

**MINNESOTA HIGH SPEED RAIL COMMISSION MEETING
OCTOBER 1, 2009
MEETING SUMMARY**

MEMBERS:

Dakota County RRA; Will Branning	City of Winona; Jerry Miller
Goodhue County RRA; Ron Allen	City of St. Charles; William Spitzer
Wabasha County RRA; Rich Hall	City of Cottage Grove; Jen Peterson
Winona County RRA; Jim Pomeroy	City of Hastings; Barb Hollenbeck
Washington County RRA; Myra Peterson	City of Utica; Tate Ferguson
City of St. Paul; Russ Stark	City of Wabasha; John Meisch
City of Red Wing; John Howe	Prairie Island Indian Community*; Marc Mogan

*Ex-officio member

OTHERS:

Honorable Tom Kelly, MN State Representative, District 28A	Honorable Sharon Erickson Ropes; MN State Senate, District 31
City of Lake City; Andru Peters	Mn/DOT; Dan Krom
Onboard Midwest; Dennis Egan	Goodhue County RRA; Ken Bjornstad
Andrew Jones; URS Corporation	Ramsey County RRA; Mike Rogers
Mark Ryan; URS Corporation	Ramsey County RRA; Josh Olson
City of St. Paul; Allen Lovejoy	Washington County RRA; Andy Gitzlaff
City of Winona; Judy Bodway	Dakota County RRA; Sam O'Connell
Donald Kliewer; Red Wing Chamber of Commerce	Tom Faella; La Crosse Area Planning Committee

1. INTRODUCTION

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

3. MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 3, 2009 MEETING

A motion to approve last meeting's minutes was requested. Councilmember Stark moved approval of the September 3, 2009 minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Peterson. The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

4. CORRIDOR INSURANCE

Mr. Rogers distributed a memo regarding procurement of insurance for the Commission. He stated that staff requested quotes from League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust, Minnesota Joint Underwriters Association, and the Minnesota Counties Insurance Trust. Quotes have been received from the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT) and the Minnesota Joint Underwriters Association. Mr. Rogers stated the LMCIT requires that each entity it covers determine whether or not it will waive these limits prior to providing coverage. Staff recommends that the Commission chose **NOT** to waive such limits. By **NOT** waiving the statutory tort liability limits, an individual claimant is limited to \$300,000 on any claim. If the limits are waived, then the claimant would be able to recover up to \$1 million.

A motion to approve the League of Minnesota Cities Trust as the insurance provider for the Commission with staff's recommendation that the statutory tort liability limits not be waived was requested. Commissioner Pomeroy moved approval of staff's recommendation to procure insurance for the Commission with Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Peterson. The motion to approve Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust as insurance provider for the Commission passed unanimously.

5. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT SELECTION

Ms. O'Connell directed Commission members to a memo distributed at the meeting. She gave an overview of staff's recommendation to select Tunheim Partners to complete a strategic communications plan for the Commission. Mayor Spitzer inquired about Tunheim's social media component. Ms. O'Connell stated that staff felt this was a weakness of their proposal but that staff would seek clarification on the social media component. Mayor Howe asked if Tunheim's role as a consultant on the Red Rock Corridor influenced staff's recommendation. Ms. O'Connell stated that each application was evaluated on its own merits. She added that the opportunity for the Commission to leverage opportunities through both contracts was one of many positive factors leading to the staff recommendation. Mayor Howe asked if the Commission would be interested in financially contributing to On Board Midwest. Councilmember Stark inquired about the value of the Red Rock Station Planning contract. Mr. Gitzlaff stated the contract amount was \$1.15 million. He added Tunheim is sub-consultant of the larger project that includes a station planning, design and engineering and a robust public involvement process. Mayor Spitzer stressed the importance and urgency of a coordinated message. He asked if Commission members would be able to offer feedback before a potential website goes live. Mr. Rogers stated that Tunheim expressed an expedited format in their proposal. He added that the Tunheim proposal did not provide specifics on the website design and timetable. Mr. Rogers added the Commission would be active in reviewing and deciding on components for Strategic Communications plan.

A motion to enter into a contract with Tunheim Partners was requested. Commissioner Peterson moved that staff enter into a contract with Tunheim Partners to complete a Strategic Communications Plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Branning. The motion passed unanimously.

6. POTENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS TOOL - URS PROJECT VISUALIZATION

Mark Ryan and Andrew Jones from URS Corporation showed a 3D simulation of the High Speed Rail line from the La Crescent to the Union Depot in St. Paul and on to downtown Minneapolis. The 3D simulation was presented to show the opportunities available to the Commission should they choose to utilize simulations or visualizations as a public communications tool. Chair Miller thanked URS staff for presentation. He added noted that speed through the Corridors is important, but that riders will also have the opportunity to access the valley's scenic amenities as well. Commissioner Peterson added the investment in track would improve speed along the corridor and the new passenger trains would improve amenities for riders. Councilmember Peters stated that Lake City has recently hosted a number of tourist groups that were very impressed with the beauty of Mississippi River valley. The tourism component of the River Route could be part of future communications. Mr. Rogers stated that as strategic communications plan moves forward, visuals such as the one presented by URS are potential opportunities to illustrate and market the Commission. Mayor Spitzer thanked URS for the

presentation and inquired about showing the simulation to their councils/commissions/citizens. Mr. Jones stated that it would be possible to get commission members copies of the simulations. He asked commission members that simulations be used a demonstration tool and not be expressed as a formal study/engineering.

Commission Members discussed the recent announcement of the Rochester Tri-State III passenger rail study. Mayor Howe expressed the need to strengthen the Commission's message. Mayor Spitzer asked if periodic press releases were appropriate. Mayor Meisch stated he felt the Commission was suffering from an identity crisis. Mayor Howe stressed urgency in getting a message out. Commissioner Peterson stated it was important to be unified in the Commission's message. She inquired if solidarity could be achieved through the purchase of stickers/buttons proclaiming support for the River Route. Ms. O'Connell added staff would prepare talking points for Commission members expressing highlighting the River Route and Cost Effectiveness of the route.

7. STATE RAIL PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Krom provided an update on the State Rail Plan and other news from Mn/DOT. He directed Commission members to a press release that was included in their agenda packets. He stated Mn/DOT was conducting another round of open houses around the state regarding the state rail plan. He encouraged members to attend one or more of the open houses. He added that open houses were scheduled in the coming weeks for Rochester, Red Wing, and St. Paul among others. Mr. Krom also added Mn/DOT was scheduled to meet with BNSF officials regarding the State Rail Plan on October 14th.

Mr. Krom informed the Commission of several recent Mn/DOT activities, including his visit with Minnesota Congressional Delegation and Mn/DOT Commissioner Sorel's tour of high speed rail facilities in Spain.

Mr. Krom also gave an update on the status of ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) grants. He stated several announcement dates were rumored but no word had been received. Announcement of ARRA grants is expected in coming months.

8. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Gitzlaff directed commission members to a memo that was included in their agenda packets. Mr. Gitzlaff gave a quick update on legislative items. He stated the FY2010 Transportation Appropriations bill passed through the House and is being debated in the Senate. The bill as it stands now authorizes \$1.2 billion in new money for high speed passenger rail grants and \$1.1 billion in new grants for projects of national or regional significance. Mr. Gitzlaff gave an update on the Transportation Reauthorization Bill. He stated little progress had been made on whether to extend the current transportation bill beyond September expiration date or finalizing a new six-year transportation preferred by Congressman Oberstar, Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

9. ON BOARD MIDWEST UPDATE

Mr. Egan provided an update on On Board Midwest's activities. He stated On Board had completed a couple of short videos found on YouTube, one of regarding Union Depot and one on Winona. He added that On Board was working a couple of additional videos including a

video with Mayor Howe. Mr. Egan also stated On Board was coordinating with Ramsey County officials regarding an upcoming visit to Washington D.C. Mr. Egan stated On Board was also beginning to engage with agriculture community and working with Mn State Senator Steve Murphy, District 28, on an Op-ED piece.

10. OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Miller asked staff to invite Representative Walz to attend the next meeting.

11. NORTHSTAR COMMUTER RAIL OPENING

Mr. Rogers directed Commission Members to a memo provided in their agenda packets. He informed the Commission that Northstar Commuter Rail service from Downtown Minneapolis to Big Lake is schedule to begin service on Monday, November 16.

NEXT MEETING - NOVEMBER 5, 2009

Being there was no further discussion the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.