  
Trevor Jung  
Natalia Minkel-Dumit  
Robert Pitts  
David Stroik

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 JANUARY 16, 2025**

Chairperson Colman asked if there were any changes or additions to the January 16, 2025, Executive Committee meeting minutes. There were none.

On a motion by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Mr. Stroik, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on January 16, 2025, were approved as published.

## **UPDATE FROM ROCKWOOD DRIVE LEASING AGENT: COLLIERS**

Chairperson Colman asked the Colliers staff to introduce themselves to the Committee. Joe Moritz and Brandon Ciebell introduced themselves as Colliers representatives working to lease the Commission's rental space.

Mr. Colman then asked Ms. Hacker to introduce and review the work with Colliers. Ms. Hacker provided a summary of the space stating that in July 2024 the 3,500 square foot leasable space in the Commission building became available. She then noted the Commission's longtime tenant moved and consolidated their operations to a location where they had additional square footage. At the July 2024 Executive Committee meeting staff was directed to engage with a leasing agent that led to the partnership with Colliers. Colliers began advertising the rental space in the early winter months and since then they have experienced some traffic for the leasable space and some contacts from interested parties. That interest will be relayed to the Committee today.

Mr. Moritz thanked Ms. Hacker for the introduction and history of the leasable space. He then stated that they did go live with promoting the rental space prior to the holidays. As of the end of January two prospective qualified groups have shown interest in the space. Neither group moved forward with a lease as they had found space elsewhere. Mr. Moritz further stated that his team is looking for a tenant similar to the group who previously occupied the space.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Mr. Moritz stated they are advertising the space with the rental rate at \$21 to \$22 per square foot. Mr. Moritz further stated there might be more interest if the rental rate per square foot was advertised at \$20 to \$22 per square foot.

Ms. Hacker asked Mr. Moritz and Mr. Ciebell to address interest in the space that may not align with the square footage that is available.

Mr. Ciebell stated that a group has been through the building twice that is interested in purchasing the building. The group has contacted Mr. Moritz and Mr. Ciebell to gauge the Commission's interest in selling the building and will submit a letter of intent. Mr. Moritz and Mr. Ciebell noted to the group that the Commission building is not on the market but would consult with the Executive Committee to determine interest. The group is willing to work with the Commission to stay in the building for an extended period of time. The Commission could lease a portion of the building from the group until the Commission could secure a different location. Mr. Moritz stated the group would like to know if a sale of the building is a possibility.

Ms. Hacker reminded the Committee that this agenda item was slated for discussion and review of the leasing activity of this building and there is no need to make an actionable decision at this time. She stated that discussion could include commentary on whether Committee members would object to a potential sale of the building. She further stated that if the Commission were presented with a letter of intent, that would be an additional discussion item for this Committee.

Ms. Brown-Martin asked if there should be discussion regarding the sale of the building. She stated that she was under the impression that the Commission was looking to lease the vacant space, so a party indicating an interest in purchasing the building is surprising. She then asked if there was a timeframe on when they would want to occupy the entire building.

Mr. Ciebell stated this group is looking to the Commission to indicate their preference and would be flexible, with a one-to-three-year timeframe to lease back space until the Commission is able to define its needs with regard to space, size, and location.

Mr. Colman stated the only reason selling the building would make sense is if there was another building that fit the Commission's needs. However, if the purchase price was right, there may be consideration.

Mr. Stroik stated that the Commission building does not necessarily represent the Commission's work and it is not representative that the Commission is one of the highest qualified and performing planning agencies in the Country.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Jung, Mr. Colman stated that the Commission's space needs have been identified through a space needs analysis study.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Ms. Larsen stated that ProHealth Care paid \$20 per square foot, which included heating, cooling, shoveling, and major maintenance repairs.

Mr. Moritz stated they are proposing the rental rate be \$21 to \$22 per square foot, but there could potentially be more interest if the rental rate was \$20 to \$22 per square foot.

Mr. Pitts commented that obtaining a long term lease would be preferable to a vacant space as that vacancy translates to a loss of rental revenue. Mr. Pitts further stated that a lower per square foot rental rate would help to rent the space more quickly.

Ms. Hacker stated that the Colliers staff had asked if the Committee would consider modifying the lease range, however as this is a discussion item, there is no action needed about the lease rates at this time. It seems acceptable from the general Committee discussion to adjust the lease range to \$20 to \$22 per square foot.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Johnson, Mr. Moritz stated the demand for leased property in the area varies by location. He further stated the demand for space is higher in Brookfield, east of Goerke's Corners. However, more organizations have staff coming from the North Shore and companies are looking for centrally located spaces. He did note the nearby Riverwood Corporate Office Park has a 40 percent vacancy rate. He does feel that there will be an increase in groups looking for first floor, direct entrance space in the future.

Mr. Colman thanked Mr. Moritz and Mr. Ciebell for their time and stated he looks forward to a future update.

#### **REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENTS (COPY OF EXHIBIT AND RESOLUTION NO. 2025-02)**

Chairperson Colman asked the Commission to consider adoption of Resolution No. 2025-02, which is an amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program for Southeastern Wisconsin: 2025-2028. Mr. McKay presented Resolution 2025-02, amending the 2025-2028 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He noted the projects included in the amendment are summarized in Table 1 attached to the resolution, and they are in conformance with the regional transportation plan. He also stated the projects have been endorsed by the Advisory Committees on Transportation System planning and programming for the Kenosha and Milwaukee urbanized areas. He further noted there are no new projects and changes to five existing projects to be amended into the TIP.

He stated that Table 2 shows the impact of the amendment on the TIP is an increase in total programed expenditures of \$9.5 million.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Mr. McKay stated that the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Viaduct Bridge project will accommodate the IH 94 project.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Ms. Minkel- Dumit, to approve Resolution No. 2025-02, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried by a vote of 9 ayes and 0 nays, Resolution No. 2025-02 was approved (copy of Resolution 2025-02 attached to Official Minutes).

## **REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF REGIONAL TAX LEVY FOR 2026 BUDGET**

Chairperson Colman introduced the agenda item and asked Ms. Hacker to provide further information.

Ms. Hacker referenced the memorandum provided in the agenda packet that outlines the status of conversations held with six of the seven counties. She noted that since the date of the memo, she has now met with all seven counties to discuss the longstanding levy total of \$2,370,245. During these discussions, she explained how the Commission has been able to hold the tax levy steady since 2006 and the need for a reasonable increase. She stated that she has received initial favorable feedback on a new total levy amount of \$2,488,757 for consideration as part of the Commission's 2026 budget.

Ms. Hacker noted there are two highlights to outline about the county conversations: the first being that some members of this Committee were able to participate in the conversations, and the second being the counties' suggestions for a more modest increase of something closer to 1 or 2 percent in 2027 and 2028. Such an increase would more closely align with the constraints counties currently face due to levy limits.

Ms. Hacker then asked if any of the Commissioners who were present at the meetings had observations to share.

Mr. Holt responded that there was significant discussion regarding not requesting an increase in the levy since 2006 during the Walworth County meeting. The Walworth County finance director also wanted to know what the approach will be for the tax levy request in 2027 and 2028 and further stated that accurate communication is important on services provided that are part of the tax levy and services provided that include an additional service fee. He suggested that a review of the Commission work efforts with the County Committee responsible for approving the tax levy on an annual basis would be appropriate.

Mr. Stroik stated he met with Washington County Executive Josh Schoemann who did not object to the increase; however, Mr. Schoemann did state that he would also like more frequent communication about Commission work efforts. Mr. Stroik further stated that a plan for the levy request should be developed for the budget years of 2027 and 2028.

Mr. Johnson stated that he and Commissioner Decker attended the Waukesha County meeting and noted it was positive; however, the County staff would also like a report from the Commission on an annual basis.

Ms. Brown-Martin commented the Milwaukee County discussion went very well. She stated it was helpful for Commission staff and County staff to talk about the projects and services the Commission offers and what those services mean for the County. She stated that the County anticipated that the Commission would request a tax levy increase. When the \$100,000 and the 5 percent increase scenarios were discussed, the budget director was not surprised.

Ms. Hacker stated Waukesha County was interested in their cost increase over 2025 which would be a 2.67 percent increase or \$18,176. Mr. Johnson stated that a 5 percent increase is problematic because it is not aligned with inflation.

Ms. Hacker stated that the next steps in the process would be to inform the Counties of the intent to include the new total levy amount in the 2026 budget assumptions. Ms. Hacker then referenced the figures that were presented at the January Committee meeting, noting that these figures visualized the change in equalized valuation of the Region since 2000 along with a comparison of the tax levy requests since 2000. She noted the equalized valuation has doubled between the years 2000 and 2025 from just shy of \$150 billion to just shy of \$300 billion. Beginning in 2006 the Commission ceased keeping pace with equalized valuation, which has resulted in a 2025 rate of .0008 percent of the equalized value. That is roughly one-quarter of what the Commission is allowed to levy under State law, which is .003 percent of the equalized value of the Region.

In response to an inquiry from Mr. Holt, Ms. Hacker stated she has been in communication with staff at the Local Government Services Bureau at the Wisconsin Department of Revenue, who stated that the regional planning commission levies are not tracked because they are not a standalone line item on the county levy limit worksheet. Ms. Hacker then stated she has discussed this issue with other Wisconsin regional planning commission directors, who concluded that this may be an opportunity to contact the Wisconsin Counties Association and discuss a procedural edit to the way that planning commission levies are assigned in County budgets. She further outlined that Commission staff understand Section 66.0309 of the *Wisconsin Statutes*, which establishes the creation, organization, and powers and duties of regional planning commissions, set forth the levy maximum of 0.003 percent of equalized value before the establishment of the current constraints on county tax levies. Ms. Hacker explained that as a result, the levies of regional planning commissions were folded into the constraints of levy limits within each county.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Ms. Hacker stated that county participants in levy discussions generally included those who previously received notice of the 2025 Budget, which established the 2025 tax levy amount.

Mr. Pitts made a motion, seconded by Mr. Crowley, stating that the Commission Executive Committee will include a regional tax levy amount of \$2,488,757 into the budget assumptions for 2026, which will be considered by the Executive Committee and the full Commission at subsequent meetings.

Following the motion and second, Ms. Minkel-Dumit stated that the tables that were included in prior Executive Committee meetings should be provided to the full Commission. She also suggested that there be county specific materials on the work the Commission has done for each county that can be shared with the counties.

A call of the vote was taken. The vote was carried by 8 ayes and 0 nays, with one Commissioner abstaining.

## **CONSIDERATION OF 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 four contracts.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Jung, 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).

## **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 31, 2025**

Copies of the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures as of reporting period No. 2, ending on January 31, 2025, were distributed for Committee review.

In reviewing the Statement with the Committee, Ms. Larsen commented that the period covered represented under 10 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 January meeting.
2. The service agreement revenues remain unchanged from the report presented at the January meeting.
3. The Commission had on hand as of January 31, 2025, approximately \$4.57 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 4.39 percent interest, and certificate of deposit accounts. The Spring Bank CD renewed on February 14, 2025, that CD has been renewed for a period of 12 months, with a 4.45 percent annual percentage yield.
4. 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. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Holt, and carried unanimously, the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures for the period ending January 31, 2025, was accepted to be placed on file (copy attached to Official Minutes).

## **CONSIDERATION OF DISBURSEMENTS**

### **2025 Reporting Period No. 1**

Copies of the Check Register for the 1<sup>st</sup> financial reporting period of December 30, 2024, to January 20, 2025, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen reviewed and discussed the payments that have been highlighted on the Check Register for the 1<sup>st</sup> financial reporting period.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Crowley, seconded by Mr. Pitts, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the 1<sup>st</sup> reporting period of 2025 were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Mr. Stroik, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the Check Register for the 1<sup>st</sup> reporting period of 2025 (copy attached to Official Minutes).

## **2025 Reporting Period No. 2**

Copies of the Check Register for the 2<sup>nd</sup> financial reporting period of January 21, 2025, to January 31, 2025, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen reviewed and discussed the payments that have been highlighted on the Check Register for the 2<sup>nd</sup> financial reporting period.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Crowley concerning payment to The Water Council, (page 1), Ms. Larsen stated the invoices were incorrectly coded to the wrong account and will be corrected.

There being no further questions or comments, on a motion by Ms. Minkel-Dumit, seconded by Ms. Brown-Martin, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the 2<sup>nd</sup> reporting period of 2025 were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Mr. Stroik, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the Check Register for the 2<sup>nd</sup> reporting period of 2025 (copy attached to Official Minutes).

## **CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Larsen announced that the March 5, 2025, full Commission meeting will be held at The Abbey Resort in Fontana. Meeting materials, including a map to The Abbey Resort, will be mailed within the next week.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:47 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Crowley, and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Hacker  
Deputy Secretary