

**Minutes of the
East Wisconsin Counties Railroad Consortium
Meeting of March 13, 2024**

East Wisconsin Counties Railroad Consortium Meeting was called to order by Chairman Thomas E. Winker on March 13, 2024, at approximately 10:00 a.m., at the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office, Richard Meyer Room, 4311 Jackson Street, Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

The Consortium rose to say the Pledge of Allegiance.

Certification of Public Notice: Kimberly A. Nass certified that the notice of this meeting complies with all applicable requirements of Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law.

Present: Char Holtan, Columbia County; Dave Frohling and Jeffrey Caine, Dodge County; Karen Madigan, Fond du Lac County; Shawn Rolland, Milwaukee County; Tom Winker, Ozaukee County; Jeff Schleif and Robert Hartwig, Washington County; and Donald Nussbaum and Howard Miller, Winnebago County.

Excused: John Zorn, Fond du Lac County; Dennis Mulder and Charlie Wielgosh, Green Lake County; Marty Wolf, Ozaukee County; and, Roger TeStroete and Al Bosman, Sheboygan County.

Others Present: Ben Mohlke and Mike Halsted, WisDOT; Kimberly A. Nass, Dodge County Corporation Counsel; and Kelly Lepple, Dodge County Corporation Counsel Office.

Introduction of Shawn Rolland from Milwaukee County: Chair Winker welcomed Shawn Rolland from Milwaukee County to the EWCRC and asked that everyone introduce themselves.

Public Comment: Chair Winker thanked Winnebago County for hosting the March 13, 2024, EWCRC meeting.

Approval of Draft Minutes of November 8, 2023: Motion by Schleif/Caine to approve the draft minutes of November 8, 2023. Motion carried.

Financial Report: Jeff Caine reported for the period ending February 29, 2024. The balance in the checkbook as of October 31, 2023, was \$1,001.79. Deposits – \$25,000.00, Expenditures – None, and Transfers – \$25,000.00. Total EWCRC money on deposit in the Local Government Investment Pool as of January 31, 2024, is \$1,080,142.83. The interest rate for January 2024 was 5.39%. There was an error on the Financial Report, the Transfer amount to the LGIP reads \$5,201.21, but should read \$25,000. The report will be updated with the correction. There was discussion about why Winnebago County only contributed \$25,000. Don Nussbaum will follow up with its Finance Department to submit the \$5,000 to make its 2023 contribution whole. There was discussion about why Milwaukee County only contributed \$25,000. Shawn Rolland stated that he will follow up with the County Board Chair to allocate \$5,000 to make its 2023 contribution whole. Motion by Caine/Nussbaum to approve the Financial Report as corrected. Motion carried.

Consider, discuss, and take possible action to amend the Bylaws of the EWCRC: There was consideration and discussion about changing the EWCRC Bylaws to allow for one of the two members of the Consortium to be a citizen member. Kim Nass provided a draft revised version that reflected changes to “Article II – Board of Directors, Section 2 – Directors and Term” of the Bylaws of the EWCRC. “In lieu of two (2) members from each of the Boards of Supervisors of the participating counties, one (1) of the two (2) members from each of the counties may be a citizen member with a demonstrated interest in freight rail. No more than one (1) citizen member from each participating county may be appointed to the Board of Directors.” Kim Nass explained the proposed changes. Motion by Madigan/Hartwig to approve the revisions to the Bylaws as presented. Motion carried. Kim Nass stated that she will finalize the Bylaws and email them to all of the member county clerks, chairs and/or executives and consortium members.

Harbor Assistance Program / DeLong Presentation – Mike Halsted: Mike Halsted, Harbors & Waterways Program Specialist for WisDOT, gave a PowerPoint presentation on The DeLong Company. In the fall of 2021, a groundbreaking was held in Milwaukee for the new DeLong agricultural maritime export facility. In July of 2023, DeLong celebrated the grand opening of the \$40 million agricultural maritime export facility, which is located on Jones Island. The facility will be one of the first on the Great Lakes to handle various agricultural commodities via truck, rail, and international vessel, including dried Distillers Grains with Solubles (DDGs). DDGs are an animal feed supplement derived as a byproduct of ethanol high in nutrients. This facility will open Wisconsin’s maritime and agricultural economies to new international markets for this and other products. Future service at the facility may also include the export of Wisconsin-grown soybeans, corn and grain. The facility was made possible by local, state, and federal grants and partnerships.

Mike Halsted also gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Harbor Assistance Program. In 1979, Wisconsin’s Legislature created the Harbor Assistance Program (HAP) to assist harbor communities along the Great Lakes and Mississippi River in maintaining and improving waterborne commerce. HAP continues to be a program with an excellent and proven return on investment for Wisconsin.

Report of WisDOT Railroads and Harbors: Ben Mohlke thanked Mike Halsted for his presentation. Mr. Mohlke handed out a draft of the Memorandum of Understanding between WisDOT, WSOR and the UP regarding the Janesville Bridge project. WisDOT would like the EWCRC to take formal action to approve the MOU at its next meeting of the EWCRC.


Report of WSOR: Ken Lucht was unable to attend the meeting but provided a written report to Kim Nass to report to the EWCRC. WSOR’s Year 2023 Production Totals: In 2023, WSOR installed approximately 20,832 ties, installed six miles of continuous welded rail, rebuilt eleven at-grade crossings, and rebuilt numerous small and major bridges. WSOR is currently constructing a multimillion-dollar locomotive shop. WSOR also installed three new turnouts in Janesville, in addition to the locomotive shop. WSOR also installed 3 signal upgrades that was 50% funded and upgraded a 1,600-foot rail relay of the Granville Pass from 75,000-pound rail to 90,000-pound rail. In 2023, WSOR spent an additional \$2 million in capital expenditures for track and structures.

Year 2024 Plan: In 2024, WSOR plans on installing approximately 42,775 ties, half of these are part of a state rehabilitation project between Waunakee and Devils Lake, renew 15 at-grade public crossings, rebuild numerous small and major bridges, including the Merrimac Bridge, complete the locomotive shop and tracks in Janesville, start the Phase II Reedsburg Rehabilitation project at milepost 149–171, and complete six signal projects to be 50% funded between WisDOT and WSOR.

Date, time, and place of next meeting (May 8, 2024): The next regular EWCRC meeting will be held on May 8, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. Char Holten stated that Columbia County will host the meeting, to be held at the Columbia County Administration Building, located in Portage, Wisconsin.

Motion by Schleif/Caine to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



John Zorn, Secretary

Disclaimer: These are draft minutes. These draft minutes may be approved, amended, or corrected at the next meeting of the East Wisconsin Counties Railroad Consortium.