

**Minutes of the  
East Wisconsin Counties Railroad Consortium  
Meeting of March 12, 2025**

**East Wisconsin Counties Railroad Consortium Meeting** was called to order by Chairman Thomas E. Winker on March 12, 2025, at approximately 10:00 a.m., at the Dodge County Administration Building, Administration Auditorium, 127 E. Oak Street, Juneau, Wisconsin.

The Consortium rose to say the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

**Present:** Char Holtan, Columbia County; Jeffrey Caine and Jim Mielke, Dodge County; Karen Madigan, Fond du Lac County; Dennis Mulder and Charlie Wielgosh, Green Lake County; Shawn Rolland, Milwaukee County; Tom Winker and Marty Wolf, Ozaukee County; Jon Kuhlow and Chuck Born, Sheboygan County; Jeff Schleif and Robert Hartwig, Washington County; and Donald Nussbaum and Howard Miller, Winnebago County.

**Excused:** Darren W. Schroeder, Columbia County; and, John Zorn, Fond du Lac County.

**Others Present:** Jamaar Benton, WATCO; Steven Balsiger, Columbia County; and Kim Nass and Kelly Lepple, Dodge County Corporation Counsel Office.

**Public Comment:** Jamaar Benton from WATCO, introduced himself to the Consortium and stated that he is the sales manager for WATCO and primarily handles the industrial accounts. Jamaar Benton further stated that he will be filling in for Ken Lucht and will be providing the WSOR Report.

**Approval of Draft Minutes of November 13, 2024:** Motion by Mulder/Holton to approve the minutes of November 13, 2024. Motion carried.

**Financial Report:** Jeff Caine reported for the period ending February 28, 2025. The balance in the checkbook as of October 31, 2024, was \$1,002.43. Deposits – \$10,201.48, Expenditures – None, and Transfers – \$10,201.21. Total EWCRC money on deposit in the Local Government Investment Pool as of January 31, 2025, is \$1,443,522.95. The interest rate for January 2025 was 4.39%. Motion by Caine/Schleif to approve the Financial Report as read. Motion carried.

**Consider, discuss, and take possible action on Transportation Reauthorization Group Letter:** Kim Nass stated that this is a support letter that GoRail wants to send to the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, and to the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure about the importance of rail, and requesting that rail be funded appropriately in the upcoming federal budgets. Jamaar Benton stated that government funding is a huge part of where WSOR gets its funds to help maintain its infrastructure to serve its customers. Any support that the Consortium can provide is greatly appreciated. Tom Winker asked for a motion to approve the support letter. Motion by Mulder/Nussbaum to have Tom Winker sign and authorize GoRail to include the East Wisconsin Counties Railroad Consortium on the support letter, which will be delivered to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation in advance of its mark-up of an infrastructure bill. Motion carried.

**Report of WisDOT Railroads and Harbors:** No members from WisDOT attended the meeting. The Consortium considered and discussed numerous road and bridge closures in various EWCRC member counties.

Karen Madigan reported that Fond du Lac County received a Federal Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) Grant to assist in examining an at-grade crossing on County Road N where it intersects with the CN railway tracks. The project would assess various alternatives to improve the safety and mobility of the crossing. Fond du Lac County started the prep work, but later learned that they lost the grant money.

Tom Winker reported that Dean Hughes, Chairman for the Town of Beaver Dam, expressed concerns about obtaining title to a bridge owned by the Union Pacific Railroad. The Town of Beaver Dam received some bill infrastructure money to repair and fix the bridge but could not start repairs due to the Union Pacific Railroad owning it. Tom Winker further reported that he contacted the Railroad Commissioner, Ken Lucht, and some elected officials to help the Town of Beaver Dam in obtaining title to the bridge. Dean Hughes recently contacted Tom Winker and stated that the Town of Beaver Dam has the title of the bridge and can start repairing it.

Tom Winker reported that Darren Schroeder from Columbia County contacted him expressing his concerns regarding the closure of three bridges. Columbia County is working with WisDOT, Canadian National and State Representatives to try and repair and reopen the bridges. Tom Winker expressed his concern about the safety of people in case of an emergency or accident in those areas, which causes medical and safety personnel to take long detours.

Tom Winker asked Kim Nass to draft a letter to Lisa Stern, Chief of Railroads and Harbors at WisDOT, from the EWCRC voicing its disappointment in WisDOT for not being more responsive to road and bridge closures causing ambulances and safety personnel to take long detours to reach the scene of an accident or to reach an emergency call in those areas. Motion by Holton/Caine to direct Kim Nass to draft a letter to Lisa Stern, Chief of Railroads and Harbors at WisDOT, voicing EWCRC's disappointment in WisDOT for not being more responsive to road and bridge closures, causing ambulances and safety personnel to take long detours to reach accidents and emergency calls in those areas. Motion carried.

**Report of WSOR:** Jamaar Benton reported the following: WSOR is working with the City of Oshkosh to petition the Office of Commissioner of Railroads to create a new crossing over Compass Way in the Industrial Park. In 2025, Lycon will be starting construction of a new redi mix concrete plant. In order for Lycon to receive rail services, a new spur and crossing would need to be installed on Compass Way. All utility and grading work has been completed. Construction of the lead track is expected to begin in May or June of 2025 and all of the work is outside of the railroad right-of-way. WSOR is working with the Town of Plymouth regarding the permanent closure of the Short Cut Road rail crossing. The agreement and closure of the Short Cut Road rail crossing will occur sometime in May or June of 2025. At the Waupun United Cooperative, the feed mill and grain elevator are complete, and the soybean crush plant should be online and completed sometime in the fall of 2025. Oshkosh Defense lost its military truck contract and will be shipping its last unit train of military vehicles sometime in June of 2025. AM General of South Bend, Indiana was awarded the five-year contract. The contract will be up for rebid in 2030. Ripon Grain South United Cooperative is working on expanding to ship 50-car blocks. Ripon Grain South is also working on its loadout right now and will be installing a certified weight scale there so they can be more competitive in the market. On the Plymouth Subdivision, WATCO purchased a small portion of rail from CN that is not part of the consortium that is weight restricted. There is a bridge in Brown Deer that needs to be rehabilitated and WSOR applied for a grant to rehabilitate it to 286,000-pound car weight. Janesville Bridge Update: WSOR is currently at a standstill with the Union Pacific (UP) and is requiring WSOR to pay them \$100,000 for the bridge plans and

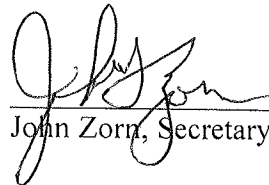
the preliminary review of the engineering plans. WSOR countered and offered \$5,000 but the UP turned WSOR down. The Union Pacific continues to delay the project and demands reimbursement for its own bridges. There is no grant agreement with the FRA. Jamaar Benton stated that he will follow up with Ken Lucht to see if he has reached out to Charter Steel to set up a date and time for the Consortium to come and tour the facility.

Matt Belling gave a brief update on Didion Milling in Cambria. Didon Milling ships meals all over the world to countries in need. Didion has several new customers starting later this month. Didion will soon be shipping a product to make kitty litter by rail.

**Date, time, and place of next meeting (May 14, 2025):** The next regular EWCRC meeting will be held on May 14, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. Dodge County will host the meeting, to be held at the Dodge County Administration Building, located in Juneau, Wisconsin.

Motion by Schleif/Mulder to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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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.