

## **MINUTES**

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

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Thursday May 15, 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
Christopher Hiebert	MPO Director
Alina Panasiuk	Accounting/HR Specialist

#### **ROLL CALL**

Chairperson Colman called the meeting to order at 1:45 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 17, 2025**

Chairperson Colman asked if there were any changes or additions to the April 17, 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 April 17, 2025, were approved as published.

## **PRESENTATION AND CONSIDERATION OF THE 2024 COMMISSION AUDIT REPORT**

Chairman Colman welcomed Mr. Jordan Boehm, CPA, of the firm CliftonLarsonAllen (CLA), to present the Draft 2024 Commission Audit Report to the Committee.

Mr. Boehm introduced himself to the Committee and then presented the audit findings.

Mr. Boehm referenced the Summary Audit Results document of the Commission's 2024 Audit and then reviewed the summary of the findings. He noted there are three reports issued as part of the audit. The first is the independent auditors report that is the opinion of the auditors of CliftonLarsonAllen and stated that the financial statements are in good form and content and are materially correct for other users. The second is a report on internal control of financial reporting called a yellow book report. This reports on compliance with the federal and state funding the Commission receives. Any compliance findings would be noted in this report. The Commission had a clean report with no compliance findings. The final report is the compliance opinion over federal and state grants dollars the Commission receives. As part of this report, testing is conducted on expenses and controls around the management of the programs receiving federal and state funding.

Mr. Stroik clarified that the auditors tested various areas and requested information and reviewed supporting documentation that was provided by staff.

Mr. Boehm confirmed and noted an audit review asks for staff to provide documentation of randomly selected financial entries. The auditors will verify those entries with outside information, as an example, comparing payments against bank statements, and payroll entries will be compared against requests for revenues. He further clarified the audit conducts a deep dive into the Commission financials. Mr. Boehm stated the best practices and observations will be shared in the management letter. He also stated the management letter highlighted the completion of the bank reconciliation statements and the normal timing and sequencing of the audit.

Mr. Boehm summarized that as there are no financial statement findings, no compliance issues, no single audit findings, and no internal control matters, a clean audit opinion will be issued.

Mr. Boehm did state that with any audit, auditors do share best practices or observations in the form of a management letter. This letter is shared with the Executive Committee for awareness and best practices and observations that are identified. He further stated that such practices and observations are not meant for action by the Committee, rather for management of the Commission to address.

Mr. Boehm then noted that due to the change in the Commission accounting software, there were delays in the timely completion of bank reconciliations that were not able to be completed on a monthly basis. This in turn delayed invoicing to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for the Continuing Land Use Transportation Study program, ultimately resulting in a larger receivable from the federal and state funds than in past years.

Ms. Larsen commented that the bank statements were balanced to the checkbook in a timely manner. The cash account in the general ledger was not balanced to the bank account due to a number of issues. All Commission banking accounts at Associated Bank were closed in December 2023, with new accounts subsequently issued. This was due to an unauthorized transfer of funds between the Commission's savings account and checking account by an unknown individual. Also at the end of 2023, the accounting software transitioned from Microsoft Dynamics to Acumatica, which also involved transitioning to an out of house

payroll provider. The general ledger entries to cash were off due to working to close out the old software and move to the two new software providers.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Mr. Boehm stated that Ms. Larsen, and Mr. Michael Anderson, CPA, Manager, CLA, began working together prior to initiating the work on the 2024 audit to identify gaps between the bank records and the general ledger. He continued to note that as Ms. Larsen had asked for assistance prior to the initiation of the audit, this issue will be reported in the management letter and not as a more significant matter. Mr. Boehm further stated that the proactive nature of asking for assistance is a good practice when working through challenges.

Mr. Boehm stated there was one new accounting standard that was updated regarding compensated absences, vacation and sick leave. This update was not an error or restatement, but a requirement of auditing standards for every organization that reports under the governmental accounting standards. He also noted that no transactions were entered into that lacked authoritative guidance. There is one significant estimate, other post-employment benefits, and as that is an estimate, the Commission does work with an actuary to determine that liability. As part of the audit, the post-employment benefit information is tested and then provided to the actuary for accuracy.

Mr. Boehm then referenced Slide 6, page 6 of the Summary Audit Results, indicating there were no particularly sensitive disclosures, no significant difficulties in performing the audit, no uncorrected immaterial or material misstatements, no corrected material misstatements, no disagreements with management, and there were no consultations with other accountants.

Mr. Boehm then stated that the audit has historically been presented to the Executive Committee at this May meeting, and given the challenges with the 2024 audit, the audit was presented within the historical timeline. He then thanked the accounting team for their assistance with the audit process and noted those staff made the audit a priority work effort.

Mr. Johnson noted Catholic Charities has recently been in the news and asked if the Commission could face similar issues. Mr. Boehm stated that audits are not constructed to detect fraud. He stated that issues such as this may occur when there are fiscal challenges that result in cuts to administrative staff and efficiencies are created, which generally degrades good accounting practices and reduces internal controls. It is important to make sure there is a segregation of duties and to watch for transactions that carry risk, such as credit card transactions. Mr. Boehm continued to state that ultimately staff ensures the continuation of segregation of duties and controls around financial transactions, especially on things like general disbursements in payroll where the money is leaving the organization. The Commission does not have a lot of cash that flows in and out in terms of bills, which lowers the Commission's risk because there is not a large amount of cash on site.

There being no additional questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Pitts, and carried unanimously, the 2024 Commission Audit Report was approved and placed on file.

#### **REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AMENDMENTS (COPY OF EXHIBIT AND RESOLUTION NO. 2025-05)**

Chairperson Colman asked the Commission to consider adoption of Resolution No. 2025-05, which is an amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program for Southeastern Wisconsin: 2025-2028. Mr. Hiebert presented Resolution 2025-05, 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, Milwaukee, Racine, and West Bend urban areas. He further noted there are 13 new projects, one dropped project, and changes to 27 existing projects to be amended into the TIP.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Pitts, to approve Resolution No. 2025-05, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried by a vote of 9 ayes and 0 nays, Resolution No. 2025-05 was approved (copy of Resolution 2025-05 attached to Official Minutes).

## **CONSIDERATION OF BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS FOR 2026**

Chairperson Colman asked Ms. Larsen to lead the Committee through a discussion of budget assumptions for calendar year 2026. Noting that materials had been provided to Committee members prior to this meeting (copy attached to the Official Minutes), Ms. Larsen made the following major points:

1. Federal grants for transportation planning are slightly under the 2025 Adopted Budget. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law had called for a nominal annual increase, but due to the uncertainty surrounding federal funds, staff is conservatively budgeting for the same level in 2026 as received in 2025. The Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding for the Regional Orthophotography Program will again be available in 2026, and the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) has been allocated proportionately to staff effort through 2027.
2. State funding for transportation planning remains fairly consistent from the 2025 budget.
3. State funding for water quality management planning will remain at the same level as the 2025 budget, however additional funds have been allocated to the Commission in both 2025 (\$39,000) and 2026 (\$56,000) to complete a prospectus for an update to the Regional Water Quality Management Plan. This plan has not been fully updated since 1979. The coastal management planning will remain at the same level as the 2025 budget.
4. An overall increase in service agreement revenues of \$722,062, or just under 44 percent, has been assumed. The service agreement assumptions are as follows:
  - A. An increase is expected in park and land use planning due to the completion of a number of comprehensive plan updates and the addition of funds for work on the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District Habitat Restoration project.
  - B. Economic Development planning revenues have increased due to the anticipated grant approval to complete the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Region that is done every five years.
  - C. Transportation modeling has increased due to anticipated funding to be received from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) for an IH 94 East-West Mitigation project.
  - D. The MARK Commuter Rail Feasibility Study initiated in 2023 will continue through March 2026.
  - E. The Orthophotography program is a recurring two-year project slated for even-numbered years. This project is funded by the participating counties, the Commission's reserve fund and Federal STP funds.

- F. WisDOT is expected to request additional perpetuation work due to ongoing road construction.
  - G. Community Assistance planning revenues have decreased significantly as funding for County hazard mitigation plans is no longer available from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
  - H. Water quality planning service agreements have decreased due to the anticipated completion of the Geneva Lake Management Plan Update, the Delavan Lake Management Plan Update, and a number of other lake studies. This amount also includes revenue assumptions from the updated fee schedule including corridor and wetland delineation fees, sewer extension review fees, and sewer service area plan update and amendment fees. These fees are estimates based upon expected work in 2026.
  - I. Stormwater management planning revenues have increased slightly due to anticipated work to be completed on the Root River Watershed project.
  - J. The County Surveyor budget reflects a one percent increase over the actual revenue amount of 2025. In addition, the re-monumentation assistance project is also expected to increase due to greater work requests from WisDOT.
5. The rental amount from a tenant in the Rockwood Drive building is estimated to remain the same. It is hoped the Commission will attract a new tenant to that space with the rent being at a minimum, the same rental rate as the Pro Health Care lease.
6. The Region's tax base, or equalized valuation, increased by 6.21 percent from 2023 to 2024 (see Table 2). The anticipated 2026 regional tax levy, a 5.00 percent increase over the 2025 levy, yields a tax rate of 0.00079 percent – substantially below the statutory cap of 0.003 percent. Table 3 shows the distribution of the levy among the seven counties.
7. On an overall basis, the potential year 2026 operating budget would call for a total revenue and expenditure level of about \$9.94 million, an increase of \$1.05 million or 11.85 percent from the adopted 2025 budget. This increase in both revenues and expenditures is driven largely by the 2026 Orthophotography program.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Mr. Colman stated staff are working with Colliers to find a tenant for the rental space. Mr. Stroik noted the rental market is poor. Mr. Pitts then asked if it is time to work with a different agent. Mr. Colman responded that he will ask Ms. Hacker to meet with Colliers to receive an updated report. Mr. Stroik suggested it would be appropriate for the executive director to work with Colliers to develop options for the Commission given the tough rental market.

Mr. Pitts initiated discussion on bringing on additional staff to assist in the accounting department. Mr. Colman stated that topic will be addressed later in the meeting.

Ms. Hacker then distributed a memorandum addressing some of the questions that this committee has asked in prior 2025 executive committee meetings regarding the status of Federal funding. She stated this memorandum does not need to be incorporated in the 2026 budget assumptions. Ms. Hacker asked Mr. McKay to review this memorandum.

Mr. McKay reviewed the memorandum stating that the Federal metropolitan planning funding, which is the Commission's transportation PL funding, accounts for nearly half of the Commission's operations and funds most of the transportation-related work efforts.

Mr. McKay then stated the Commission has received increases in the PL funding since the 1990's. Historically a five-year transportation funding bill has been adopted by Congress, which currently runs through 2026. Staff has been in contact with staff at the WisDOT and U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT), and they have stated the current PL funding is secure through calendar year 2025 and to expect approximately the same amount for calendar year 2026. He then noted that staff received a memorandum from the US DOT that included no mention of a reduction of Federal funding in 2026.

Mr. McKay then directed the Commissioners to page two of the memorandum, which outlines options the Commission could consider if funding decreases. Options may include executing a new revenue / project priority plan, furloughs, or restructuring or re-sizing the Commission staff.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Johnson, Mr. Hiebert stated the biggest risk is when funds haven't been obligated at Federal level. Once funds are obligated, they go into an account to spend against and subsequently request reimbursement. However, funding that has not yet been obligated may be rescinded by Congress. All 2025 funds have been obligated; 2026 funds have yet to be obligated.

Mr. Stroik commented that the budget is sufficiently conservative with options outlined.

There being no further questions or comments on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Pitts, and carried unanimously, the budget assumptions for calendar year 2026 were approved.

## **REVIEW OF CI DESIGN MESSAGING GUIDE AND REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF THE STRATEGY**

Ms. Hacker stated she had previously provided materials from CI Design for review. Those materials included the messaging guide, noting that the messaging guide is for Committee review, and not for consideration of approval. Information from this document may be incorporated into the Strategy document.

Ms. Hacker then referenced the original schedule for the 2024 Strategy outlined as of February 2024. She noted that while the strategy was originally scheduled for completion in November of 2024, staff met and had wrapped up preliminary and holistic comments by October of 2024. She then stated that the Executive Committee in the fall of 2024 approved working with two external facilitators during the first quarter of 2025. She further stated the division heads and leadership staff were very pleased with CI Design's facilitation, the results of which are reflected in the messaging guide. staff subsequently worked with MRA – The Management Association to develop measures of success. The division heads and leadership staff were less certain about the results of the MRA workshops.

Ms. Hacker further commented that the pages following the schedule are the near final mission, vision, goals, and actions, that if approved will be presented at the Full Commission meeting on June 18<sup>th</sup>, and will be launched at a staff meeting the following week.

Measures of success will be taken from what was provided by MRA and staff will continue to develop, finalize, and work through those measures in house. With careful wordsmithing, staff worked through the mission, vision, goals, and actions and feel confident that those measures embody what CI Design advised,

what our division heads want to undertake, and what we want to share with the Region and with the general public as our goals for the next five years.

Ms. Hacker stated that this is the first time the Commission has had a mission statement which is, “The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission serves as a steady source of clarity, providing trusted expertise to help communities plan for a thriving Region,” and the vision statement is; “Through collaborative regional planning, Southeastern Wisconsin will be a connected and thriving community.”

Ms. Hacker noted that the Commission would be realizing the vision through our mission of working to help plan for a thriving community. The Commission’s six goals are listed with actions for each goal noted.

Mr. Crowley made a motion to approve the Strategy as presented. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion.

The following discussion occurred.

Mr. Johnson stated he had three suggestions on the messaging guide. Ms. Hacker noted that the messaging guide is part of the CI Design final deliverable that staff will use to inform how to message the strategy. This guide will be an internal document.

Mr. Johnson indicated he understands this is internal. He feels it is important to maintain regular communication with the Commission’s partners and stakeholders. He noted page 19 does not reference land use and environment, which are important, and page 28 does not reference that the Commission serves as a resource for government bodies.

Mr. Stroik commented that at the start of the strategic planning process a goal was to attain a higher level of respect as in the past the Commission seemed to be invisible to the public. He also noted the concept of value proposition is directly out of a marketing handbook where you want to differentiate from the competition. The Commission does not have competition, and perhaps there is a different word than differentiation. He further commented the metaphor of a river is needlessly complicated, and the words live, work, play and create memories, are esoteric and not part of the Commission’s work effort.

Mr. Stroik then addressed the frequently asked questions section, stating the Commission is not an independent agency, as the Commissioners are appointed. Mr. Stroik further commented that the Executive Committee should see this document in the final form, prior to the draft going to the Full Commission meeting in June.

Mr. Crowley noted that as this document is geared not only toward the public but also to employees, creating memories should be enjoyable amongst this family as an organization as well as the community. He interpreted this messaging guide as not being explicit to employees or the general public in the Region. Some of the messaging guide is about the staff and the culture as the Commission evolves. This is a guide, a tool, it does not get publicly communicated. Mr. Crowley stated he does appreciate how it transitioned into the draft strategy mission and vision statements.

Mr. Pitts amended the motion to postpone the review of the draft strategy by the full Commission until the September meeting, which was seconded by Mr. Stroik.

Mr. Holt noted that the amended motion would not bring the draft strategy back to Executive Committee for approval.

Ms. Hacker stated that the document is labeled 'near-final' because it has not yet been considered by the Executive Committee. It is final from the staff.

Mr. Crowley stated postponing this three to four months will not change the substance of the Strategy. Mr. Stroik stated that there will then be no changes based upon the comments made.

Mr. Jung stated he is uncomfortable wordsmithing a document that has been worked on by the leadership of the Commission staff.

Mr. Holt asked the reason why the full Commission would not want an opportunity to do a revision for the September meeting. He stated that is why he would not vote for the amendment to the motion.

Mr. Stroik stated that the normal protocol is the Executive Committee spend time on the details of an issue prior to consideration of the full Commission. He stated that he seconded the amendment because he felt this document needs more attention.

Ms. Hacker clarified that on the amended motion, which would postpone delivery to the full Commission until September, the Executive Committee is hoping to advise the Commission through consideration today, and that in June or September, the full Commission could review the final strategy and not have to consider it. Thus, this Committee could consider the strategy as presented which would make it final, and the Executive Committee would bring this document to the full Commission for review in June or September. The full Commission would not need to approve the strategy.

Ms. Brown-Martin stated that there seems to be concern that issues have been raised without giving enough time to address the issues. She further stated that she does not remember a time when the full Commission did not review or did not give a comment on agenda items brought to the full Commission meetings. She stated she wants to provide the full Commission an opportunity to comment on and modify the Strategy if necessary.

Ms. Hacker stated that she can help summarize her understanding of the discussion. The comments made by Executive Committee members were on the CI Design messaging guide. There have not been comments on the mission, vision, goals or actions contained within the Strategy. The mission, vision, goals, and actions are what the Committee is considering. If considered today, they can be made final to bring to the Commission. The Commission then can be advised by this Committee as to whether it's a review and consideration in June or a review only. Ms. Hacker stated she understood it to be review and consideration by the full Commission given the Vice Chair's comments. Comments can be made today on the mission, vision, goals and actions. The comments or edits would be included in the final document that would go to the full Commission meeting in June.

Mr. Stroik stated that this type of debate with wordsmithing should not happen at the full Commission meeting.

Mr. Pitts moved for a vote on the amendment.

On a motion by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Mr. Stroik, to postpone the review of the draft strategy by the Full Commission to the September 10, 2025 meeting, was defeated by a vote of 2 ayes and 7 nays.



Mr. Johnson clarified that Ms. Hacker stated the comments thus far in this discussion have been on the messaging document. Ms. Hacker stated that messaging guide was for review only and the Strategy was included on the meeting agenda for review and consideration.

Mr. Holt noted the Committee had returned to a discussion period on the original motion in which Committee members can comment on the draft strategy.

Mr. Stroik commented that the overall thought when the Strategy was being developed is whether the Commission is more prominent or invisible. He further stated that incorporating healthiest food, water, building materials, native landscaping, engaging Commissioners in developing communication tools seems like vulnerable language.

Mr. Johnson stated he had a comment on page 5 regarding staff certifications. Ms. Hacker stated that some Commission positions do require certifications, and in some positions, certifications are highly encouraged. Mr. Johnson noted those requirements should be captured in the document. Ms. Hacker stated one way to measure success is noting that we will seek to incorporate the appropriate certifications and licensures into forthcoming job descriptions, and that Mr. Johnson's comment could be incorporated in the measures of success.

There being no additional comments, on a motion by Mr. Crowley, seconded by Mr. Johnson, to approve the Strategy for review and consideration at the June 18<sup>th</sup> Full Commission meeting passed on a vote of 7 ayes and 2 nays.

## **REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF BUSINESS INSURANCE RENEWAL**

Ms. Larsen noted the Commission's Business Insurance is up for renewal on June 1, 2025. She noted that Committee members had received in advance of the meeting information regarding the business coverage renewal. She stated that West Bend Insurance has changed the way business coverage is quoted with each line of coverage now being quoted separately. This change has resulted in significant increase to the Commission's coverages.

Due to this change, Mr. Ronald Knudsen, Vice-President Business Development, Risk-Strategies, had requested a quote from Hanover Insurance a national insurance carrier based out of Worcester, Massachusetts.

Ms. Larsen directed the Committee to the last page of the document, which shows the expiring premium and the renewal premiums with West Bend Insurance and Hanover Insurance. The 2024-2025 insurance premium was \$71,776, the 2025-2026 West Bend Insurance renewal premium is \$79,673, and the 2025-2026 Hanover Insurance premium is \$70,833.

Ms. Larsen discussed a few differences between the West Bend Insurance coverage and the Hanover Insurance coverage, specifically the earthquake coverage. Hanover Insurance earthquake coverage is \$1,000,000 with a \$25,000 deductible, while the West Bend Insurance will cover up to \$1,000,000 as long as claims are made within 12 months of the event. In addition, West Bend no longer views the building as the Commission's largest liability, rather the survey staff as the Commission's largest liability. As a result, if the building is destroyed, the cost to rebuild is based upon the value of the survey staff. Under Hanover Insurance the building remains the Commission's largest liability. Ms. Larsen also noted that both insurance companies have set all deductibles to a minimum of \$1,000.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Holt, Ms. Larsen stated the earthquake coverage is not a large expense within the overall general liability policy.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Ms. Larsen stated the Commission does have crime and cyber liability under Travelers Insurance that covers fraud and embezzlement claims. She also stated that the Commission does carry Employment Practices Liability coverage through Greenwich Insurance Company that would cover the Commission in the event an employee provided incorrect information to a client that caused harm or damage to the client or property.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Johnson, Ms. Larsen stated that the value of the building does increase with inflation, and she does increase the value of the contents, including computers and equipment annually.

On a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously, the Commission's business insurance was moved to Hanover Insurance with an annual amount of \$70,833.

### **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 two contracts.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Jung, 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. Johnson, Mr. McKay stated that Ride Amigos is the platform that is used to connect people with carpooling. The Commission staff work partner the Greater Madison MPO and WisDOT in this effort.

### **REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF THE STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES FOR REPORTING PERIOD ENDING APRIL 20, 2025**

Copies of the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures as of reporting period No. 4, ending on April 20, 2025, were distributed for Committee review.

In reviewing the Statement with the Committee, Ms. Larsen commented that the period covered represented 35 percent of the calendar year. She then called attention to the following items:

1. The Federal revenues remain unchanged from the report presented at the April meeting.
2. State revenue entries remain unchanged from the report presented at the April meeting.
3. The service agreement revenues have increased \$86,210 due to the addition of a WisDOT contract, the addition of projected revenues pertaining to service requests, additional wetland

delineation contracts with MMSD, and a greater work effort on the MMSD Root River project in 2025.

4. The Commission had on hand as of April 20, 2025, approximately \$8.00 million. This includes about \$131,000 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.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik, Ms. Larsen stated that the National Exchange Bank money market can be closed. Funds had been maintained with National Exchange Bank in exchange for using their parking lot, however staff no longer has need for use of that lot. She then stated that the Associated Bank savings account is used to fund payroll and accounts payable as needed.

There being no questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Stroik, and carried unanimously, the Statement of Projected Revenues and Expenditures for the period ending April 20, 2025, was accepted to be placed on file (copy attached to Official Minutes).

## **CONSIDERATION OF DISBURSEMENTS**

### **2025 Check Register dated April 11, 2025**

Copies of the Check Register dated April 11, 2025, for financial reporting period of March 24, 2025, to April 6, 2025, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen reviewed and discussed the payments that have been highlighted on the Check Register dated April 11, 2025.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Johnson concerning a portion of the payment to Cardmember Service (page 1), Ms. Larsen stated the amount of \$959 was for a computer purchased for the transportation division.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman concerning payment to Milwaukee Community Journal, (page 2), was for an employment ad.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Stroik concerning payment to CI Design (page1), Ms. Hacker stated the contract limit was \$12,000.

There being no additional questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the April 11, 2025, check register were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Mr. Stroik, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the April 11, 2025, Check Register (copy attached to Official Minutes).

**2025 Check Register dated April 25, 2025**

Copies of the Check Register dated April 25, 2025, for financial reporting period of April 7, 2025 to April 20, 2025, were distributed to the Committee.

Ms. Larsen reviewed and discussed the payments that have been highlighted on the Check Register dated April 20, 2025.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Mr. McKay stated that the Commission had set up a scholarship for students that are attending the Master of Urban Planning Program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

In response to a second inquiry by Mr. Pitts, Mr. McKay stated that staff are eligible for reimbursement of up to 80 percent of undergraduate or graduate tuition costs should they decide to pursue a field of study that is related to the Commission's work.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Colman concerning payment to Carahsoft Technology Corporation (page 1), Ms. Larsen stated this payment was for the renewal of a software used by the Survey division to manipulate lidar data.

There being no further questions or comments, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously, the Commission disbursements for the April 25, 2025, check register were approved.

Chairperson Colman, Mr. Stroik, and Ms. Hacker then affixed their signatures to the April 25, 2025, Check Register (copy attached to Official Minutes).

**REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF COMMISSIONER PER DIEM**

Ms. Hacker stated that review and consideration of the Commissioner per diem is an agenda item because there have been questions from the Commissioners about the coverage of meals, and whether meals are incorporated into the per diem or should be reimbursed separately.

She further stated that in consulting with the Commission Chairperson, the options, while many, could be simplified by reviewing an increase to the Commissioner per diem, but establishing that there will not be separate meal reimbursements. This would ensure consistency among the Commissioners. The simplest option would be to consider an increase to the Commissioner per diem that might acknowledge the coverage of meals within that per diem. A dollar amount that could be considered is \$175 per day. Ms. Hacker acknowledged that a 3 percent increase to the current \$150 per day per diem, which is what has been budgeted, is \$154.50. As such, considering an increase to the per diem to \$175 would accommodate the occasional need for a meal.

Mr. Stroik stated he is looking for clarity concerning recent telephone and virtual meetings where there has been no discussion or sign-in sheet for compensation for those meetings, specifically whether those meetings receive the same per diem amount. He further stated he has attended recent telephone meetings on various topics with no payment option or acknowledgment of payment. Ms. Hacker stated the meetings whether in person or virtual have the option to receive payment. Ms. Panasiuk stated that she keeps a list.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Holt, Ms. Hacker stated that with this increase to the per diem, Commissioners will no longer be reimbursed for meals.

Mr. Pitts commented that the Commission Bylaws will need to be reviewed for modifications as a result of the change to meal reimbursements.

On a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Pitts, the Commissioner Per Diem amount was approved for \$175 per day and there will no longer be the opportunity to submit separate requests for meal reimbursements. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

Chairman Colman indicated that Mr. McKay, Ms. Larsen, Mr. Hiebert, and Ms. Panasiuk should leave the room.

Secretary Crowley indicated that pursuant to Wis. Stats. Sec. 19.85(1)(c), he was requesting a motion for the Committee to adjourn into a closed session for a discussion concerning employment, promotion, compensation, and/or performance evaluation data of leadership staff. It was moved by Mr. Johnson and seconded by Mr. Stroik to go into closed session. Without objection the Committee moved into a closed session.

On a motion by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Mr. Stroik, and carried unanimously, the Committee approved the staff recommendation from closed session.

## **CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT ON STAFF COMPENSATION**

Ms. Hacker reported that an Ad Hoc Salary Committee including Commissioners Brown-Martin, Colman, Crowley, Hanson, Maurer, Minkel-Dumit, and Trottier met to review recommended staff salary adjustments to be in effect from July 2025 through June 2026. The Ad Hoc Salary Committee met prior to the Executive Committee meeting and approved the proposed salary adjustments. The proposed salary adjustments average 3.14 percent, or \$163,839.50. Excluding promotions and equity adjustments, the proposed increase in salaries based on merit is 3.00 percent. There being no additional discussion, on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Jung, the Commission Compensation Plan was approved.

Mr. Pitts asked whether a contract was in place between Ms. Hacker and the Commission. Mr. Colman stated that Ms. Hacker is an at-will employee. Mr. Crowley stated that a conversation could be held with the Chairperson.

## **CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Hacker stated the June Executive Committee meeting will be canceled and the June 18<sup>th</sup> Full Commission meeting will be held at Lac Lawrann Conservancy.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Stroik, seconded by Mr. Johnson, and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Hacker  
Deputy Secretary

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Executive Committee  
May 15, 2025

SRH/BRM/EAL  
#277195