



## Meeting Minutes

August 25, 2011

Cottage Grove City Hall

4:00 p.m.

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### Members Present:

Joe Harris, Dakota County  
Autumn Lehrke, Washington County  
Janice Rettman, Ramsey County  
John Hunziker, St Paul Park  
Jen Peterson, City of Cottage Grove  
Barb Hollenbeck, City of Hastings

### Ex-Officio Members Present:

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

### Others Present:

Andy Gitzlaff, Washington County Regional Railroad Authority  
Josh Olson, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority  
Mike Rogers, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority  
Joe Morneau, Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority  
Jon Solberg, MnDOT  
Lisa Weik, Washington County Commissioner  
Linda Jungwirth, Commissioner Rettman's Assistant  
John M Burbank, City of Cottage Grove

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Chair Harris called the meeting to order at 4:01pm.

### Agenda Item #1 Consent Items

- a. Minutes of the June 30, 2011 Meeting
- b. Checks and Claims

Commission Chair Harris noted there was an addition to the checks and claims items. This is a \$927.00 invoice from the League of MN Cities Insurance Trust for the period of 2011-2012. Mr. Gitzlaff indicated that he just received this bill two days ago and it is the next action item on the agenda. He recommended that the Commission go ahead and take action on it at this time. Commission Chair Harris recommended we add this item to our checks and claims and deal with the waiver of the liability on the next agenda item. Commission Member Rettman questioned if this was included in our yearly budget. Mr. Gitzlaff confirmed that \$3000 is budgeted for yearly insurance expense. Commission Member Rettman moved the approval of the Consent Items. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Lehrke.

### Roll Call Vote:

Commission Member Rettman	Yes
Commission Member Lehrke	Yes
Commission Member Hunziker	Yes
Commission Chair Harris	Yes
Commission Member Peterson	Yes
Commission Member Hollenbeck	Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

## **Agenda Item #2 League on MN Cities Liability Coverage Insurance Coverage**

Mr. Gitzlaff indicated that this is an annual question to waive or not waive the tort liability requirements. Risk Management staff has recommended to not waive the tort liability requirement of the coverage. The requested action today is to not waive the tort liability requirement of the coverage for the upcoming year. The coverage will then be renewed with the League of MN Cities as was approved in the Checks and Claims in Agenda Item #1.

Commission Member Hunziker motioned to approve not waiving the tort liability coverage requirement with the insurance policy through the League of MN Cities for the upcoming year. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Peterson and passed unanimously.

## **Agenda Item #3 East Metro Rail Capacity Study Update- RCRRA**

### **a. Resolution Approving Funding Contribution**

Mike Rogers presented a power point presentation and provided a handout with an update on the East Metro Rail Capacity Study. He began with an overview of the railway partners and who is impacted by these improvements in the east metro area. He proceeded to provide maps detailing the three major railroad routes, and the problems created by the areas where they overlap. These areas are Westminster Junction, Robert Street Bridge, and Hoffman Interlocking/Wye area as well as the freight yards to the south.

Mr. Rogers reminded the Commission Members they are in the Initial Phase of analyzing what alternatives may work and selecting a preferred concept. Future stages will be engineering, the environmental process, as well as the final design and construction. He continued to explain the study objectives which include: identifying capacity needs addressing long-term needs first, phasing opportunities, contributions to congestion and technical issues and constructability. He indicated that the study approach concentrated on the biggest benefit with the least amount of cost. Some of these items include: the change of scheduling and dispatching of trains so there is less interference, train re-routing, as well as lower cost capital items such as sidings, crossovers or additional yard tracks. Additionally, higher cost capital items may include: dedicated passenger tracks, additional freight tracks, grade separations and river crossings.

He indicated that through the study approach four build alternatives as well as a no build alternative were developed. The first alternative was to have no improvements or changes. There are four build scenarios, which were designed with the railroads input and remained within the railroad right-of-way. The four build alternatives were very similar north of the Cottage Grove area. This area included yard improvements and a third main line built from the Union Depot to the Newport area. The goal is to get the through trains and the yard trains separated and keep the speeds up for the high-speed trains. The area south of Cottage Grove focused on some uncommon elements. This area north of Hastings on the St Croix River focused on grade separations. The question remains where to put a third track, up along Highway 61 or along the river.

The study approach had the following requirements:

- Must accommodate 150+ existing freight moves in Hoffman Yard, which is 10,000 freight cars a day, as well as yard operations for BNSF, CP & UP. These freights do not want their schedules changed.
- Must accommodate existing passenger trains.
- Must accommodate growth of about 36% including ten Red Rock Trains and twelve high speed trains to Chicago as well as some additional passenger trains.

Mr. Rogers provided a review of a graph detailing the four options. This indicated that option four offers the most changes and is the most capital intensive. It also detailed that there will be significant speed reductions due to congestion by the freight if there are no improvements made. To solve this problem, some improvements must be made as these problems will become worse with the addition of passenger trains.

He continued to review the effects of the four options with the addition of passenger trains. With option one the average congestion and unplanned delay per train increases dramatically with the addition of passenger trains and no capital improvements. As capital improvements are done to increase capacity, the delays go way down.

Specifically, he noted what they have learned from the study:

1. Cottage Grove Auto Facility
  - a. Servicing the facility reduces the railroad to a single track
2. Dayton's Bluff Yard
  - a. Yard work dramatically reduces the capacity of Hoffman Interlocking
3. Hoffman Interlocking
  - a. An increase in turnout speed is needed
  - b. Separation of yard and through movements will increase capacity
  - c. Crew changes impact tract capacity.

Mr. Rogers reviewed the four options and a new option that only recently developed called option 5. In this option only Area C will change. The BN Track will go up the bluff alongside the CP track. This would create a one-rail corridor from the St. Croix to Newport. It would include three main line tracks minimum. This option will eliminate the BNSF/CP crossover and the St Croix flyover as well as future flyover at Newport. Both the railroads are indicating that this option does hold some merit and should be further analyzed. He indicated that to proceed with the analysis of Option 5 the following would need to be completed: modeling simulations, conceptual engineering with geotechnical engineering to determine what material the bluffs are made out of, as well as track design. These steps will delay the project one to two months. He indicated that staff is in agreement that it is worth the time to consider this option now.

Mr. Rogers then discussed the additional costs needed to conduct the Option 5 analysis. The additional cost is \$100,000 and through the funding sources 80% is a Federal match (5339) and \$20,000 in a local match. This \$20,000 is the request today for the Red Rock Corridor Commission. This additional funding will allow us to keep moving forward on the study which is expected to be done towards the end of 2011 or early 2012. Commission Member Lehrke questioned what the cost difference would be if this option is analyzed at a different time, later into next year. Mr. Rogers indicated that

there is efficiency in doing the analysis in the early stages of development. To go back later and decide to review Option 5 would be very costly when the whole analysis is in more detail. She noted that the Washington County Commissioners recently submitted a grant request for the Federal Livability Grant to look at an advanced alternative analysis on modes. The original analysis ruled out BRT right away due to the bluffs and the river, but now there are some hybrid versions of BRT that could be very cost effective to implement in this corridor. She indicated her interest in conducting an alternative analysis in this corridor for BRT, and that the RRCC could be approached to become a funding partner if this grant is approved. She noted that they will know more in October or November and questioned if they could table this item until then. Mr. Rogers indicated that now is the time to complete this work. If we wait until November or December the weather is not conducive to surveying or obtaining the borings that are needed. From the study timeline it is much more efficient to complete this work now. Commission Member Lehrke questioned if we waited until next year to complete this work, would the cost remain the same. Mr. Rogers answered that he was not certain on the cost next year. He noted that the reason for the price now is due to the expectation that we can determine which option is the correct option without following through with both options all the way to the end of the process. Mr. Gitzlaff indicated that in regard to the application submitted by Washington County for the advanced alternatives analysis, the results of this study could be plugged into the AA total task and it could bring the total cost of that project down.. He also noted that this is only the Federal portion. Even if we are successful with that grant, there is still a 20% local match that would most likely go back to the four funding partners. This local match funding split would be the same as is agreed for all dues. He indicated that the grant application was for two million in Federal Funds and the total cost would be 2.5 Million, so it would be a \$500,000 total match from all the funding partners. Commission Member Rettman commented that if we need to research going up the bluff as a viable alternative this could help leverage more dollars. Mr. Gitzlaff confirmed that there remains a \$30,000 contingency in the budget. The East Metro Rail Capacity Study is in our work scope and could be used with these funds. He reminded the Commission Members that these funds have been equally proportioned with the funding partners at the rates of: 37.5% from Ramsey County, 35% from Washington County, 17.5% from Hennepin County and 10% from Dakota County. This is the standard contribution rate this is followed for all funding for the Red Rock Corridor.

Commission Member Peterson motioned to approve the resolution for the \$20,000 funding contribution to the East Metro Rail Capacity Study. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Hunziker and brought to a vote.

Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Rettman	Yes
Commissioner Lehrke	Yes
Commissioner Hunziker	Yes
Commissioner Harris	Yes
Commissioner Peterson	Yes
Commissioner Hollenbeck	Yes

Motion passed unanimously

#### **Agenda Item #4 Station Area Planning Study Update- WCRRA**

Mr. Gitzlaff indicated that there are three things to update on the Station Area Planning Study. At the last meeting the Commission approved the release of the draft of the report for public review, comments and endorsement by the cities. It has been busy since then getting on city and county board agendas giving updates and going through the approval process. So far, the Newport City Council has accepted the report. Cottage Grove is scheduled for an update to the City Council on September 7<sup>th</sup> to approve the report. Additionally, the presentation to the Transportation Committee of the City of St. Paul was given on July 11, and now their planning commission will hold their own public hearing and comment period that may continue until early October. In Hastings, the report was presented to the Planning Commission and Council, and they are going to be sending a resolution of support at their September 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Additionally, an update was given to the Washington County Regional Rail Authority Board on August 2<sup>nd</sup> and the Ramsey County Regional Rail Authority Board on August 16<sup>th</sup>. He indicated that they have received some comments and feedback, and most of it remains technical in nature. Nothing major yet. He noted this Commission is scheduled for approval next month and at that time he will provide details of any comments and changes necessary. Mr. Gitzlaff informed the Commission Members that they had originally targeted October to finish the study but Washington County recently extended the contract with Hay Dobbs until the end of the year to allow them to assist with final updates, communication services and website management.

Finally, Mr. Gitzlaff referred the Commission to the specialized service task for this project which was the creation of a short three-minute video. This video highlighting the Red Rock Corridor will be available for upcoming meetings, cable channels, the website and the You-Tube page. The Commission Members then viewed the video.

Commission Member Lehrke commented on the responses in the video that referenced taking the train to the ball game, yet this is commuter rail system that will not be available at ball game times. She is concerned with the false impression that is given in this video. Mr. Gitzlaff indicated that the comments offered in the video are not scripted comments, just the feedback that people have given. The commuting aspect is still the primary goal. He indicated that this video will be available on our website front page as well as the You-Tube page. It will also be sent out to local media and cable access. This remains another resource that staff and commissioners have to get the Red Rock message distributed. Commission Member Lehrke questioned what stage this video was in, and if it was possible to edit any portion. Mr. Gitzlaff indicated he would check with the consultants and see if there are any funds available to provide some edits. Commission Member Peterson recommended that we send this out to the area Chamber of Commerces for them to put on their websites. Commission Member Rettman reminded the Commission Members that this process is about building up the whole corridor, not just getting a ride one place; it is about a complete two way trip.

#### **Agenda Item #5 Legislative Update - RCRRA**

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

Josh Olson informed the Commission that since the last meeting a lot has happened. He referred the Members to the hand-out in the agenda packet which provides more detail on the State and Federal Legislatures. He continued to provide the highlights at

the State level. Highlights of the budget include: passenger rail was funded for \$500,000 for the 2012 -2013 year; and Metro Transit bus service was funded at \$39 Million for 2012 and 2013 for a total of \$78 Million, which is less than was requested. That gap in funding was filled in with CTIB funding as well as cuts to the suburban transit providers (opt outs). Additionally, the bonding bill was approved and the RRCC received some funds associated with this. They have initially allocated \$500,000 to the Newport Park-and-Ride.

**b. Federal**

Josh directed the Commission Members to the debate on debt ceiling and the potential cuts to transportation as well as cuts in other discretionary funding. He indicated that there are two transportation bills in process, one in the Senate and one in the House. In the House, Congressman John Mica is proposing a six year \$230 Billion Dollar package, and on the Senate side a two year \$109 Billion package is proposed. He noted there is a substantial difference between the two and they will continue to monitor the situation. Additionally, he noted there is a new round of Tiger Grants put out by the Federal DOT, with the pre-applications due by the first of October and the applications due the end of October.

**Agenda Item #6 Other**

**a. Next Meeting- September 29, 2010**

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

The Commission adjourned at 5:00 p.m.