

SCWRTC ADOPTED MINUTES

SOUTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN RAIL TRANSIT
COMMISSION

1 University Plaza • 719 Pioneer Tower • Platteville, Wisconsin 53818
Harvey Kubly, Chair • Commission Office Phone 608.342.1636 • Fax 608.342.1220
MEMBER COUNTIES: DANE • GREEN

**Wednesday April 25, 2012, 2:00pm, Fitchburg DNR Facilities, 3911 Fish Hatchery Road,
Fitchburg, WI**

- 1) **Harvey Kubly, Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:02 pm.**
- 2) **Roll Call / Establishment of Quorum:**

Commission members present for all/part of meeting:		Others present for all/part of meeting:	
Jay Allen, Dane Co.	X at 2:04; left at 2:47	Mary Penn, Administrator	
Jim Haefs-Flemming, Dane Co.	X	Frank Huntingdon, Marty Morin, Roger Larson, WDOT	
Paul Ziehli, Dane Co.	x	Dana White-Quam, Regional Park Specialist, WDNR	
Harvey Kubly, Green Co., Chair	x		
Oscar Olson, Green Co., Treasurer	x		
Ron Wolter, Green Co.	x		

- 3) **Certification of Public Notice** – Penn, SCWRTC Administrator – Olson/Wolter, Passed Unanimously
- 4) **Motion approving the Agenda, prepared by Penn-** Wolter/Haefs-Flemming, Passed Unanimously
- 5) **Motion approving the draft January Minutes** - Wolter /Haefs-Flemming, Passed Unanimously
- 6) **Public Comment** – None
- 7) **Correspondence & Communications**

Jay Allen apologized for his previous absences and explained what he would try to do to accommodate the remaining 2012 meetings.

REPORTS & COMMISSION BUSINESS

- 8) **SCWRTC Financial Report** – Olson distributed and gave the Treasurer’s report to the Commission. There were no bills to be paid.

- **Motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report** – Ziehli/Wolter, Passed Unanimously

- 9) **SCWRTC Administrator’s Report** – Penn updated the Commission on Paul Ziehli’s reappointment to the SCWRTC, let them know she is working on finalizing the SCWRTC crossing permit and crossing agreement forms, and let them know a railroad map should be ready for their consideration by the July meeting. Kubly also spoke in regard to reappointments to the Commission.

- 10) **WisDOT Report** - Huntingdon talked about the WATCO purchase of WSOR and said that so far it seems to be working pretty well. He said that grant/loan applications were received in February, and mentioned specifically that the Madison-Milton Junction project will be finishing up soon, including bridge work near Monroe and Janesville. He said there were no new projects in the area currently but there is tentative discussion with Union Pacific (UP) on a track purchase for a short spur but which is based on the amount of money WDOT will have available in their budget. He noted that purchase could not really begin for 12 months if it were to go forward. He said that UP recently stopped using its ballast quarry (near Fitchburg/Oregon) so this remnant track is no longer of use to them. He said there is no immediate threat to service but Sauk Co. is very interested

SCWRTC ADOPTED MINUTES

in WDOT acquiring the Reedsburg line and there won't be money to buy it if WDOT earmarks money for the UP line segment purchase.

He also spoke about the bridge near Sauk City and its ability to carry bigger cars. There is a huge cost associated with the bridge improvements and line rehabilitation on that line but nothing has been decided to date. He said that Madison/Prarie du Chien line is very active nowadays, with some trains a half mile long (due to grain and frac sand shipping). There is reportedly a frac sand loading facility being discussed in Reedsburg. As rail traffic is growing, tracks have to be updated and upgraded.

In other projects, Huntingdon said that between Plymouth and Kohler there is an old UP line purchased by WDOT years ago which will be upgraded this summer. He said there are a lot of projects going on state-wide. He added that grants submitted to WDOT in February will be awarded in July. Kubly asked if these new lines would be incorporated into the WRRTC but Frank said it could be WRRTC or Pink Lady RTC.

Olson asked about a crossing in Monroe (on HWY 69) which has been worked on by WSOR with the result that the road was torn out and bump signs added and he was wondering what the status of the project was? Huntingdon said he could check and find out if it were finished or not. Larson said that he had also checked on this project but there was nothing he knew of now, asking who was the responsible municipality. Huntingdon also noted that WDOT was looking at buying some lines in west central Wisconsin but due to frac sand traffic, the current owners probably won't sell (UP and Northern).

White-Quam asked if mining companies had to pay for road damages frac sand hauling? Larson said there is no requirement to pay on State roads but local roads can have theirs paid through local agreements. She then asked if the railroads are getting paid to support rail infrastructure? Huntingdon said if the lines are owned by the shippers, there is no support costs involved as they are the owners.

11) **DNR Report** – Dana White-Quam, WDNR Regional Park Specialist

White-Quam spoke about trail issues, particularly the bridge in Monroe and the problems trying to resolve the issue of the bridge being shorter than it should be. She reported that the contractor admitted to the mistake but since they submitted corrected drawings to the wrong person at WDOT, incorrect specs went out which resulted in the bridge built incorrectly. There are currently attempts to resolve the issue but suspected that it might be a court decision. She noted that hopefully some solution could be made without repairing to the court system. Huntingdon asked if the specs had been submitted to Rails and Harbors but White-Quam said they had not; it had been a different section of WDOT. Huntingdon then asked for more clarification of the situation and she explained that the City of Monroe had received a "T-grant" to raise a bridge on 8th street which incorporated the SCWRTC trail bridge (SCWRTC was part of that decision). Ziehli asked if it was a roofed-bridge? White-Quam said that all the drawings she saw gave the correct dimensions and did not include a roof. Kubly asked if it were feasible to go around the structure? She said that the maintenance equipment cannot groom up to the bridge and then back it away and go around to groom the other side of the trail as this would involve a lot of equipment moved awkwardly, especially over a 30 year period, the bridge's projected life span. Ziehli asked if they could get smaller grooming equipment? She said that smaller equipment can't run the maintenance equipment necessary to cut, groom, etc. and that smaller equipment can't be charged by the snowmobile clubs as much per mile as the larger equipment. Olson asked if they can cut off the roof and raise it? She said that the bridge manufacturer has suggested this option thought at a very expensive rate.

White-Quam also discussed an issue involving McKey road in which a MG&D gas line was placed down the center of the trail that has developed an 1" wide crack (due to settling) which in turn could lead to possible safety issues if someone trips (such as inline skates); she said that for any WDNR trails, whenever a utility line goes in, the agreement says the utility has to repair any damages that may occur at their cost and it is a lifetime responsibility. White-Quam said they'll be meeting with the utility to address the issue. Larson said that MG&D has been very responsible in the community in the past and he's optimistic that this issue will be addressed satisfactorily.

12) **SCWRTC 2012 Election of Officers**

Kubly announced the reelection of Commission officers and opened the floor for nominations. Olson announced he was not interested in running for Treasurer again, citing some personal reasons and added he has held the office for 4 years. Ziehli nominated Kubly as Chair/ Olson seconded. PA.

- **Motion to nominate Harvey Kubly as Chair** – Ziehli/Olson, Passed Unanimously
- **Motion to nominate Paul Ziehli as Vice Chairman** – Olson/Haefs-Flemming, Passed Unanimously
- **Motion to nominate Ron Wolter as Treasurer** – Ziehli/Haefs-Flemming, Passed Unanimously

SCWRTC ADOPTED MINUTES

13) Consideration and possible approval of private crossing request for McGuire & Sons Farm, Inc. – Penn distributed copies of the permit application, explaining the applicant had paid as soon as he learned a fee was required. Included with the handout was a map showing the location of the new crossing location. White-Quam explained that the new crossing has a much better sight distance and that the Town Board Chair supports moving it.

- **Motion to accept the crossing as proposed on the permit** - Olson/Wolter, Passed Unanimously

Following the motion, White-Quam clarified WDOT crossing standards to the Commission and Penn, in response to a question from Ziehli, said that the WDOT crossing standards would be included in the Crossing Permit.

14) Consideration and possible approval of Letter of Understanding with parcel list attachment between SCWRTC and Illinois DNR / Stephenson County, IL

Penn explained the necessity of drafting this letter, reminding the Commission that the situation was before her tenure but the letter is intended to provide a “capstone” to the Illinois taxing issue that was resolved by Amy Seeboth and the SCWRTC last year. Kubly reminded the Commission that the State of Illinois’ solution to the situation was to set the assessment on SCWRTC owned parcels low enough so they would not trigger a tax bill. Penn told the Commission that the SCWRTC is not qualified to be exempted as a state government entity because the State of Wisconsin was not involved in the creation of the SCWRTC (it was between Dane and Green counties).

Huntingdon suggested Penn talk to legal counsel Eileen Brownlee about the possibility of gaining Federal exemption rather than state exemption. Penn will do so and report back to Commission in July. Olson said that he had learned that \$150.00 is the level where a parcel would be taxed; since the SCWRTC parcels are assessed lower than \$150.00, the Commission should not be taxed again.

- **Motion to accept the letter written as is** - Ziehli/Olson, Passed Unanimously

15) Prior to adjournment, Kubly asked about the new DOT employee in attendance and Huntingdon introduced Marty Morin to them. Morin will be working on finances in the Rails/Harbors section and will be managing contracts and other financially related information.

- **Motion to Adjourn** - Ziehli/Wolter – Passed Unanimously at 3:19 PM