



## Meeting Minutes

September 30, 2010

Cottage Grove City Hall

3:30 p.m.

**NO QUORUM PRESENT**

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### Members Present:

Myra Peterson, Washington County  
Barb Hollenbeck, City of Hastings  
Jim Keller, Denmark Township  
Corbin Hopkins, City of Newport  
Cam Gordon, City of Minneapolis  
John Hunziker, City of St Paul Park  
Lee Helgen, St Paul

### Others Present:

Josh Olson, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority  
Andy Gitzlaff, Washington County Regional Railroad Authority  
Sam O'Connell, Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority  
Jon Solberg, MnDOT Metro District  
Linda Jungwirth, Assistant to RCC Janice Rettman

### Ex-Officio Members Present:

Marc Mogan, Prairie Island Indian Community  
Ken Bjornstad, Goodhue County

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Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 3:40 pm.

She indicated that we did not have a quorum and would therefore not be able to take any official action. Mr. Gitzlaff displayed the new Red Rock Corridor magnetic sign that can go on a car for display in parades or events. Commission Chair Peterson encouraged any of the Commission members to check out the magnetic sign to promote the Red Rock Corridor at any upcoming fall festivals, events or parades.

### Agenda Item #1 Consent Items

***\*\*\*Will be considered at next meeting when quorum is present***

- a. Minutes of the July 29, 2010 Meeting
- b. Checks and Claim

### Agenda Item #2 League on MN Cities Insurance Coverage – WCRRA

Mr. Gitzlaff reminded the Commission Members that at the last meeting there was a request to not waive the requirement for tort liability coverage on the League on MN Cities insurance coverage. The League on MN Cities has provided a quote of \$927 for the insurance renewal. He referred the Commission Members to the handout provided

comparing this quote to last year's cost of \$930. He additionally noted that it is a budgeted item. He stated that since there is no quorum the Commission can look at having this formally approved at the next meeting. He will notify the League on MN Cities that the approval will be completed at the next meeting.

### **Agenda Item #3 Financial Management Agreement Amendment - WCRRA**

Mr. Gitzlaff informed the Commission that this item will be an informational item due to the lack of a quorum. Until now, as a joint powers board, the Commission has been allowed to appoint one of its members to be its fiscal agent. This position would handle bills, insurance and legal issues. Washington County Regional Railroad Authority (WCRRA) has been acting in that role since Red Rock Corridor's inception in 1998. There was a Financial Management Agreement in place between the WCRRA and the Red Rock Corridor Commission, but upon a recent review of these documents, it was discovered that it technically expired at the end of 2004. Mr. Gitzlaff indicated the he is unsure of why the clause with an expiration date was included, but if it is still the decision of the Commission to have Washington County act as the fiscal agent, the Commission would need to formally amend this clause. Commission Chair Peterson suggested to move this item to the consent calendar for next meeting. Mr. Gitzlaff agreed. Commission Member Helgen questioned if there have been any issues due to operating with the expired agreement. Mr. Gitzlaff indicated that, in regard to the State Statute, there is nothing that indicated that we have a Financial Management Agreement in place in order to designate a fiscal agent. Since we do, now it is important to make sure the agreement is current and valid. Commission Member Helgen noted that the terms of the agreement had been executed in good faith and that there was no reason why we shouldn't continue operating in good faith.

### **Agenda Item #4 Draft 2011 Work Plan and Budget – WCRRA**

Mr. Gitzlaff indicated to the Commission that, at this time, he would only provide a brief discussion of the work plan and budget, and we would review this item at the next meeting with a quorum present. He referred the Commission Members to review the 2010 Accounting Summary provided in their packets. This summary is good through September 15, 2010 so it could fluctuate a bit before the end of the year, but no major expenses are expected prior to year end. Mr. Gitzlaff proceeded to review the 2010 Summary that detailed the revenues and expenses.

Mr. Gitzlaff continued to review the 2010 Work Plan as included as a draft in the agenda packet. This included the general activities of the RRCC. He reminded Commission Members of an upcoming open house at The Union Depot on Tuesday, October 5 from 5:00 – 7:00 PM which will include some initial results from the East Metro Railroad Capacity Analysis Study and will be an opportunity to gain input from those who live in the study area.

He proceeded to go over the 2010 Operating Revenue included in the packet, which reviews the fund balance break down for each individual county. He noted that the differences are due to the counties joining the RRCC at different times. The proposed budget is a little more detailed than in past years. He noted that since we have not yet adopted a travel policy, it still remains in the budget as it was in the past. Also, he highlighted the Public Involvement area which in the past year has involved an elevated

level of outreach including newsletters, press releases and website updates included in the station area planning study. When the station area planning study is complete next year, the intent is to continue that level of public involvement to keep people engaged and excited about the corridor projects.

#### **Agenda Item #5 Draft Travel and Attendance Policy – WCRRA**

Mr. Gitzlaff referred the Commission members to their packets with the draft Travel and Attendance Policy information. This includes a summary of what the Commission has done to date as well as the results of research on other corridors existing travel policy. Additionally, included are some questions the Commission members can review to aid in their decision as to whether we will continue to fund travel. He reminded members that if it is decided to not continue to fund travel, we would not include it in our yearly budget. He has included in the packet a draft policy that the RRCC Staff has put together based on Washington County's Travel Policy for the County Commissioners, as a template if it is decided to continue to fund travel. He referred the Commission members to review the packet.

Commissioner Member Gordon indicated concern if there were too many people making use of the travel. Mr. Gitzlaff replied that historically it is very sparsely used.

Commission Member Gordon agreed that it would be good to have a set policy. He noted that it does appear to fit the mission of this Commission to have its Commissioners get educated, yet in these tough economic times, possibly our other agencies could pay for this training. Commission Member Helgen conversely noted that many cities no longer have funding for travel, so this may be an opportunity that is not available on another level. Commission Chair Peterson indicated that because of the diversity of our organization, she would encourage our Commission to be able to assist the cities in gaining knowledge as they have the responsibility for land planning. This discussion will continue when a quorum is available. Commission Member Hopkins questioned if the new policy would include surface transportation fees. Mr. Gitzlaff indicated it is included in the draft travel policy.

Commission Chair Peterson reminded the Commission members that The Transportation Alliance is sponsoring a candidates forum on Thursday, October 7, 2010 from 10-12:00 at the South Service Center. This will include the candidates from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District.

#### **Agenda Item #6 Station Area Planning Study Update – WCRRA**

Mr. Gitzlaff indicated that he would be giving the update today on the Station Area Planning. He referenced that August was the first series of public meetings for the Station Area Planning sessions. These sessions were held in St Paul, Newport, Cottage Grove and Hastings and were very well attended. These meetings allowed them to present the concept plans and gain feedback. Currently, they are going through a process of refining those concept plans and putting together more detailed cost estimates as well as environmental assessments. The next to do item is scheduling the next round of open houses. The project team is planning on scheduling these after the holidays, sometime in January. This will allow for larger attendance at the events as well as allowing the design team to refine the plans and put together some more details.

Mr. Gitzlaff referred the Commission members to a hand out that contains the results of a bus rider survey. The RRCC team members were at the Park-n-Ride in Lower Afton and Cottage Grove at 5:00 AM when the first bus left handing out about 350 surveys to people boarding the bus. They provided some information on the RRCC as well as a stamped envelope to return the survey. He indicated that they received 43% of returned surveys. Mr. Gitzlaff continued to review the results indicated on the handout. He additionally informed the Commission members that at the bottom of the survey they provided a box to check if they would be interested in attending a focus group meeting. There was quite a bit of interest in this meeting so it was scheduled the past Tuesday evening. Only six people attended, but for a focus group it was a good turnout with good discussions. There will be a summary of the focus group responses provided to the Commission members at the next meeting.

Commission Chair Peterson commented about the completion of the Comprehensive Plan and the results indicated that by 2030 Washington County will have an additional 130,000 people and most of those people will live on the western side of the County. It is projected that 69% of our workers will be on the road or driving to work at another place. Additionally, there is projected to be an increase of 57% of senior citizens. We need to try to encourage our community development around transit stations to assist our seniors with their mobility. She encouraged all board members to review a synopsis of The Comp Plan prepared by The Star Tribune online.

#### **Agenda Item #7 Legislative Update - RCRRRA**

##### **a. State**

Josh Olson, from Ramsey County Staff, informed the Commission that staff will continue to monitor the governor's race and other races. The candidates are beginning to unveil their different budgets and as we get closer to the election we may see their emphasis on transportation issues.

##### **b. Federal**

Mr. Olson indicated that the biggest development at the Federal level since the last meeting was President Obama's announcement on Labor Day for a \$50 Billion investment in transportation. This is a new development and a diversion from past history. Part of this transportation proposal includes the establishment of an infrastructure bank. This has been discussed for years and now is being implemented by the White House. Additionally there is an emphasis on high speed rail and new starts projects. In regards to the transportation reauthorization bill, not much has changed and staff will continue to monitor. He continued to note that an announcement is anticipated from the DOT & HUD on the Tiger Grants, High Speed Rail Passenger Grants, and HUD Regional Grants sometime this fall. He added that there was quite a bit of interest in the regional planning grants from HUD and DOT.

#### **Agenda Item #8 Draft 2011 State Legislative Platform- WCRRA**

Mr. Gitzlaff indicated that we can now begin to put together a legislative platform for the upcoming legislative session. He informed the Commission members that we don't have platform statements prepared yet, but we will review the requests from last year.

He provided a summary for the results from last year's state legislative session: RRCC put forward a request for \$500,000 for the design and construction of Park-n-Ride facilities along the Red Rock Corridor. This request did make it into the Transit & Capital Improvement Program, which was a blanket bill with a number of other corridors, but it was one of the things that the Governor vetoed out of the bonding bill last year. RRCC, like all the other corridors, did not receive funding.

He referred to the next request which was for implementation of a commuter bus service for a three-year demonstration program from Hastings to service both St Paul and Minneapolis. This bill was authored by Senator Sieben and did become a bit controversial in the Legislature, due to the funding source of the request. The source was from state road construction funds for transit mitigation from construction of the Hwy 61 Bridge. MnDOT was reluctant to commit to the funding for a transit service since their policy does not provide for that. In the end, it did make it into the bill with a total amount of \$250,000 for bus service in 2011 as mitigation to the bridge construction. However, it can be used at the discretion of the Commissioner of Transportation. As of now, there has been no commitment from MnDOT to use those funds for bus service.

The other requests were for support of the county partners. This included, The Union Depot, Hoffman Yard and High Speed Rail to Chicago. All three of these were initially included in the bonding bill and were later vetoed by the Governor.

Mr. Gitzlaff noted to board members that the upcoming legislative session, starting in 2011, is the first year of the bi-annual, so it is technically not a bonding bill year. He believes there will be a smaller bonding bill this year with some transit projects, due to them being vetoed last year. Additionally, there remains some uncertainty due to the election year.

He suggested some of the future projects that can be part of the upcoming legislative platform:

1. Continued support for the requests of support for Union Depot, Hoffman Yard and the High Speed Rail to Chicago projects.
2. Funding request for Park-n-Rides along the Red Rock Corridor. This past year RRCC did allocate some of its 2005 and 2006 bond funds to Hastings in the amount of \$600,000 for construction of the Hastings Park-n-Ride.

Mr. Gitzlaff also indicated that staff has talked with the Metropolitan Council in regards to the ownership of the Park-and- Ride and the restrictions that come with that when the request for funding comes from a Corridor Commission. Met Council staff and the County staff feels the funds should go through the host county or city. For example, Washington County is putting together a \$500,000 request for the Newport Transit Station. This is a request that the Commission could support.

Commission Chair Peterson questions the process as it relates to our proposal to give \$600,000 to the Hastings Park-n-Ride. Mr. Gitzlaff clarified that what first needs to happen is approval by the State Bond Council that it is an eligible project. This happened the previous week. Secondly, a grant agreement needs to be put in place between the Met Council and the City of Hastings which is in process right now.

Mr. Gitzlaff suggested that extending the eligibility to use the funds for the Hastings bus service into fiscal year 2012 could be included as part of the legislative platform. Commission Chair Peterson asked for clarification on this issue. Mr. Gitzlaff specified that, right now, there is no commitment from MnDOT to put the funds towards the Hastings Bus Service. With it being late in the year and the process that needs to occur to get a Park-n-Ride in service, it realistically is a later 2011/early 2012 service. He continued to explain that by amending the year we are buying time for the City of Hastings, Met Council and MnDOT to find some way to fund the service. Commission Chair Peterson questioned that as she understood it we recently had the first dig/ ribbon cutting of the Hastings Bridge construction, so when will that construction actually begin? Mr. Gitzlaff referred that question to our MnDOT representative Mr. Jon Solbeg. He indicated that he does not have the exact start date but will get that information back to Mr. Gitzlaff to distribute to the Commission Members. He did remind them that it is a three-year long-term project. Commission Chair Peterson's understanding of the project was that the Park-n-Ride was going to facilitate moving the people and aid in reducing the traffic congestion during the bridge project. In order for this to occur, it needs to be operational during the bridge project. She encouraged the Commission members that we need to get people used to using transit as the bridge is being rebuilt. Mr. Solberg indicated that MnDOT agrees with that, and is in support of the RRCC. Commission Member Hollenbeck indicated that the Hastings Transit Committee met two weeks ago and the city supports the date to be changed to 2012. It seems like a more appropriate time due to the construction challenges to work with the Park-n-Ride. The Transit Committee is actively meeting and working out the issues on providing service in 2012 and beyond. Commission Member Peterson expressed her disappointment that the date is delayed. She is concerned that when people experience congestion in travel they will try to find other ways of travel. The sooner the bus service is implemented and we invest in the transit station the more successful we will be in the long-term. Commission Member Hopkins indicated that he sees some merit in preparing the Park-and- Ride structure, lot and having buses ready, but may not go into the full schedule. He feels we should start earlier to build a better base of ridership before the travel delays begin. Commission Member Hollenbeck indicated that the Park-n-Ride facility won't be ready until next spring. Commission Chair Peterson is concerned that riders will build habits that won't include the Park-n-Ride system if it is not available at the right time and facilitate the growth of the corridor. Mr. Gitzlaff suggested that we go back and look at the language and coordinate with Hastings and see where they are at with the construction plans and discussions for funding. It may be possible that a language change may not be needed. Commission Chair Peterson asked the other Commission Members what their feelings were. Commission Member Gordon indicated that he is somewhat undecided. It appears that this would allow us to have the flexibility of the funds use being deferred over a two- year time frame. He also preferred to refer the decision to the Commission members closer in the corridor. He questioned if there is a fear we won't be able to spend all the funds. Commission Member Hollenbeck agreed that was her understanding also. This change in date would add the flexibility in the use of the funds. Commission Chair Peterson indicated that her perception in the change was not just the flexibility in the use of the funds over time. Commission Member Helgen agreed with Commission Member Gordon. He agreed it is prudent to allow more time to complete the project than be under pressure to get it spent and risk losing the funds.

Mr. Gitzlaff suggested we go back and look more closely at the requirements and restrictions for the bonding bill and see if we are able to make changes. He reminded the

Commission members that these are just the suggestions to put in the new platform; it is not the final platform yet.

Mr. Gitzlaff also informed the Commission that the last suggested item that the Commission could support in the upcoming legislative platform is the Minneapolis Interchange Bonding Request. We are currently supporting The Union Depot and the Hoffman Projects along the corridor. He indicated that for the October meeting, he will bring back a draft of the new legislative platform based on the guidance received here today for the quorum to review.

**Agenda Item #9 Other**

**a. High Speed Rail Summit – October 27, 2010**

Josh Olson, from the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority, provided an update on the East Metro Rail Capacity Study. He indicated it would be helpful for both staff and consultants if the Commission Members could attend the open house next week from 5 -7 at the union depot on Tuesday, October 5, 2010. There will be some information relating to potential capacity solutions. This is one of the first steps in the unveiling to the public some of these essential solutions for the project. He noted that anyone could contact Mike Rogers for more information. The public is encouraged to attend. Mr. Olson believed that there will be a presentation around 5:30 and staff and consultants will be available for questions. Additionally, he indicated that project boards will be available to provide perspective view of the project.

**b. Next Meeting-October 28, 2010**

This date was confirmed.

There being no further business, Commission Member Hunziker moved a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hopkins and passed unanimously.

The Commission adjourned at 4:50 p.m.