

**MINNESOTA HIGH-SPEED RAIL COMMISSION MEETING  
GOODHUE COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER, RED WING, MN  
SEPTEMBER 1, 2011  
MEETING SUMMARY**

**MEMBERS:**

Dakota County RRA; Will Branning	City of Red Wing; Michael Schultz
Goodhue County RRA; Ted Seifert	City of Winona; Jerry Miller
Ramsey County RRA; Janice Rettman	*Prairie Island Indian Community: Marc Mogan
Wabasha County RRA; Rich Hall	*LAPC; Tom Faella
Washington County RRA; Autumn Lehrke	
Winona County RRA; Jim Pomeroy	
City of Cottage Grove; Jen Peterson	
City of Lake City; Andru Peters	

\*Ex-officio member

**OTHERS:**

Ramsey County RRA; Mike Rogers	Ramsey County RRA; Josh Collins
Goodhue County; Ken Bjornstad	City of St. Paul; Allen Lovejoy
Washington County; Andy Gitzlaff	
Dakota County; Sam O'Connell	
City of Winona; Judy Bodway	

The meeting was called to order at 11:10 a.m.

**1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion to approve was requested. Commissioner Lehrke moved for approval of the agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Peterson. The motion passed.

**2. CHECKS AND CLAIMS**

A motion to approve was requested. Commissioner Branning moved for the approval of the Checks and Claims. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Peterson. The motion passed.

**3. MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 4, 2011 MEETING**

A motion to approve was requested. Commissioner Hall moved for approval of the August 4, 2011 minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Peters. Councilmember Peterson asked that the minutes be amended to reflect the location of the meeting. The amendment was accepted as 'friendly' by the proposers. The motion passed.

**4. RECAP OF THE WINONA MEETING**

Chair Miller provided a recap of the Commission's August meeting in Winona. He described the presentation given by city staff and the tour of Miller Felpax. He noted that 6-8 new jobs were created in Winona when Miller Felpax purchased a company and moved its operations to Winona. Additionally, Winona's small businesses benefit from its larger business through a variety of contracting out of specific work. This allows the larger businesses to access the skilled labor of the smaller shops as they need it instead of having to send the work out of the area. Chair Miller added that Governor Mark Dayton would be in Winona on a trip to seek out input

from business leaders on the types of incentives that could be helpful to businesses so that they could continue to add jobs.

Commissioner Rettman added that the meeting in Winona was a wonderful opportunity for the commission to see the city and all it has to offer. The discussion on jobs and the synergies that have developed between larger and small companies in the Winona area was very interesting. She added that the discussion on the city's history and its manufacturing role was very insightful and helpful.

Chair Miller closed the discussion by noting that Fastenal recently donated \$150,000 to the technical school for machinist training. This is representative of the culture of philanthropy that exists in Winona. Additionally, city staff takes a 'hands on' role with businesses to ensure they can navigate the permitting process effectively. Businesses have expressed their gratitude for this approach as it saves them time and aggravation.

**5. TIGER GRANT APPLICATION**

Mike Rogers directed commission members to the TIGER memo in the agenda packet. He described the TIGER program and its requirements. He described the two potential projects that could be submitted by local agencies along the rail route advocated for by the commission. These projects included:

- Sturgeon Lake Road Overpass, Red Wing
  - Replace the existing at-grade railroad crossing with an overpass.
- Canadian Pacific/BNSF Sidings and Yard Improvements, St. Paul and Cottage Grove
  - Construct sidings along the Canadian Pacific and BNSF track in Cottage Grove so that trains working the auto facility won't impact the main and allow for train staging on the BNSF line.
  - Construct an extended yard lead for BNSF and crew change-bridge for Canadian Pacific to minimize delays on the mains and at Hoffman interlocking.

Mr. Rogers noted that preapplications were due on October 3, 2011 and that it would be helpful for these projects if other agencies provided resolutions of support.

A motion to approve the Sturgeon Lake Road Overpass was requested. Councilmember Peters moved for approval of the resolution. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Schultz.

## **Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission**

### **Resolution 2011-01**

#### **Resolution supporting the submittal of a FY2011 TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) Grant for the Sturgeon Lake Road Overpass Project in Red Wing by the City of Red Wing**

**WHEREAS**, the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission (hereafter known as The "Commission") is a political subdivision and local government unit of Minnesota; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission is established by Joint Powers Agreement by and between Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, Washington County Regional Railroad Authority, Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority, Goodhue County Regional Railroad Authority, Wabasha County Regional Railroad Authority, Winona County Regional Railroad Authority, City of St. Paul, City of St. Paul Park, City of Cottage Grove, City of Hastings, City of Red Wing, City of Lake City, City of Wabasha, City of Goodview, City of Winona, City of St. Charles, City of Utica; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission is working to establish high speed intercity passenger rail service between the Union Depot Multi-modal Transit Hub in St. Paul and Chicago along the current Amtrak Empire Builder route in Minnesota which parallels the Mississippi River; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Red Wing and Prairie Island Indian Community currently are partnering in the development of the Sturgeon Lake Road Overpass, and

**WHEREAS**, Sturgeon Lake Road is the primary access to Prairie Island Indian Community, Treasure Island Resort and Casino, Xcel Energy's Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant; and the US Corp of Engineers Lock and Dam #3.

**WHEREAS**, if the crossings is blocked significant delays are incurred which can negatively impact safety, emergency response and economic activity, and

**WHEREAS**, Sturgeon Lake Road currently crosses the Canadian Pacific Railway at grade, and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Red Wing is the road authority for Sturgeon Lake Road and is seeking FY 2011 TIGER funding for construction of the Sturgeon Lake Road Overpass; and

**WHEREAS**, the construction of a grade separation will improve safety, enhance economic actively, improve the reliability of the existing Amtrak Empire Builder and freight rail services and reserve space for future rail capacity improvements, and

**WHEREAS**, future rail capacity will be needed for high speed trains to Chicago, Red Rock commuter trains, and additional conventional passenger trains in addition to accommodating increasing freight traffic, and

**WHEREAS**, the award of this funding will allow the project to be built without further delay.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission hereby supports the efforts by the City of Red Wing to seek FY 2011 TIGER funding for the completion of the Sturgeon Lake Road Overpass.

Approved:



\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
September 1, 2011  
Date Approved by the Commission

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is true and correct copy of the resolution presented to and adopted by the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission at a duly authorized meeting thereof held

on 1st day of September, 2011 as show by the minutes of said meeting in my possession.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<b>MILLER</b>	X			
<b>SEIFERT</b>	X			
<b>RETTMAN</b>	X			
<b>LEHRKE</b>	X			
<b>BRANNING</b>	X			
<b>HALL</b>	X			
<b>POMEROY</b>	X			
<b>STARK</b>				X
<b>HUNZIKER</b>				X
<b>PETERSON</b>	X			
<b>HOLLENBECK</b>				X
<b>SCHULTZ</b>	X			
<b>WEIMERSKRICH</b>				X
<b>SPITZER</b>				X
<b>FERGUSON</b>				X
<b>PETERS</b>	X			

A motion to approve the Canadian Pacific/BNSF Siding and Yard Improvements, St. Paul and Cottage Grove was requested. Councilmember Peters moved for approval of the resolution. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Schultz.

Commissioner Lehrke asked if the grant for the Canadian Pacific/BNSF siding and yard improvements was the same as the East Metro Study funding request made at the last Red Rock Corridor Commission. Mr. Rogers said that while the projects being requested through the grant application were part of the East Metro Study, the grant request was not for the same thing as the funding request made to Red Rock. The Red Rock request was for the analysis of an additional alternative. The TIGER request was for construction of small improvements that were identified as part of a much larger list of capacity improvements that would be needed to introduce commuter and high-speed rail. The improvements being requested would primarily benefit existing freight and passenger service.

## **Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission**

### **Resolution 2011-02**

#### **Resolution supporting the submittal of a FY2011 TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) Grant for Canadian Pacific/BNSF siding and yard improvements in St. Paul and Cottage Grove**

**WHEREAS**, the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission (hereafter known as The “Commission”) is a political subdivision and local government unit of Minnesota; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission is established by Joint Powers Agreement by and between Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, Washington County Regional Railroad Authority, Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority, Goodhue County Regional Railroad Authority, Wabasha County Regional Railroad Authority, Winona County Regional Railroad Authority, City of St. Paul, City of St. Paul Park,

City of Cottage Grove, City of Hastings, City of Red Wing, City of Lake City, City of Wabasha, City of Goodview, City of Winona, City of St. Charles, City of Utica; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission is working to establish high speed intercity passenger rail service between the Union Depot Multi-modal Transit Hub in St. Paul and Chicago along the current Amtrak Empire Builder route in Minnesota which parallels the Mississippi River; and

**WHEREAS**, the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority (RCRRA), Red Rock Corridor Commission, BNSF Railway, Canadian Pacific Railway, Union Pacific Railroad, and others are currently are partnering in the development of the East Metro Rail Capacity and Engineering Improvements Study (East Metro Rail Capacity Study), and

**WHEREAS**, the East Metro Rail Capacity Study has identified various improvements needed to improve rail capacity; and

**WHEREAS**, the RCRRA is partnering with Canadian Pacific Railway and BNSF Railway to seek FY 2011 TIGER funding for the following improvements identified in the East Metro Rail Capacity Study.

- Canadian Pacific crew change bridge at St. Paul Yard
- Canadian Pacific siding in Cottage Grove
- BNSF yard lead at Dayton's Bluff Yard
- BNSF siding at Cottage Grove; and

**WHEREAS**, the construction of these improvements will improve safety, enhance economic activity, improve the reliability of the existing Amtrak Empire Builder and freight rail services and provide capacity for future increases in rail traffic, and

**WHEREAS**, future rail capacity will be needed for high speed trains to Chicago, Red Rock commuter trains, and additional conventional passenger trains in addition to accommodating increasing freight traffic, and

**WHEREAS**, the award of this funding will allow the project to be built without further delay.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission hereby supports the efforts by the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority, Canadian Pacific Railway and BNSF Railway to seek FY 2011 TIGER funding for the completion of the following rail improvements:

- Canadian Pacific crew change bridge at St. Paul Yard
- Canadian Pacific siding in Cottage Grove
- BNSF yard lead at Dayton's Bluff Yard
- BNSF siding at Cottage Grove

Approved:



\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
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I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is true and correct copy of the resolution presented to and adopted by the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission at a duly authorized meeting thereof held

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	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Absent</u>
<b>MILLER</b>	X			
<b>SEIFERT</b>	X			
<b>RETTMAN</b>	X			
<b>LEHRKE</b>	X			
<b>BRANNING</b>	X			
<b>HALL</b>	X			
<b>POMEROY</b>	X			
<b>STARK</b>				X
<b>HUNZIKER</b>				X
<b>PETERSON</b>	X			
<b>HOLLENBECK</b>				X
<b>SCHULTZ</b>	X			
<b>WEIMERSKRICH</b>				X
<b>SPITZER</b>				X
<b>FERGUSON</b>				X
<b>PETERS</b>	X			

Staff was requested to send an electronic copy of the resolutions to commission members so that their bodies could pass similar resolutions.

**6. COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS**

Josh Collins directed commission members to the memo provided in the agenda packet. He walked them through the memo providing additional detail on each of the items. He noted that the memo covers efforts from the first of the year up to June 30, 2011. The six month period included the distribution of articles for community newsletters, e-newsletters, and guest editorials. Additionally, articles tracking mentions of the commission or high-speed rail along the river route were tracked.

Commissioner Rettman asked if there was overlap between the e-news item and what we are putting on the webpage and on Facebook? Mr. Collins stated that we are able to use the e-news to target those on an email distribution list and that the e-news articles are also able to be posted on the webpage and on Facebook. There is some overlap, but there are also a significant number of unique users to each form of communication. Commissioners went on to discussion how the e-news should be a vehicle for use with other city/county information. This could be melded into the website so that we created a “fabric” for the corridor. The e-news could then highlight specific areas of the corridor in each issue along with having more generic high-speed rail information.

Mr. Collins next went on to discuss the commission’s website and its analytics. He noted that the website is attracting visitors, but not as many as it could. He asked that everyone provide links from their communities’ webpage to the commission’s webpage. This would help to drive traffic to the site and allow people to stay better informed on high-speed rail.

Mr. Collins provided an update on the commission’s Facebook page noting that it was launched in May and has recently seen a larger growth in “likes”. The total lifetime “likes” through June

30<sup>th</sup> was 42, however, the current number is approaching 650. This growth has come through targeted advertising on Facebook. Commissioner Lehrke asks what the targeted audience was for the advertisements. Josh said that it was people in Minnesota aged 18-and-over and those who have predefined interests in environmentalism, transportation, rail, trains, and rail-related items. He said that for the initial investment of \$500, of which only \$115 has been used, it is well worth the cost.

Commissioners thanked staff for the report and then discussed the need for a Request for Proposals (RFP) for communications work in 2012. Commissioners felt that it had been a sufficient amount of time since the last RFP was released and that a new RFP and work scope should be develop. Staff was directed to develop a draft work scope for communications activities in 2012 and bring it to the next commission meeting for discussion.

**7. BRINGING HIGH SPEED RAIL TO MINNESOTA PRESENTATION**

Mr. Rogers provided copies of the presentation and then walked through the presentation with the commission. He noted that the presentation was visually different from the previous version that was presented in June. The new version was developed to provide additional interest in the presentation without it taking on the feel of a bullet list.

Commissioners asked for a couple of changes to the presentation. First, the spelling of 'dependent' on slide 17 should be checked. The second change requested was to the last slide where the commission directed staff to add its website and Facebook page.

Following the presentation, Mr. Rogers provided an update on the presentation made to the Hastings Rotary on August 25<sup>th</sup>. He said that around 15-20 people were in attendance and that the audience was generally supportive of high speed rail. He added that the audience asked questions about subsidy, overall cost, and how much it would cost to ride. He then provided a list of upcoming presentations to the Commission:

- September 20, 2011; Zumbrota Rotary
- September 24, 2011; La Crescent Rotary
- December 7, 2011; Winona Rotary

Additionally, staff is working on scheduling presentations with the following:

- Winona Chamber of Commerce
- Lake City Chamber of Commerce
- Lake City Rotary
- Hastings Chamber of Commerce

Commissioners directed staff to contact the Lake City Kiwanis and the Cottage Grove Chamber to schedule future presentations.

**8. DRAFT 2012 WORK PLAN AND BUDGET**

Mr. Rogers directed commission members to the draft 2012 Work Plan and Budget provided in the agenda packet. He noted that many of the items were the same as previous years; however, several updates had been made. The changes include having the commission take a more active role in monitoring high-speed rail in the United States as compared to previous efforts that were

regionally focused. Additionally, the commission will need to stay informed on the upcoming second frequency study for Amtrak service.

Mr. Rogers noted the need for the commission to continue to inform legislators on the need for high-speed rail and that this could be done more effectively by partnering with others who shared the commission's interests. Councilmember Peters added that there is also an opportunity for the commission to expand its role and focus some efforts on advocating for "hub and spoke" transit systems to connect communities to stations and potential grade crossing improvements.

Following the update on the work plan, commissioners discussed the need for information regarding passenger rail subsidies, transit subsidies, and highway subsidies. Councilmember Peterson added that the same information has been requested at Red Rock Corridor Commission meetings. Staff added that they have tried to find this information, but it is spread out over multiple studies and none of them use the same methodology for analysis. Chair Miller said that an analysis of transportation subsidies would be very helpful, but felt that it would be best done by a neutral party, like a university, instead of commission staff as it would lend the analysis more credibility.

Mr. Rogers then provided an overview of the draft 2012 budget. He stated that the budget is for the same amount as the previous year and would also include the same funding offset through the use of fund balance as 2011. Staff was asked to provide an updated work plan and budget at a future meeting for adoption by the commission.

**9. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Andy Gitzlaff directed commission members to the memo provided in the agenda packet. He walked them through the memo providing additional detail on each of the items. Discussion focused on the potential expiration of the gas tax, debt concerns, and the future six-year transportation bill.

**10. ADVOCACY PARTNER UPDATE**

Dan Krom, Director of Passenger Rail for Mn/DOT provided an update on Mn/DOT activities that included attendance at a joint Minnesota/Wisconsin transportation conference, the Twin Cities to Milwaukee Study, and a second frequency study. Wisconsin has decided not to hold any open houses related to the Twin Cities to Milwaukee Study; however, Mn/DOT is looking at holding one in La Crescent to try and capture the greater La Crosse area. The open houses for the study are being scheduled for this fall. Mr. Krom then went on to discuss the second frequency study and how it was being funded. He said that the study should begin shortly and will focus on a second passenger train frequency between the Twin Cities and Chicago, though an extension of the service to St. Cloud would also be explored.

Additional updates were provided by Tom Faella on the Oktoberfest celebration being held by La Crosse officials in Madison and how its focus would be on the importance of a second frequency train. Marc Mogan provided an update on the Sturgeon Lake Road Overpass project being undertaken by the City of Red Wing and the Prairie Island Indian Community. This overpass is being designed in such a way as to allow a future train platform to fit underneath it.

**11. OTHER**

No additional items were discussed.

**NEXT MEETING – OCTOBER 6, 2011**

Being there was no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.