

**MINNESOTA HIGH SPEED RAIL COMMISSION MEETING
AUGUST 16, 2010
MEETING SUMMARY**

MEMBERS:

Dakota County RRA; Will Branning	City of St. Paul; Russ Stark
Goodhue County RRA; Ron Allen	City of Winona; Jerry Miller
Ramsey County RRA; Janice Rettman	LAPC; Tom Faella*
Wabasha County RRA; Rich Hall	
Washington County RRA; Myra Peterson	
Winona County RRA; Jim Pomeroy	
City of Cottage Grove; Jen Peterson	
City of Red Wing; John Howe	

*Ex-officio member

OTHERS:

Dakota County; Sam O'Connell	City of Winona; Judy Bodway
Washington County; Andy Gitzlaff	OnBoard Midwest; Dennis Egan
Goodhue County; Ken Bjornstad	Red Wing Area Chamber; Cory Doden
Ramsey County RRA; Mike Rogers	
Mn/DOT; Dan Krom	
City of Red Wing; Jerry Dooley	
Prairie Island Indian Community; Marc Mogan	

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m.

1. 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.

2. MINUTES OF THE APRIL 1, 2010 MEETING

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

3. CHECKS AND CLAIMS

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

4. INSURANCE

Mr. Rogers provided an update to the Commission on insurance procurement. He directed the Commission to the memo included in the packet and noted that the Commission had procured insurance through the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT) in 2009 and had chosen to NOT waive its statutory tort liability limits. He added that for 2010 staff was recommending that the Commission continue to procure its insurance through LMCIT and to NOT waive its statutory tort liability limits. Commission members asked if an invoice had been received for insurance costs. Mr. Rogers stated that one had not yet been received, but would be shortly and payment would be due prior to the next meeting of the Commission. He said that last year's insurance coverage cost the commission \$1,300. Mr. Rogers also noted that the

2010 work plan and budget includes funds for insurance costs. Commission members discussed the need to approve procuring insurance prior to the next meeting and the need to provide for an increase in insurance costs. Following the discussion, Commissioner Peterson moved that the Commission approve procuring insurance through LMCIT in an amount not to exceed \$1,400 and if the amount was greater than \$1,400 it would need to come back to the Commission for approval. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hall. The motion passed unanimously.

5. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANCE RFP

Mr. Rogers provided an update to the Commission on the Public Communications Assistance RFP. He directed the Commission to the memo included in the packet and noted that two proposals were received and that staff had interviewed both consultants. He said the staff recommendation was to select Tunheim Partners to complete the work identified in the RFP. Discussion ensued regarding the past work of Tunheim Partners for the Commission. Their work on the development of the Commission's logo was highlighted as were concerns with the accuracy of some of their detailed work. Staff was asked to work with Tunheim Partners to ensure that the accuracy of the detail work was improved through the duration of the new contract. It was a general consensus of those at the meeting that Tunheim Partners provided the best ability to quickly respond to events surrounding high speed rail that impacted the Commission. The Commission was also impressed with Tunheim's experience handling crisis management, a speaker's bureau, public information, and their quick response to Commission needs.

Commissioner Peterson asked if Tunheim had a contract with Olmsted County or the Mayo Clinic since that may constitute a conflict of interest. Staff responded that they weren't aware of one, but would confirm with Tunheim. *Note: Tunheim does not have a contract with Olmsted County or the Mayo Clinic.*

A motion to approve was requested. Commissioner Peterson moved to select Tunheim Partners to provide Public Communications Assistance for the Commission pending a satisfactory outcome on potential conflict of interest issues. The motion was seconded by Council member Peterson. The motion passed unanimously.

6. RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR TIGER II FOR THE UNION DEPOT

Mr. Rogers provided an update on the TIGER II grant process and how funds are available to states, local governments, and others to complete infrastructure projects. He stated that the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority will be submitting a TIGER II grant request in the amount of \$90 million for completion of the Union Depot. He added that this funding would be in addition to the \$35 million the RCRRA received at part of TIGER I for the Depot. Mr. Rogers then directed the Commission to Resolution 2010-05 in their packet which spelled out the Commission's support for the Union Depot and the RCRRA's TIGER II funding request.

A motion to approve the resolution was requested. Commissioner Rettman moved to approve resolution 2010-05. The motion was seconded by Mayor Howe. The resolution was approved unanimously.

7. RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR FEDERAL FUNDING FOR THE RED ROCK CORRIDOR COMMUTER RAIL PROJECT

Mr. Gitzlaff provided an update on the Red Rock Corridor and the federal funds being sought by the Red Rock Corridor Commission. He noted that the Corridor is currently finalizing station area plans for its stations and will need to proceed with an Advanced Alternatives Analysis (Advanced AA) once the plans are completed. The Advanced AA will look at ridership, environmental impacts, operating costs, and capital costs in more detail. Mr. Gitzlaff added that the Red Rock Corridor and high speed rail share the same rail corridor from St. Paul to Hastings and that this allowed any investments in rail infrastructure in those areas to provide a 3 for 1 benefit. He then directed Commission members to resolution 2010-06 included in the agenda packet.

A motion to approve the resolution was requested. Commissioner Branning moved to approve resolution 2010-06. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Peterson. The resolution was approved unanimously.

Following approval of the resolution Commissioner Peterson asked for a brief update on the East Metro Rail Capacity Analysis. Mr. Rogers said that the study was moving forward and that a technical staff meeting would be held on in early August. The meeting was well attended by the public sector and by the freight railroads. All parties are interested in seeing a successful outcome to the study due to rail capacity being a major issue for the introduction of passenger trains. Commissioner Peterson asked that additional updates be given at future meetings.

Commissioner Branning asked about the development of the capacity model. Mr. Rogers said that the model is being developed and that it will begin as a base case of existing conditions. Then multiple capacity improvement scenarios will be tested on it to see how capacity is and is not improved. He added that at each step of the process the freight railroads would be providing input and concurrence with model results.

8. ADVOCACY MATERIALS UPDATE

Mr. Rogers provided a handout to Commission members showing potential roll-up banner displays. In general, Commission members liked the focus on being shovel ready, a 3 for 1 benefit, and jobs. However, they suggested that more emphasis be placed on the environmental benefits of high speed rail as the banners are finalized. Staff was directed to work with the Chair to finalize the roll-up banners prior to printing them.

9. JOINT MEETING WITH THE EMPIRE BUILDER COALITION

Mr. Rogers directed Commission members to the memo included in the agenda packet. He discussed the previous joint meeting held between the two organizations on March 18th and how it was successful in building support for high speed rail along the River Route. He noted that, following direction by the Commission, staff had begun preparations for a second joint meeting at the Union Depot in St. Paul. He next discussed the draft agenda, the budget, potential meeting dates and the possibility of having over 200 attendees. He noted that while the joint meeting would be similar to the previous meeting, it would have a greater focus on jobs. Tours of the Depot would be available to those who were interested following the conclusion of the meeting.

Commissioners discussed the proposed meeting dates and decided that they were not ideal given the conflict with MEA and the Counties Transit Improvement Board. It was suggested and agreed upon that the joint meeting would take place on October 27th.

Commissioners next discussed the draft budget and potential areas to reduce expenses. Staff stated that like the La Crosse event, attendees would be asked to provide for a portion of the lunch costs. Additionally, staff would work with OnBoard Midwest and others to see if there were sponsorship opportunities for area businesses. It was also noted that some of the meeting expenses would be one-time item expenses, such as the roll-up banners, that could be used at future meetings.

Staff noted that due to combining of the August and September meetings it would be necessary to approve a not-to-exceed budget for the joint meeting and give the Chair approval to sign off on expenses.

A motion to approve a not-to-exceed budget of \$8,000 and to authorize the Chair to approve expenditures was requested. The motion was made by Commissioner Peterson. The motion was seconded by Council member Stark. The motion was approved unanimously.

10. TWIN CITIES TO MILWAUKEE PRESENTATION

Mr. Krom provided an update on Mn/DOT's Twin Cities to Milwaukee study. The study includes an evaluation of the multiple alternative routes that trains could take between the Twin Cities and Milwaukee that includes ridership, costs, and impacts. Mn/DOT is also undertaking a cost/benefit study on the passenger rail routes identified in the State Rail Plan. In addition to these studies, Mn/DOT is undertaking a governance study to identify available options for Minnesota to govern passenger rail. This study will also help to clarify the roles that each level of government will play in the development of passenger rail.

Specific to the Twin Cities to Milwaukee study, Mr. Krom noted that the study will cost \$1.2 million which will be paid for by federal and state (MN/WI) funds. The study has narrowed the original 33 route variations to 10 that are now undergoing further analysis. He added that open houses on the study would be held in the winter. When asked about next steps, Mr. Krom responded that Wisconsin has applied for \$42 million in federal funds to complete environmental and preliminary engineering work on the selected corridor.

11. DRAFT 2011 WORK PLAN AND BUDGET

Mr. Rogers directed the Commission to the draft 2011 work plan and budget included in their agenda packet. He walked through the General Activities, Advocacy and Legislative Coordination, Public Involvement, and Management, Policy, and Administrative Activities work tasks. Commissioners asked for the Work Plan to include assisting others in their efforts to advance high speed rail along the River Route as a priority. Furthermore, they suggested adding language to the work plan discussing how the Commission will work to strengthen the conclusions of the State Rail Plan, which including its conclusion that high speed rail should go along the River Route.

Mr. Rogers next discussed the budget. He noted that the budget increased from \$39,000 in 2010 to \$80,000 in 2011. This was primarily due to the increased cost for public advocacy and involvement. He noted that there was fund balance remaining from 2010 and staff

recommended that \$20,000 of it be used to offset the financial commitments of members in 2011. Discussion ensued regarding the budget and the financial contribution of members. The Commission directed staff to review the budget and the fund balance to see if more of the fund balance from 2010 could be used to offset the 2011 financial contributions.

12. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Gitzlaff provided an update to the Commission from the memo included in the agenda packet. He highlighted the ongoing discussion regarding the six-year reauthorization of the federal transportation bill, energy legislation, and appropriations.

13. ADVOCACY PARTNER UPDATE

Mr. Egan provided an update on OnBoard Midwest's outreach efforts. He noted that the St. Paul Area Chamber is actively involved in advancing high speed rail. He added that the Chamber is reaching out to other chambers throughout the state to seek their support for high speed rail.

14. OTHER

No additional items were discussed.

NEXT MEETING – OCTOBER 27, 2010

Being there was no further discussion the meeting was adjourned.