

MEETING MINUTES
SOUTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN RAIL TRANSIT COMMISSION

December 14, 2000
Dane County Highway Garage
2302 Fish Hatchery Road
Madison, WI

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was call to order by Chairman Hoesly at approximately 12:40 p.m. The following roll call was recorded.

Members Present: Bob Hoesly, Greg Engen, Harvey Kubly and Fred Bartol

Members Absent: Roberta Leidner

Others Present: Roger Larson, WDOT; Carol Strause, Village of Monticello; Ruth Wittenwyler, Monticello; Wade Wittenwyler, Monticello; Paul Ziehli, Village of Belleville; Jim Tracey, WDOT; Larry Nelson, City of Madison; Butch Johnson, City of Monroe; Nathan Klassy, City of Monroe; John Norwell, Dane County Highway Department; Anna Schramke, Green County Economic Development; and Ken Lucht, SWWRPC

2. Public Notice

It was noted that the meeting notice had been sent to the Green County Clerk for posting in the county courthouse. The notice was also sent to the Dane County Clerk for posting. Also, notice was sent to several news media. The meeting notice was also posted at the office of the Southwest Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission in Platteville, WI.

F. Bartol moved, G. Engen seconded that the meeting be declared properly noticed. Motion carried.

3. Approval of Agenda

G. Engen Moved, H. Kubly seconded, that the agenda be approved as distributed. Motion carried.

4. Approval of April 10, 2000 Meeting Minutes

G. Engen Moved, H. Kubly seconded, that the minutes of the April 10, 2000 commission meeting be approved as distributed. Motion carried.

5. Approval of Bills / Treasurer's Report

H. Kubly, Commission Treasurer, presented the following bills and the attached Treasurer's Report. H. Kubly noted that there was one bill to be presented to the commission today for payment.

A bill was received from the F. A. Agency in regards to the renewal of a commission bond. H. Kubly stated that he had went ahead and paid this bill as a result of a past deadline for renewal. The bill was in the amount of \$30.00.

H. Kubly moved, G. Engen seconded, that the bill be approved and retro-actively paid. Motion carried.

6. General Commission Business

A). Discussion / Action regarding commission membership

K. Lucht noted that he is currently working with Dane County in hopes of increasing representation on the commission from Dane County. Currently, there is a vacant position from Dane County, in which no applications have been received in order to fill the position. Furthermore, K. Lucht stated that the county would likely appoint an individual to this position if the commission sent to them a letter recommending a certain individual interested in assuming the position. This individual would also be required to fill out an application. Also, it was noted that John Norwell will be contacting the Dane County Executives office about the possibility of increasing Dane County's representation on the SCWRTC. Further information should be available at the next meeting in February.

Chairman Hoesly suggested that F. Bartols contact the Dane County Executives Office in regards to this vacancy. F. Bartols accepted the task and will report back at the next meeting. P. Ziehli mentioned to the commissioners that he sent in an application some time ago but has not heard back from Dane County yet. It was concluded that F. Bartols will work with Dane County and P. Ziehli in regards to filling the vacant position.

B). Other

None.

7. Discussion/Action regarding cancellation of SCWRTC Liability Insurance

K. Lucht reported to the commission that the WDNR assumed possession of the rail corridor extending from the Wisconsin State Line to Madison, WI this past April. Currently, the SCWRTC is maintaining general liability insurance pertaining to this corridor. However, the commission attorney E. Brownlee found that it is unnecessary for the commission to carry liability insurance for this corridor because the DNR has taken possession. As a result, if the commission were to go ahead and cancel the insurance policy as of today's date, a reimbursement amount of approximately \$3,600 would be due to the commission.

H. Kubly asked if the commission ever received a letter from the WDNR confirming their insurance coverage on this corridor. K. Lucht stated that while the WDNR has not sent the commission a letter of this type, the WDNR was at the last meeting in April and is well aware of the commissions intentions with regards to potentially canceling the liability insurance.

H. Kubly moved, F. Bartol seconded, that the commission cancel the current liability insurance coverage on the corridor extending from the Wisconsin State Line and the City of Madison,

conditional that the commission receive a letter from WDNR confirming WDNR's liability insurance coverage pertaining to this corridor. Motion carried.

8. Old Business

A). Village of Belleville Culvert Issue

P. Ziehli, Village of Belleville President, addressed the commission regarding a flood-damaged culvert in the Village of Belleville. At the last commission meeting, it was discussed that Tom Wildenborg from the WDOT would be looking further into this issue in regards to replacement of this culvert. Soon after that meeting in April, T. Wildenborg sent a proposal to P. Ziehli outlining the estimated cost of replacement to be approximately \$5,400. T. Wildenborg suggested the SCWRTC and the Village of Belleville agree to a 50/50 cost share for purchase of a new larger pipe, removal of the existing pipe, and installation of the new pipe, as well as necessary grading within the railroad right-of-way. A copy of the proposal was distributed to all the commissioners. Chairman Hoesly asked if the Village of Belleville could bill the SCWRTC for half of the costs of replacement of a new culvert, in the event this proposal is accepted. P. Ziehli stated that the Village of Belleville would likely pay for the full costs of replacement and later bill the SCWRTC for half of the costs.

G. Engen moved, F. Bartol seconded, that the commission be liable for half of the costs of replacing the culvert, with a total cost of no more than \$5,400. Motion carried.

B). Other

None.

9. New Business

A). Resolution requesting 2001 Staff Services from SWWRPC

K. Lucht presented to the commission a resolution outlining a request for 2001 Staff Services from the SWWRPC in the amount of \$4,000. This resolution would taken effect beginning January 1, 2001 and would elapse December 31, 2001.

F. Bartol moved, G. Engen seconded, that the commission accept the resolution presented. Motion carried.

B). Ethanol Plant Proposal - City of Monroe

N. Klassy from the City of Monroe presented the details of the proposed Ethanol Plant in the City of Monroe. The proposed Ethanol Plant in Monroe will be a grain processing facility that will produce 40 million gallons per year of fuel grade ethanol. In order to accommodate this plant, the City of Monroe purchased approximately 80 acres of nearby land, which was annexed into the city. One of the primary conditions of this proposed plant, is that rail access be available. As a result of proximity to rail access, a site located off Bethal road on the southwest side of Monroe, was chosen. It is estimated that 90 railcars per week will be needed for the proposed plant.

Furthermore, N. Klassy stated that this proposal includes removing existing rail near this site, as well as building additional sidetracks. In particular, this proposal includes the removal of existing rail, ties, and grading currently forming the loop extending north into the industrial park. Bethal Road will also be relocated as part of the project. In summary, the proposal includes removing existing rail, re-grading where removal will occur, improving the main line with higher pound rail, and constructing approximately 6 sidetracks. Chairman Hoesly added that the existing rail proposed for removal was purchased on a 50/50 split between the South Central Wisconsin Rail Transit Commission and the Pecatonica Rail Transit Commission some years ago. As a result, the proposal before us today must be approved by both commissions. The Pecatonica Rail Transit Commission has already met to discuss this issue, and it was approved conditional that rail access to the industrial park is strongly considered.

J. Tracey suggested that the existing rail at the intersection, extending north to the industrial park be relocated to help up-grade the existing main line track. Relocation could be fairly easy, Tracey stated. N. Klassy stated that he is unsure the current rail is heavy enough to accommodate the number of trains serving the facility. N. Klassy mentioned that the existing rail could be used for the proposed sidetracks, however. The main line should contain 110 to 112 pound rail.

A. Schramke mentioned that several communities including the City of Monroe are supportive of this project. The long-term benefit for this area is great. A. Schramke noted that one aspect of this project that should be addressed more, is the future opportunity for rail access to the industrial park. If this proposal is approved, there will be no current rail access to the industrial park. However, if any interests arise from potential shippers in the industrial park, rail access should be strongly considered.

H. Kubly noted his concerns about the costs of future removal of existing trackage if the line to the north is re-instated for rail access to the industrial park. H. Kubly would like this proposal to go through, but is a bit concerned about who will pay the costs of removing the rail that will exist in this area in the future. In the event, an intersection is rebuilt to accommodate rail access to the industrial park, the commission should not assume all costs of removing existing rail and installing a new intersection. H. Kubly suggested that the commission add specific language into the motion of approving this project that addresses this concern.

G. Engen moved, H. Kubly seconded, that the commission approve the proposed Ethanol Plant in Monroe, conditional the corridor is preserved under its current designation with the Federal Rails to Trails Program. H. Kubly further amends this motion, seconded by F. Bartol to add specific language including: in the event that rail is built in the future to accommodate rail service to the north, the transit commission will be reimbursed as necessary for costs up and beyond restoration. Motion carried. The Motion will read as follows:

G. Engen moved, H. Kubly seconded, that the commission approve the proposed Ethanol Plant project in Monroe, conditional the corridor is preserved under its current designation with the Federal Rails to Trails Program, and also conditional that in the event rail is built in the future to accommodate rail service to the north, the transit commission will be reimbursed as necessary for costs up and beyond restoration. Motion carried.

C). Other

K. Lucht reported on three property management issues that need to be addressed by the commission. In October of this year, the Freeport, IL Area Economic Development Foundation contacted Jim Tracey of the WDOT in regards to these issues. The first issue involves 3 existing buildings located on trail right-of-way on the Jane Adams Trail, Section A, Stephenson County, Illinois. It is unsure whether or not these buildings have leases (land) from the commission attached to them. It is also unsure whether or not the land underneath the buildings is owned by the SCWRTC, a single individual, or a local government agency. The Freeport Area Economic Development Foundation would like to construct a trail access point at this location and is currently evaluating the possibilities. K. Lucht further mentioned that this issue consists of a question of ownership. K. Lucht suggested that additional information be collected and addressed more specifically at the next meeting regarding this issue.

The second issue involves a utility permit request from an individual in Freeport, IL. This request includes extending an electrical facility across the trail to connect up with an existing subdivision. K. Lucht mentioned that he will gather additional information in regards to this request, and will have a utility permit drafted for commission action at the next meeting in February.

The third issue involves the encroachment of excavated soil on commission property. Just recently, the Bush Creek Golf Course in Orangeville, IL was under construction. In the process of its construction, a 6 to 8-foot high berm of soil was built on the right-of-way, approximately 10 feet from the edge of the trail surface. The berm is also very unsightly to users of the trail. This was done without prior approval from the commission. K. Lucht suggested the commission take action today to authorize staff to send a letter to the Bush Creek Golf Course ordering them to remove the berm as soon as possible.

H. Kubly moved, F. Bartol seconded, authorizing staff to send a letter to the Bush Creek Golf Course ordering them to remove the excavated soil as soon as possible. Motion carried.

10. Next Meeting (s) -

K. Lucht mentioned that the exact date of the next SCWRTC meeting will be set at a later date, and will depend on upcoming issues and projects needing immediate consideration and/or action. Each member will be notified ahead of time when the SCWRTC shall meet next.

11. Adjournment

H. Kubly moved, F. Bartol seconded, that the meeting be adjourned.

Greg Engen, Secretary

Recorded by: Kenneth Lucht, SWWRPC