

**Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting of the
West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC)
Thursday, February 13, 2025; 10:00 a.m.
Banbury Place, Room 405H, Eau Claire, WI**

Commissioners Present: Louie Okey, John Frank, Steve Rasmussen, Sharon Kelly, Joe Waichulis, George Rohmeyer

Commissioners Absent: Ryan Sicard

Staff Present: Scott Allen, Erin Whyte, Kim Zimmerman, Susan Badtke, Craig Johnson, Landon Profaizer

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Frank called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Chair Frank requested that the WCWRPC Office Manager Erin Whyte take the roll call, quorum was present for the purposes of doing business.
2. **Review and Approve Minutes of December 12, 2024, Executive Meeting** - A motion to approve the minutes was made by Waichulis and seconded by Rasmussen; motion carried.
3. **Approval of Agreement between the City of Altoona and WCWRPC** – Executive Director Allen explained the agreement, stating that the City of Altoona, on behalf of Hillcrest Estates, has received a FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure & Communities (BRIC) grant from Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) for a community safe room (storm shelter) project. The safe room would be part of a new multi-use facility located in the Hillcrest Estates manufactured housing neighborhood. The City of Altoona desires WCWRPC assistance in administering the grant at a cost not to exceed \$39,718. A cost breakdown was reviewed by the Commission and questions on the budget and FEMA funding status were addressed. A motion to pass the agreement was made by Okey, seconded by Rasmussen; motion carried.
4. **Approval of Agreement between the City of Neillsville and WCWRPC for the Planning of a Tax Increment Financing District #5** – Allen reviewed the agreement terms and conditions, he explained that the City of Neillsville interested in creating Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) District #5, which requires the preparation of a TIF Project Plan, consistent with Wisconsin Statute 66.1105, that is adoptable by the city no later than September 30, 2025. The agreement states that the services provided by WCWRPC will be provided at a cost not to exceed \$11,500. Questions were addressed on project workload and TIF requirements. A motion to pass the agreement was made by Waichulis, seconded by Rohmeyer, motion carried.
5. **Approval of Agreement between the City of Loyal and WCWRPC for a Comprehensive Plan Update** – Allen gave a brief background: the City of Loyal is requesting assistance from WCWRPC with the completion of an update to the City of Loyal Comprehensive Plan (drafted in 2005). The agreement states that the services provided by WCWRPC will be provided at a cost not to exceed \$16,000. Questions were answered on comprehensive plans and timelines. A motion to pass the agreement was made by Rasmussen seconded by Waichulis; motion carried.
6. **Approval of Agreement between the City of Chippewa Falls and WCWRPC for an Outdoor Recreation Plan Update** – Executive Director Allen briefly gave updates on items such as: the City of Eau Claire agreement with RBF revolving loan fund and the ARPA proposal, mention of open house at the RPC office for the next Commission meeting in January, and Economic funds with the new administration and future budget and plans. A motion to pass the agreement was made by Okey, seconded by Rohmeyer; motion carried.

7. **Preview of Annual Levy for 2026 Budget** – Executive Director Allen provided a preview of options for the annual levy amounts to be charged by member counties for the 2026 budget year. The committee discussed current and projected economic conditions and the percentage that would best benefit WCWRPC, including pros and cons of two-, three-, and four-percent increase options. The committee came to the consensus to suggest that the three-percent increase option (“Option 4”) be the preferred option for consideration at the March Commission meeting.
8. **Report on Funding Set-Aside Balance Relating to Sick Leave Inventory for WCWRPC Staff** – Chair Frank and Executive Director Allen reviewed the handout provided, including the balance of the sick pay for retirees, this will be paid out this year. A policy was adopted in 2019 to calculate and set aside funds for sick leave payouts and report the yearly amount to the Executive Committee. Finance Manager Kim Zimmerman was present to answer any questions regarding the sick leave budget.
9. **2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Outreach and Engagement Discussion** – Executive Director Allen introduced Associate Planners Craig Johnson and Landon Profaizer, who are leading the staff work on the CEDS plan update. He mentioned that staff have reviewed the 2020, 2015, and 2010 CEDS Plans with a particular eye towards external stakeholder engagement processes. Staff requested feedback on entities that could help with this process, which will include outreach with a survey. Staff touched on the process of CEDS both past and current. Committee discussion included identifying stakeholder groups, such as tourism groups, towns associations, county administrators, technical colleges, and highway committees. The committee encouraged more rigorous outreach than the 2020 process, and that the outreach should be substantive and not just procedural.
10. **Any Other Business or Updates** – Executive Director Allen briefly mentioned other business updates such as the federal funding pause for USDA funding.
11. **Next Commission Meeting Date:** FRIDAY, March 14, 2025 – Dunn County Government Center, Room 54 Lower Level, Menomonie, WI
12. **Next Tentative Executive Committee Meeting Date:** Thursday, April 10, 2025 - Location TBD
13. **Motion to Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn was made by Waichulis, seconded by Okey. The meeting was adjourned at 11:21 a.m.

Prepared by Erin Whyte