

WRRTC NOVEMBER 8, 2024 MEETING MINUTES – APPROVED 12/6/2024

**Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission
Commission Meeting – Friday, November 8, 2024 at 10:00 am**

1. 10:01 AM **Call to Order – Marty Krueger, Chair**

2. Roll Call. **Establishment of Quorum – Misty Molzof, Admin**

Crawford	Carl Orr, <i>1st Vice Chair</i>	X	Jefferson	Mary Roberts	X
	Mark Gilberts	X		John Kannard, <i>Vice Secretary</i>	X
	Tom Cornford	X		Jeff Smith	X
				Dan Herbst, <i>Alternate</i>	
Dane	Kevin Potter	X	Rock	Dave Homan, <i>2nd Vice Treasurer</i>	X
	Jeff Huttenburg, <i>Treasurer</i>	X		Tom Brien	X
	Jim Bolitho	X		Kevin Stone	X
Grant	David Wiederholt	X	Sauk	Brian Peper	X
	Mike Lieurance	X		Gaile Burchill	X
	Robert Scallon, <i>2nd Vice Chair</i>	X		Marty Krueger, <i>Chair</i>	X
				Tim McCumber, <i>Alternate</i>	<i>Excused</i>
Green	Harvey Kubly, <i>1st Vice Treasurer</i>	<i>Excused</i>	Walworth	Al Stanek	<i>Excused</i>
	Larry Kranig	<i>Excused</i>		Richard Kuhnke, <i>2nd Vice Secretary</i>	X
	Mark Gundlach	X		Allan Polyock	<i>Excused</i>
Iowa	Charles Anderson, <i>Secretary</i>	X	Waukesha	Rick Beutler, <i>3rd Vice Treasurer</i>	<i>Excused</i>
	Kate Reimann	<i>Excused</i>		Richard Morris	X
	Craig Hardy	<i>Excused</i>		Karl Nilson	<i>Excused</i>

Commission met quorum.

Others present for all or some of the meeting:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misty Molzof, SWWRPC Julia Potter, Boardman & Clark Ben Mohlke, Lisa Stern, and Scott Edmundson, WisDOT Ken Lucht, WSOR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alan Anderson, Pink Lady RTC Don Vruwink, Commissioner of Railroads, OCR Arun Rao, Amtrak
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3. Action Item. **Certification of Meeting’s Public Notice – Noticed by Molzof.**

4. Action Item. **Approval of Agenda – Prepared by Molzof.**

- o *Motion to approve the agenda as posted. Scallon/Orr. – Passed Unanimously.*

5. Action Item. **Approval of draft October 4, 2024 Meeting Minutes – Prepared by Molzof.**

- o *Motion to approve the October 4, 2024 meeting minutes as presented. Morris/Kuhnke. Passed Unanimously.*

6. Updates. **Public Comment – Time for public comment may be limited by the Chair.**

Alan Anderson – would like to hear updates on Merrimac Bridge on when the weight restriction will be lifted.

7. Updates. **Announcements by Commissioners**

REPORTS & COMMISSION BUSINESS

8. **Amtrak Presentation – Arun Rao, AICP, Amtrak.**

Rao, Network Development Specialist with Amtrak, formerly worked for WisDOT, presented information on current Amtrak passenger train operations as well as possible future projects. Currently, there are 16 trains operating in WI daily: includes 3 routes, 8 stations, and had approximately 724,800 riders in 2023. There are currently less than 750 miles of track supported by the state. The Borealis section has far exceeded expectations, and celebrated 100,000 riders in the 1st 5 months of operation. There are many new platforms for projects right now: Columbus will be getting 2 new platforms, Tomah has one under construction, and Portage was recently completed. Grants: the Muskego Yard bypass in Milwaukee was recently announced, new corridor development funded by the FRA which includes planning funding at 100%, service development and engineering funding at 90%, and then opens up opportunities for additional funding including operational financial support for 1st 6 years of operations.

9. **WRRTC Financial Report – Huttenburg, Treasurer**

- o *Motion to approve the September, 2024 Treasurer’s Report as presented. Lieurance/Anderson. Passed Unanimously.*

10. Wisconsin & Southern Railroad’s Report on Operations – Lucht, WSOR

Lucht provided operational updates: Reedsburg sub tie project is currently active, with crews working on final surfacing between Waunakee and Devils Lake, in hopes of being complete before snow, once the couple of sections in Waunakee that need repair are complete, WSOR will be increasing speeds from 10 to 25 mph; Town of Westport just North of Madison, WSOR is working on rebuilding County Hwy M either yet this year or next Spring; Village of Arena is done with a nearby bike path that uses the same crossing; and the brush cutter is in and will continue being used through the winter around the network. Other updates included: Private crossing agreements are in process and WSOR is currently working the Genesee Realty in Waukesha County, who has been easy to work with, and Bernard Gilbert in Palmyra is the next one on the list. WSOR recently worked with Darien to permanently close 3rd Street for a Farm City expansion project where double track is used to get to the main line in Elkhorn. The grain market has impacted movement.

11. WisDOT Report – Mohlke - WisDOT.

Mohlke reported: Merrimac Bridge – working on Pier 15 and 16 right now, completion will not happen until early Spring next year, and the weight restriction will not be officially open until it is complete and the testing has been done; Janesville Bridge project working on preliminary engineering and environmental assessment; and the annual Freight Rail Conference on Tuesday of next week.

12. Committee Updates / Recommendations

Huttenburg & Bolitho provided a status update on the track removal project: Treno, LLC was in WI and were removing rail from the site last week, some of which will be trucked, and some sold locally; various sections of rail that contained historical information, i.e., rolling date, weight, etc., will become part of a historical information section along the trail and is currently at Dane County; contractor is hopeful that project will be complete in 2 weeks, and Chris James, Dane County Park Planning Manager, is satisfied with work being done; monitoring of the site is necessary, as people are using it to drive on; however, once WRRTC portion of the project is complete, WisDOT will be responsible for securing the corridor. Krueger reported that the two projects are out for bid, 10 firms showed up for mandatory pre-bid meeting held at the end of last month, bid opening on November 19th, and contract will be awarded by Village of Sauk City Board on November 26th.

13. Aurora Street Crossing, Middleton, WI – Krueger, Chair

Potter briefed the commission on the status of the Middleton crossing and public versus private. OCR determined it was private, and the court of appeals overturned the decision and determined the crossing was public, now it will be up to the OCR to appeal that decision.

14. Registration Fees for Conferences – Chair / Admin

- *Motion to approve WRRTC pay conference registration fees only for commission members who wish to attend 2024 Freight Rail Conference. Huttenburg/Orr. Passed Unanimously.*

15. Approve Revisions to Private Crossing Agreement – Attorney

- *Motion to approve Revisions to and Revised Private Crossing Agreement as presented. Morris/Kuhnke. Passed Unanimously.*

Potter: Private Crossing Agreements – working with WSOR and WisDOT to update the form that are required through our agreements, and what is here today is the revised agreement with all parties in agreement with the revised form. Right of entry agreement is between WSOR and contractor.

16. Adjournment.

- *Motion to Adjourn at 11:10 am. Scallon/Kannard. Passed Unanimously.*