

MINUTES

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thursday April 17, 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
Trevor Jung
Natalia Minkel-Dumit
Robert Pitts
David Stroik

Dewayne Johnson

Staff:

Stephanie Hacker	Executive Director
Benjamin McKay	Deputy Director
Elizabeth Larsen	Director of Administration
Christopher Hiebert	MPO Director
Alina Panasiuk	Accounting/HR Specialist

ROLL CALL

Chairperson Colman called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 20, 2025

Chairperson Colman asked if there were any changes or additions to the February 20, 2025, Executive Committee meeting minutes. There were none.

On a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Jung, and carried unanimously, the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on February 20, 2025, were approved as published.

DISCUSSION ON RESULTS OF STRATEGY EXTERNAL FACILITATION

Chairperson Colman asked Ms. Hacker to review with the Committee the results of the external Strategy facilitation with CI Design.

Ms. Hacker recalled that the Committee was aware that staff would be finalizing the Commission's Strategy by engaging with two external facilitators, CI Design and Management Resource Associates, MRA.

Ms. Hacker stated the meeting packet contained two pages from CI Design and proceeded to explain that the materials received from CI Design are a part of the scope of work the Committee approved at the October 17, 2024, Committee meeting. Among CI Design's full scope were two one-half day workshops. She further stated CI Design advised staff to keep the workshops small and indicated that all 11 Division Heads and the Commission Chairperson and Vice Chairperson were included in the workshops. She then stated that some, but not all, of the CI Design workshop results are referenced in the enclosed materials.

Ms. Hacker then noted the Committee had also approved staff to work with MRA to develop measures of success for the actions that were drafted in prior staff and Division Head meetings throughout the last year. MRA hosted two one-half-day workshops to recommend certain measures of success. She then noted that neither CI Design nor MRA have yet completed their work with staff. Ms. Hacker further stated the Strategy booklet would be developed in-house based on the input received from CI Design and MRA. Both organizations may review the booklet and provide feedback. This booklet will also be reviewed by Commissioners and staff.

Ms. Hacker stated that the pages from CI Design represent a three-part elevator talk. This five second, ten second, and twenty second three-part elevator talk is designed around the story of the Commission's mission and vision statements and goals. This will allow staff and Commissioners to better tell the story of what the Commission does.

Ms. Hacker then described the exercise CI Design conducted with the group, which included participants drawing a picture of what the Commission does, then developing a metaphor that most directly relates to the work of the Commission. She stated that the notion of the Commission as a river became the center point that led to the five second piece, "We are a steady source of clarity for the Region." CI Design staff built upon the river metaphor to develop both the ten and twenty second elevator speeches that describe how the Commission is a steady source of clarity for the Region. Ms. Hacker stated this is a draft version that can be used to start to tell the story of the Commission. She reiterated that staff will bring updates on the status of the Strategy work with both CI Design and MRA as the last deliverables are closed out.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman, Ms. Hacker stated that she will be synthesizing the CI Design and MRA final feedback with the Division Heads and will bring back what is available to the May Committee meeting. She indicated that she may not have a final document available but noted it would be a very close draft as staff do need the opportunity to understand the facilitation results.

Mr. Stroik stated that he would like to see this done as soon as possible. He then asked the Committee members not to share the elevator speech with individuals outside of this Committee, noting the statements seem trivial and too much time and money was spent to get to this point. Ms. Hacker stated the elevator speeches may not be representative of the final plan.

Mr. Stroik then suggested that the plan be approved, and staff move onto the work of the Commission.

Ms. Hacker stated that a strategic plan needs to outlive Commission leaders, but needs to be informed by leadership. She further stated that the Commission is not yet firing on all cylinders with one voice. She noted that staff is broken into divisions, with the word division being very descriptive. She stated this is an opportunity for staff to develop a better unified voice as an agency that has multiple divisions with multiple ways of doing business with the Region. She stated this was also an opportunity for the Division Heads with the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson to give thought to actions that matter and come up with a unified voice. She further stated the five, ten, and twenty second message is very simple and not representative of the entire Strategy, but the Commission needs to start by ensuring that staff are looking at wording that everyone can get behind.

Mr. Stroik stated that he is a strong supporter of strategic planning. However, too much time has been spent on the plan. Given the political climate the fact that the plan is not yet finished makes the Commission vulnerable. He stated that the plan needs to be finished without making a big deal about it. Ms. Hacker noted the schedule for the Strategy was provided to this Committee at the February 2024 meeting that noted an internal November 2024 completion, and despite several circumstances that occurred in 2024, the Strategy was drafted by November 2024. She further stated that in October 2024 the Committee approved staff to work with two external facilitators, CI Design and MRA, to inform the Commission's storytelling and measures of success from people who do this work every day. At that time, the Committee understood staff would work with these facilitators into the first quarter of 2025.

Mr. Holt stated that for clarification this was an internal exercise to help with clarity in the different divisions and asked if insights have been gained into the progress of the organization internally. He also asked if this exercise has been helpful and if staff was speaking with one voice before the start of this process. He further stated these questions were not answered by the elevator speech.

Ms. Hacker stated that when a mission statement and a vision statement were first developed in 2024, the Commission did not have an official mission statement. She began working with staff to develop a mission statement and then discussed a vision statement, noting that staff at that time did not have a common language to reiterate. She noted that the strategic planning process has helped in this regard.

Ms. Brown-Martin stated that as a Commissioner representative at these meetings, she noted as the meetings progressed, she had a better sense of how both CI Design and MRA were using the information from the earlier discussions and how the staff in the room were relating to the discussion. Part three of the elevator speech describes how the Commission brings clarity to the Region. After attending the final MRA meeting, Ms. Brown-Martin noted that she was impressed by how staff worked as a group to flesh out the detail of the key elements of the Strategy and is confident that staff will be able to deliver the requested results prior to the end of May.

Ms. Minkel-Dumit asked that the schedule of the Strategy development be brought back to the Committee to determine where the plan is in the process and to keep track of the bigger picture of the process.

Mr. Jung stated that the current process is to ensure the plan does not get developed and set on a shelf, that this is a functional strategy.

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF CHANGES TO THE SERVICE FEE SCHEDULE

Chairperson Colman asked Mr. McKay to review the proposed changes to the service fee schedule.

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Mr. McKay distributed a background document regarding the proposed changes. He noted the current schedule was approved by the Executive Committee at the November 2024 meeting and the full Commission at the December 2024 Quarterly meeting. Staff have now had time to track how the process is working. Staff has found the need to adjust fees charged for environmental corridor delineations, wetland delineations and lake protection management plans, specifically concerning the hourly rates charged for this work. Mr. McKay stated staff has proposed three updates to the service fee schedule.

Mr. McKay noted that the hourly rates on the service fee schedule include ranges of job titles, which do not closely reflect the staff working on these efforts. The first proposed update is to reduce the hourly rate for the staff working on these efforts from \$95/hour to \$80/hour.

The second proposed update involves changes to the amount of the cost of delineations covered by service fees. Delineations are funded in one of three ways. One type is funded under a Wisconsin Department of Transportation contract (WisDOT). The second is for non-WisDOT delineations that fall within a sanitary sewer service area (SSA), and the third is for non-WisDOT delineations that fall outside a sanitary sewer service area. Under the Overall Work Program, delineations within SSAs are ineligible for Continuing Land Use and Transportation (CLUTS) funds, and those that are located outside of SSAs are eligible for CLUTS funds. This creates cost disparity based on the location of a delineation, and many of the public park and utility delineations are within SSAs. The proposal is to cover 40 percent of the total cost of a non-WisDOT delineation with a service fee regardless of its location.

The third proposed update would be to replace the application for delineations with a letter agreement and charge a minimum payment of \$500 for both environmental corridor and wetland delineations.

In response to a comment by Ms. Hacker, Mr. McKay noted the Commission tax levy would cover approximately 60 percent of the cost of the delineation that falls within a SSA. If the delineation falls outside a SSA, it would be partially supported by CLUTS funds.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Mr. McKay stated the \$80/hour represents the base wages, fringe and overhead costs plus a 30 percent increase to that total for the employees that conduct delineations.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Holt, Mr. McKay estimated that staff conducted about 15 delineations within SSAs in 2024.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Mr. McKay stated that prior to this service fee schedule there were no service fees charged for this work. Ms. Larsen stated that under this service fee schedule each agreement will be assigned a project number where staff time is tracked. There will then be an accounting of revenue and expenses that can be used to determine if the fees are reasonable.

There being no additional questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Holt, and carried unanimously, the changes to the service fee schedule were approved.

DISCUSSION ON ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW PROCESS AND SCHEDULE

Ms. Hacker began the discussion by reviewing with the Committee of the process Division Heads undertake to conduct staff performance reviews. Ms. Hacker also stated that the Commission Chairperson will be appointing members to the Ad Hoc Salary Committee. This Committee will convene prior to the May 15, 2025, Executive Committee meeting at 12:30 pm.

Ms. Brown-Martin then stated that she and Chairperson Colman are in the process of conducting an annual performance review of the Commission Executive Director. She stated that the review process will be standard and include a self-evaluation, a joint evaluation with the Chairperson and herself, and a discussion with the Division Heads. She also stated that Ms. Hacker has been asked for goals for the next year and to share that information with the Committee to help Division Heads to move forward.

Ms. Brown-Martin noted that this review process will be completed by mid-May.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Ms. Hacker stated that the salary committee will review the proposed salary increments for all Commission staff. She further stated the staff salary adjustments are based upon merit. However, the total staff merit-based adjustment should be very close to the total budgeted amount for salary increases included in the 2026 Budget assumptions.

Ms. Larsen stated the 2025 Budget had a salary increase of three percent overall, however she noted that the rate may need to be decreased as the tenant space has not yet been occupied. Ms. Larsen explained that the staff salary adjustment process is undertaken between Executive Staff and Division Heads.

In response to a comment by Mr. Pitts, Mr. Stroik stated that the Salary Committee is aware of the individual increase amounts and the total cost of all increases. The Executive Committee receives a report from the Ad Hoc Salary Committee and approves the proposed increase amount.

Mr. Pitts asked if the Ad Hoc Salary Committee went into closed session. Ms. Minkel-Dumit stated that the Committee does go into a closed session and thus everything stated in that session is confidential.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Ms. Larsen stated that she and Mr. McKay are reviewed by Ms. Hacker.

In response to an additional inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Ms. Brown-Martin stated that she and the Chairperson will review Ms. Hacker. As part of that review feedback will be received from individual discussions held with the Division Heads. The results of the review and collection of feedback will be brought back to this Committee for discussion.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Ms. Hacker stated that she is an At-Will employee. As part of her review process, she has provided to the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson the Commission Personnel Regulations, the job description the hiring committee provided to Spano Pratt, and the Commission's performance review scorecard.

Mr. Stroik stated that all prior executive directors of the Commission have had an employment contract and stated that the search committee had considered one prior to his leaving town during the search process.

Mr. Pitts stated he would like to review the Executive Director contract. Mr. Colman stated he would look at the contract structure as the review process is completed.

Mr. Jung summarized the conversation, noting there is a longstanding process of employee evaluation and the Executive Committee will be informed of decisions that are made with regard to staff.

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF STAFF SUPPORT

Mr. Colman called upon Ms. Larsen to review this agenda item.

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Ms. Larsen stated that a memorandum to the Executive Committee requesting permission to hire a full-time Administrative Assistant has been distributed. Staff is requesting that an individual be hired to handle meeting preparation, which includes draft minutes and agendas, compiling meeting materials, printing mail and e-mailing meeting materials, determining and scheduling locations of Quarterly meetings and dinners for the June and December meetings, and coordinating internal staff meetings and recognition awards. In addition, this individual would assist the Principal Graphic Designer with Commission report production.

Ms. Larsen noted that the Commission last had an Executive Secretary position in the 2018 Budget. Ms. Larsen then stated that she has been handling the Executive Secretarial duties since that time.

Ms. Larsen stated she is requesting permission to hire a full-time administrative staff person. She stated the budget does have a part-time administrative position in the budget and those job duties would become part of the full time position. A full time position is not in the budget for 2025, the tax levy increase will cover a position in 2026. Should this position be approved, it is anticipated at this point in time that there would be approximately a \$50,000 decrease to a potential surplus or an addition to a potential deficit at year end.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Ms. Larsen stated this person would not need to attend Commission meetings because they are recorded.

There being no additional comments or questions, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Pitts, and carried unanimously, the administrative assistant staff position was approved.

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.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Ms. Larsen stated that this report does not have any projects that are funded by Federal funds.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Minkel-Dumit, Mr. McKay stated the Regional Natural Areas Plan Update Phase IV contract is for plan implementation activities.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Jung, Mr. McKay stated the contract report lists new contracts and agreements that have been recently signed and authorized. The work program progress report is a listing of current work efforts. There will be some overlap between the two reports.

There being no further questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Crowley, seconded by Ms. Minkel-Dumit, 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).

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Ms. Larsen stated that Federal funds make up approximately one-half of the Commission's Budget.

In response to a second inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Mr. McKay stated that the Wisconsin Department of Transportation has stated that the federal transportation planning funding is secure through 2025, and the current five year Federal transportation funding bill runs through 2026. Mr. McKay also highlighted the EPA funding for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant has been reopened. Should any grant be paused, staff would need to stop working on that grant. Mr. McKay further noted this will be an agenda at the May Committee meeting.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Mr. Hiebert stated that the Commission in prior years had belonged to the Association for Metropolitan Planning Organizations, a national group that advocates and shapes policies for Metropolitan Planning Organizations. While the Commission is no longer a member of this organization due to the cost of the annual dues, the Commission continues to receive e-mails from this group informing staff of changes and additions to regulations.

In response to an additional inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Mr. McKay stated our Chief Community Engagement Specialist, Nikki Payne, is in regular contact with Congressional Representatives.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman, Ms. Hacker stated the Commission has received a comprehensive open records request. This request has been sent to all nine Regional Planning Commissions in Wisconsin. Mr. Stroik asked if this Committee will be informed of the Commission response to the open records request. Ms. Hacker noted this discussion could continue under the Correspondence and Announcements section of the Agenda.

REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF THE STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR REPORTING PERIOD ENDING MARCH 23, 2025

Copies of the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures as of reporting period No. 3, ending on March 23, 2025, were distributed for Committee review.

In reviewing the Statement with the Committee, Ms. Larsen commented that the period covered represented under 25 percent of the calendar year. She then called attention to the following items:

1. The Federal revenues have increased \$55,564, due to FHWA PL funds released from the Green Bay MPO.
2. State revenue entries remain unchanged from the report presented at the February meeting.
3. The service agreement revenues have increased \$83,785 due to a greater work effort on the MARK rail study. These funds are from an agreement the Commission has with the City of Racine to provide staff assistance with the conduct of this study.
4. The Commission had on hand as of March 23, 2025, approximately \$8.21 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.

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. Pitts, seconded by Mr. Stroik, and carried unanimously, the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures for the period ending March 23, 2025, was accepted to be placed on file (copy attached to Official Minutes).

CONSIDERATION OF DISBURSEMENTS

2025 Check Register dated February 14, 2025

Copies of the Check Register dated February 14, 2025, for financial reporting period of January 27, 2025, to February 9, 2025, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen reviewed and discussed the payments that have been highlighted on the Check Register dated February 14, 2025.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman concerning payment to Xylia Rueda, (page 2), Ms. Larsen stated that Ms. Rueda is a Commission employee, and this payment was for mileage and meal reimbursement for her attendance at a MobilISE meeting.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman concerning payment to Diversified Benefit Services, (page 1), Ms. Larsen stated that this organization administers the Commission's Health Reimbursement Account and Flexible Spending Account on behalf of Commission employees.

There being no additional questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Pitts, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the February 14, 2025, check register were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Mr. Stroik, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the February 14, 2025, Check Register (copy attached to Official Minutes).

2025 Check Register dated February 28, 2025

Copies of the Check Register dated February 28, 2025, for financial reporting period of February 10, 2025 to February 23, 2025, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen reviewed and discussed the payments that have been highlighted on the Check Register dated February 28, 2025.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Mr. Stroik, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the February 28, 2025, check register were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Mr. Stroik, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the February 28, 2025, Check Register (copy attached to Official Minutes).

2025 Check Register dated March 14, 2025

Copies of the Check Register dated March 14, 2025, for financial reporting period of February 24, 2025 to March 9, 2025, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen reviewed and discussed the payments that have been highlighted on the Check Register dated March 14, 2025.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman concerning payment to Securian Financial Group, Inc. (page 1), Ms. Larsen stated this payment was for the term life insurance program for the Commission staff.

There being no additional questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Pitts, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the March 14, 2025, check register were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Mr. Stroik, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the March 14, 2025, Check Register (copy attached to Official Minutes).

2025 Check Register dated March 28, 2025

Copies of the Check Register dated March 28, 2025, for financial reporting period of March 10, 2025 to March 23, 2025, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen reviewed and discussed the payments that have been highlighted on the Check Register dated March 28, 2025.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman concerning payment to Dell Marketing (page 1), Ms. Larsen stated this was the purchase of two laptops and docking stations for two Commission staff.

There being no additional questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Pitts, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the March 23, 2025, check register were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Mr. Stroik, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the March 28, 2025, Check Register (copy attached to Official Minutes).

CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Hacker stated that she will have follow up with this Committee regarding the open records request.

Mr. McKay stated that there is a Planning & Research Committee meeting scheduled for May 6, 2025.

Mr. Stroik acknowledged that Ms. Laura Herrick, Chief Environmental Engineer, was featured in the Milwaukee Business Times.

Mr. Pitts asked for a status report on the rental space. Ms. Hacker noted that she had asked Colliers to see at least two to three tours in the present month. She further stated that she does need to check in regarding their status on the tours of the space.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:08 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Crowley, and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Hacker
Deputy Secretary

SRH/BRM/EAL
#276897