



## Meeting Minutes

May 22, 2014

Cottage Grove City Hall

4:00 p.m.

| Commission Members       | Agency                | Present |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Autumn Lehrke, Chair     | Washington County RRA | X       |
| Mike Slavik              | Dakota County RRA     | X       |
| Janice Rettman           | Ramsey County RRA     | X       |
| Linda Higgins            | Hennepin County RRA   |         |
| Barb Hollenbeck          | City of Hastings      | X       |
| Jen Peterson, Vice-Chair | City of Cottage Grove | X       |
| Keith Franke             | City of St. Paul Park |         |
| Steve Gallagher          | City of Newport       | X       |
| Jim Keller               | Denmark Township      |         |
| Cam Gordon               | City of Minneapolis   |         |
| Amy Brendmoen            | City of St. Paul      |         |

| Ex-Officio Members | Agency                          |   |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Marc Mogan         | Prairie Island Indian Community | X |
| Jess Greenwood     | Goodhue County                  |   |

| Staff           | Agency                | Present |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Jan Lucke       | Washington County RRA |         |
| Andy Gitzlaff   | Washington County RRA | X       |
| Lyssa Leitner   | Washington County RRA |         |
| Jimmy Shoemaker | Ramsey County RRA     |         |
| Joe Morneau     | Dakota County RRA     | X       |
| Josh Olson      | Ramsey County RRA     | X       |

| Others        | Agency          |   |
|---------------|-----------------|---|
| Katie White   | Met Council     |   |
| Jay Demma     | STANTEC         |   |
| Lynne Bly     | MnDOT           |   |
| Chuck Darnell | Hennepin County | X |
|               |                 |   |
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The meeting was video recorded and can be viewed online at:  
[http://swctc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=2&clip\\_id=4815](http://swctc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=2&clip_id=4815)

Chair Lehrke called the meeting to order at 4:07 p.m. (without a quorum)

### **Agenda Item #1: Introductions**

Introductions were made by those present.

### **Agenda Item #2: Consent Items**

#### **a. Checks and Claims**

#### **b. Minutes of the March 26,2014 Commission Meeting**

Motion made by Peterson to approve the March 26, 2014 meeting minutes and checks and claims. Seconded by Slavik. **All in favor.** Motion carried.

### **Agenda Item #3: Website and Communication Consultant Selection\* - Andy Gitzlaff, WCRRA**

Authorization to enter into a contract for a 1 year period. Budget for this item is \$30,000, which covers revamping of the web site to better update, re-branding, easier to distribute our e-news letter. Explained process that was put together to look for a consultant. Received 10 proposals. Formed a group from Hennepin, Ramsey, Washington and Dakota County to review the proposals. It has been narrowed down to 2 companies. Brought them in for interviews. Mod out of St. Paul and Johnson Group out of St. Cloud. Both interviewed very well. Johnson Group was given a slight edge, they have a good understanding on how to engage communities. Reference check went very well. Johnson's rate came in low at \$23,940 total cost. Staff recommends that we enter into a 1 year contract with Johnson Group. Staff asking for and not to exceed amount of \$30,000 in case of a contingency if there was something that was added, such as Mind Mixer.

Rettman: If we approve the \$30,000 any other expenditure would come back to the board (over the \$23,940)? Getzlaff: It could be set up that way. If that route is taken then we can leave it at the \$24,000. This would wouldn't be a commission action, we would have is a project memo where the project manager authorizes those services. We would be bringing it back anyways we just wouldn't need authorization to do so.

Rettman: Has no problem leaving it with in the communications bit. How soon will the web site be converted into the new design? Gatzlaff: 3-4 months for the branding components, 5-6 months for the web site and the remaining 6 months is assisting with hosting and training period for staff.

Motion made by Gallagher to authorize the contract with the Johnson Group for up to \$30,000. Seconded by Hallenback. **All in favor.** Motion carried.

#### **Agenda Item #4: AAU Implementation\* - Andy Gitzlaff, WCRRA**

##### **a. Update on Report Adoption by Local Partners**

##### **b. Next Steps Discussion**

**Gitzlaff:** We left this out there for really as a discussion item, to get input from the commission. We have wrapped up our AAU Study; we have had our hearings and comments on it where our communities really take action to endorse the new direction that we are going and I think that it is kind of a good check in point to kind of figure out, we have laid out the short meetings and long term strategies and what does the commission want to focus on? What are those priorities? What we would like to do is structure that is to get them input in a workshop type setting. Get your input on what you would like to cover in that workshop? One of the things that we thought about would be at the July meeting bring in one of the transit experts that we work with to give a synopsis of kind of how the corridor, now that it has its findings, some things that they would want to peruse or some help with facilitating that meeting. We can also tie it into some discussions on messaging and branding, what do we want to tell the public about Red Rock and potentially if there is movement on a branding consultant we could add that as part of it. Does that workshop make sense? It does take a little bit of staff time, lead time for us to put something like that together.

**Lehrke:** Before opening for discussion I would like to talk a little bit about timing. On Tuesday (May 20<sup>th</sup>) we had a workshop on the county's transit improvement board preview and we talked about the revised program of projects, and I am happy to report that they are looking at readiness, and now that Red Rock is looking at bus rapid transit, it's going to be a lot sooner than the alternative. Looking at the chart by 2016 we could be entering the project engineering phase. It is critical that this project is on par for where it is. According to this we could be looking at a 2018 construction.

**Rettman:** Don't we have enough to put timelines in place? That is not really a workshop thing, it's more of line everything up and bring it in and let us approve it, and start moving the project along. Rettman would like to see the time line moved up and start to lay some foundations to be set in place. We have enough information, we can just sit and do nothing. We need to get moving. Lehrke agrees with moving the time line up.

**Gitzlaff:** The biggest thing with the AA study came out with was a change in direction. It didn't lay out any specific plan, except for some strategies on how to get there. So this makes sense as a pause point to really define, that we have identified this other direction so what are the next steps to really put that together. We can bring back some options, but we do want to make sure that whatever we bring forward is realistic and obtainable. If it is doing more analysis and studies we want to make sure that we are going down the right path. For example the AA laid out a few different things that needed to be worked out. Is this a project that can be built all at once or do they need to be done in stages as the elements allow? We need guidance on what which course of action is best. One of the outcomes that could be logical is following another corridor that has a similar experience. Not sure of the familiarity of it but the Orange line. 35W coming out of Minneapolis. What that project has done is a number of feasible studies to define what it is. They have been working on a project plan that puts into more detail on what it will look like as well as

potential funding scenarios. We don't have anything in our budget this year except for 20 – 30 thousand dollars in contingency for some additional study and analysis. With that you can put in a request for federal funds for small starts or position to be more locally funded by putting in a higher contribution amount with in the 2016 timeframe. We need to do a little bit more work to define what that project is.

**Retzman:** Is this going to go to another consultant mode? There seems that we should be able to lay out a time line. It seems that we get a little bit of momentum and then we say that it has to be analyzed. Don't want to have study after study and we miss the window.

**Slavik:** There is still a lot of work to be done on stage 1 and thought was pretty clear. What is not addressed in there is a time line of when some of those things will be completed. Encourage the cities to do their ordinances and zoning on new construction. don't want to jump the gun getting to stage 2 until we put all of our energies into stage 1. Stage 1 is really about building up the population, working with the City of Hastings to encourage more users of the corridor and try to get them out of their cars and other parts of transit. Doesn't share the same concern on the time line, but I do think that focusing on stage 1 to get some better dates put into that, what ever that may be. However, we need to do stage 1 before we move forward. Report of adoption: Ramsey County – Y, City of Hastings – Y, City of Cottage Grove – Y. We have to make sure that we have our community partners on board.

**Retzman:** Metro transit, where are they on saying yes to increase the express bus service?

**Gitzlaff:** Historically it has been a pretty hard no for service expansion. Other options that are out there is if you can get some federal money in to help to do a demonstration type service. We have looked at that in the past. The solicitation this year didn't open it up wide enough for us to peruse that.

**Peterson:** What is the expected completion date for the Newport transit station?

**Gitzlaff:** The expected date would be September of 2014. **Lehrke:** Sounds like there has been a decision made, Andy are you looking for a discussion to happen at a workshop in the future, is that what you are suggesting?

**Gitzlaff:** Staff can put together a schedule and bring back options at the next meeting to firm up the implementation plan and the priorities for the commission.

**Retzman:** If we just focus on the stage 1 and have a timeline on how long each one of those take, the minimum and the maximum and how many can be bundled together instead of on their own. Are any of stage 2 or 3 collapsible in to 1?

**Olson:** One thing that we now know is an end game, so now I think that we can develop a critical path identifying what are the necessary things in terms of project development. There are a number of tasks in here that are not really attached to a project. If we can outline the ones that are related to a critical path then we can focus in on a time line for that. Also, I believe that it would be beneficial for us to have someone come in and facilitate that, because there are so many floating time lines related to all these new transit projects there isn't a whole lot of single guidance between the 3 of us, and there are some people who are really good at this on transportation projects and project development who can focus in on the critical path pieces, but it is really related to the funding. Andy and I have talked about a couple of people who would be really good for that. However, if we can outline a critical path piece for those pieces I think and feel that you will be more comfortable understanding that piece but the other items that commissioner Slavik

noted which is... I think that we can put a best case on it, but when there are zoning decisions at a city level, we as county staff can't place a good time frame on that because they could last for a long time. But they are going to dictate or help or hinder an ultimate project schedule. **Peterson:** Looking at stage 1 the first step is noted as complete the Newport transit and park and ride which we just heard is expected to open September of 2014, the step after that, which are in the order we should expect them to happen, which is listed in the packet, where are we on that step? **Gitzlaff:** What the AAU study did show is that there is a market in Newport that maybe Metro Transit was telling us otherwise before. Perusing that will need to be tied to some sort of pot of money out there, just knowing that there is a market out there might not get us what is needed. One of the strategies is maybe identifying when the next solicitation is for regional funds that go thru, CMAC being one of them, Met Council is redoing their solicitation right now. Next year is when the next solicitation is going to happen and when we should put in an application thru that program for CMAC funds to help with service expansion projects, could include a Hastings element. There is a way to package potentially a service expansion. **Peterson:** At this point we don't even know if there will be service, correct? **Gitzlaff:** We will have St. Paul service. **Slavik:** It is important to have people living close to the transit for this to be successful, but it is truly up to the elected officials of the individual cities to have this be a go, but this commission could actually go in and offer to help provide some leadership. **Hollenbeck:** Hastings is ready to go. They have a lot of their planning and zoning around the depot and have obtained several tracts of land for housing, but it is hard to develop if you don't have service. **Lehrke:** Do you have enough direction on what to do? Or do you need more time to plan. Or can some of these topics be moved to June's meeting. **Gitzlaff:** There may be a scheduling conflict for next month's meeting; maybe we can change the time of the meeting to get more people? **Lehrke** agrees. Asked the commission how they felt about it. **Hollenbeck,** is flexible. **Peterson** suggested having a more central location for the meeting. **Lehrke,** suggested Newport, they do have cable TV at the city hall. **Slavik** asked staff to send an email with times and let people respond to the emails. **Lehrke,** asked about having some transit buses as some of the summer festivals to get more public involvement. Strawberry fest was mentioned. **Hollenbeck** asked how the bus would get into the community, what the cost it and who would staff it. **Gitzlaff:** To the best of his knowledge when it was offered 6 months ago it would be free, but it would have to be used on a Saturday. **Hollenbeck:** Rivertown days is coming in July and thinks it would be good to tie the bus in with other vehicles that are going to be there on display with their public works department under the bridge, to get people involved and excited about the project. **Rettman:** Have something for people to sign to sign up to show the momentum building to show the results of support. **Lehrke:** Andy what is the technology capability for us at these events to get feedback from people? **Gitzlaff:** We can do questionnaires, sign people up for newsletter, have materials available. **Lehrke:** Would like Andy to look into this for sure for Rivertown days. **Olson:** Red Rock will have a presence at the green line opening. Staff will be at the tables. We will check to see if Metro Transit a presence there and will check to see if they will have some of their busses there to see if we are able to display some of our information on it. Mentioned what is being used with

another corridor, Rush Line, is mind mixer, online forum, but does active things at the poll in person or at their leisure. The consultant that they have has helped them keep the conversation going to make sure the tie ins keep coming around. They are impressed how it is being used.

Lehrke: Commissioner Gahllager has arrived 4:50PM

#### **Agenda Item #5: Communications Update\* - Andy Gitzlaff, WCRRA**

Red Rock Visitation totals for March were 507 and 579 for April. This is consistent with our averages over the past couple of quarters.

Facebook 151 likes. No e-newsletter has been sent out yet as there is not much going on, but one will be sent out by the end of the month, to let people know that they are still doing things.

#### **Agenda Item #6: Legislative Update\* - Andy Gitzlaff – WCRRA (State)**

Legislature adjourned 2 days early. The comprehensive transportation reform bill didn't happen. So, sales tax on gas or increasing sales tax in the region. Bills were introduced but nothing ended up happening with that. A lot of collaborations have been built so expect that to be back next year. If something is there once it is not that important but if it comes back each year it builds momentum. The other thing that we've been watching as well as Red Rock has been tuned into is the bonding bill developments. That was the last piece that was before the legislature adjourned. The governor has now signed off on it. Basically the numbers that came out of it were approximately \$850 Million in bonding and \$236 Million from surplus cash finance projects. Of that, about \$100 Million for transportation projects. Within that specifically for transit, besides some appropriation of greater Minnesota and some small earmarks there was \$15 million set aside for met council for use on a number of eligible projects. Red Rock was named as one of those eligible projects, but there was about another dozen or so projects that were listed on there and the total appropriation amount was 15 million. Some of the language that came out of that was two things, 1) is that the money goes to met council but they have to consult with the county's transit board on how those funds get distributed, 2) the idea of geographical balance is part of that.

Looking back at how much money the different projects are looking for not including Southwest, which is a much larger appropriation which is over 50 to 60 million dollars in requests and the legislature provided about 15 million.

Specifically for Red Rock we had that request in there for a placeholder, bonding typically happens every two years. The governor wanted us to get that request in early to see what funding would be out there the next few years. If not successful here next year might be in a better shape as well even if it is an off bonding year they often times still do some bonding. A year from now we will probably have a better direction on

where were going with the project and know what the next phase is and getting the project closer to being more bond eligible.

**Reddman:** For implementation, I am concerned with no drop dead dates or time lines. At this time I am not prepared at this moment in time to actually ask that we shouldn't go on and be ready to apply to met council and get our act in order because I think that them stating the having the geographic equity so to speak, then time is of the essence.

**Peterson:** Being that the report that you just gave was not in the packet on the legislative. Can we get that? The little report that you just did about the state legislative update

**Gitzlaff:** Yes, as a matter of fact we are going to get a couple end of session reports, I have one that it is Lockerage Lindell one, so I can get that to you. We also usually get one from C-tib that is more comprehensive to and we usually try to get those out but I should be able to get the out to you that I am reading from pretty soon.

**(Federal)**

**Gitzlaff:** There has been some movement on the surface transportation re authorization bill. As you may recall last time the bill was under review it was extended for a period of 2 or 3 years and then when they did re authorize it, map 21 it was re authorized as a 2 year bill, that is approaching us fast, and now there the starts on what comes after that 2 year bill, all though judging on recent past history the bill is going to continue to be extended until the new bill gets done.

There is a bill out in the senate side that they are continuing to work from, it is consistent with current levels as far as spending, and it also back fills the highway trust fund which is from gas tax base at the federal level. Often times the highway trust fund runs out of money which is scheduled to happen about August of this year, where there is not enough funds generated from there to pay for all of the projects that are going to need to be money brought in from somewhere else, so that may be a crunch, pinch points at the federal level happening around that July – August time frame, depending on how long that lingers that could have impacts on projects that are out there either in the field or nearing completion. At this point there is still a couple of months for them to come to either an extension to fill the highway trust fund or work on the long term bill.

## **Agenda Item #7: Other**

### **a. Next Meeting June 26, 2014**

## **Agenda Item #8: Adjourn**

Motion made by Gallagher to adjourn. Seconded by Slavik. **All in Favor.** Motion Carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.