

**MINNESOTA HIGH SPEED RAIL COMMISSION MEETING
JANUARY 7, 2010
MEETING SUMMARY**

MEMBERS:

Goodhue County RRA; Ron Allen	City of Red Wing; John Howe
Ramsey County RRA; Janice Rettman	City of Utica; Tate Ferguson
Wabasha County RRA; Rich Hall	City of Winona; Jerry Miller
Wabasha County RRA; David Windhorst	City of Wabasha; John Meisch
Washington County RRA; Myra Peterson	Prairie Island Indian Community*; Marc Mogan
Winona County RRA; Jim Pomeroy	La Crosse Area Planning Committee*; Tom Faella;
City of Cottage Grove; Jen Peterson	
City of Lake City; Andru Peters	

*Ex-officio member

OTHERS:

Senator Steve Murphy	La Crosse County, WI; Steve O'Malley
Dakota County RRA; Sam O'Connell	Dave Christianson, Mn/DOT
Ramsey County RRA; Mike Rogers	Darin Broton; Tunheim Partners
Goodhue County; Ken Bjornstad	
Washington County RRA; Andy Gitzlaff	
Jay Owens, City of Red Wing	
Andrew Wanstale; Tunheim Partners	

1. INTRODUCTION

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve was requested. Mayor Howe moved for approval of the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Allen. The motion passed unanimously.

3. CHECKS AND CLAIMS

A motion to approve was requested. Commissioner Peterson moved for approval of the checks and claims. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Peters. The motion passed unanimously.

4. MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 5, 2009 AND DECEMBER 3, 2009 MEETINGS

A motion to approve was requested. Councilmember Peterson moved for approval of the November 5, 2009 and December 3, 2009 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mayor Howe. Councilmember Peters asked that a correction to the November 5, 2009 minutes be made noting his attendance.

The motion, with the correction passed unanimously.

5. FINAL 2010 WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

Mr. Rogers walked through the Final 2010 Work Plan and Budget that was included in the Commission's agenda packet. He noted that the Final 2010 Work Plan and Budget was the same as the draft that was presented at the December meeting.

A motion to approve was requested. Commissioner Pomeroy moved for approval of the Final 2010 Work Plan and Budget. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Allen. The motion passed unanimously.

6. DRAFT FINAL STATE RAIL PLAN

Mr. Rogers directed the Commission to the Memo included in their agenda packet. He noted that the Draft Final State Rail Plan had been released; however, staff had not gotten thoroughly reviewed it. He said that the due date for comments is January 29, 2010 which would require the Commission's comments to be submitted prior to the February meeting. In preparation for this, he provided a draft letter to the Commission for them to submit on the State Rail Plan. The letter specifically noted that more detailed comments would follow once a detailed review of the study was completed.

Dave Christianson was asked to provide an update on the State Rail Plan. Mr. Christianson provided handouts to the Commission and noted that the governor supports the plan. Additionally he added that the Plan identifies the need for a multimodal department and the need for freight rail to thrive. If freight can't thrive, then passenger rail will be that much more difficult to implement. He went on to provide the Commission with a brief update on how the alternatives analysis of the Twin Cities to Madison portion of the Twin Cities To Chicago corridor will be done and that this work should be completed by the end of 2010.

Senator Murphy was asked if he had any advice on how the Commission could be more effective in advocating for high speed rail. Senator Murphy noted that the Commission had credibility due to its combination of local governments, but that it should continue to press local and federal officials to keep the River Route moving forward. He is encouraged by the work done to date with the State Rail Plan, but without consistent pressure there would be an opportunity for the project to slip.

A motion to approve was requested. Mayor Meisch moved for approval of the Chair to develop and send the Commission's comments on the State Rail Plan to Mn/DOT. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Peters. The motion passed unanimously.

7. WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Ron Adams of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation was unable to attend the meeting due to a family emergency. The WisDOT update will be rescheduled for a future meeting.

8. ONBOARD MIDWEST COORDINATION

Mr. Rogers provided an update to the Commission on a meeting held between OnBoard Midwest and Commission staff. He noted that following that meeting the staff felt that the roles of the two organizations were best served by focusing on the following areas:

Commission's Role:

- Primary advocacy focus is on elected official to elected official and the public
- Information provider (sources, Mn/DOT, MWRRRI, local studies, etc.)

- Provide information on the Corridor and possibly staff events such as city/county events, fairs, and etc.
- Prioritize attendance at city/county events and identify commissioners/staff from respective counties to attend
- Coordinate with OnBoard Midwest for attendance at joint meetings/events
- Advocate for the Minnesota portion of the Chicago to Twin Cities Corridor
- Maintain communication and ex-officio membership with River Communities in Wisconsin (La Crosse and etc), but don't expand further east due to the JPA being a Minnesota entity.

OnBoard's Role:

- Primary advocacy focus is on generating private and non-profit interest and membership
- Utilize information provided by the Commission for its advocacy efforts
- Provide information on the Corridor and staff events such as chamber events, rotaries, convention and visitor bureau events, and etc.
- Expand reach to include the entire Chicago to Twin Cities route
- Seek to incorporate Wisconsin and Illinois members, including Chambers and CVBs from major markets

A general discussion followed with Commission members agreeing that the information presented by staff was a solid plan for moving forward.

9. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Mr. Broton directed Commission members to the memo in their agenda packets. He discussed how they had taken input from the December Commission meeting and revised the logo. He also noted that they were not presenting a tag line for the Commission at this meeting due to the need to focus on the logo so that the webpage could be completed and launch. Mr. Broton proceeded to show the Commission the revised logo and its use with both a letterhead template and website mock up. The following comments were received:

- Add "River Route" in front of Members on the letterhead
- Add a river design to the letterhead
- Remove the watermark on the letterhead
- Have the website contain a link to one person for questions

Mr. Broton indicated the suggested revisions could be made, but that it was important that the Commission decide on the logo. Following some discussion on the logo the Commission agreed that it was a good fit with what they were trying to accomplish and approved the logo as presented.

10. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Gitzlaff directed the Commission members to the memo provided in their packet. He walked through the memo and noted important upcoming federal request dates. Mr. Gitzlaff went on to discuss the upcoming state legislative session noting that would begin in early February and that there was a Bonding Committee hearing on January 26th.

Mr. Gitzlaff concluded with an update on the potential award of American Recovery and Reinvestment funding at part of the President's State of the Union Address.

11. LA CROSSE AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING (LAPC)

Mr. Faella and Mr. O'Malley introduced themselves to the Commission. Mr. O'Malley stated that the proposed joint meeting for February did not work with Secretary Busalacchi's schedule. He noted that they were actively looking to reschedule the meeting for sometime in March and would communicate with the Commission once a date had been finalized. Discussion ensued on who should be invited to the meeting and what topics it should cover. Staff was directed to work with their counterparts in Wisconsin to jointly develop the meeting's agenda and attendee list.

Mr. O'Malley distributed a flyer with information on a trip to Milwaukee on Amtrak for a chance to meet with Wisconsin Senator Kohl and to see the Milwaukee Bucks face the Minnesota Timberwolves. All were invited to attend the event as a way to promote rail travel and ultimately high speed rail along the River Route.

12. OTHER

a. NEW MEMBERS

Lake City formally approved the joint powers agreement on December 15, 2009. Their representative is Andru Peters.

b. SPOKESPERSON IDENTIFICATION

The Commission discussed the importance of having one voice to speak on behalf of the Commission. It was decided that the Chair should be the first point of contact for the Commission.

c. NEXT MEETING – FEBRUARY 4, 2010

Being there was no further discussion the meeting was adjourned.