

# PECATONICA RAIL TRANSIT COMMISSION

719 Pioneer Tower • 1 University Plaza • Platteville, Wisconsin 53818  
MEMBER COUNTIES: GREEN • IOWA • LAFAYETTE • ROCK

DRAFT MINUTES

## Pecatonica Rail Transit Commission

1:00pm • Friday, 22 January 2010 • Green Co. Courthouse, Cnty Board Mtg Rm, 1016 16<sup>th</sup> Ave • Monroe, WI

1. Harvey Kubly, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.
2. Commissioners present for all or part of the meeting:

	Commissioner	Position	Present		Commissioner	Position	Present
Green	Harvey Kubly	Chair	X	Iowa	Charles Anderson	Secretary	
	Oscar Olson	Treasurer	X		Jerry Dorscheid		X
	Ron Wolter		X		Philip Mrozinski		X
Lafayette	John Bartles		X	Rock	Ben Coopman	Alternate	
	Jed Gant	1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Chair	X		Katie Kuznacic		X
	Gerald Heimann	Alternate			Alan Sweeney	2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair	X
	Ted Wiegel		X		Terry Thomas		X

**Others present for all or part of the meeting:** Elieen Brownlee (PRTC Legal Council), Frank Huntington, Roger Larson & Sheri Walz (WisDOT), Ken Lucht, Bill Gardner & Steven Beske (WSOR), Leon Wolfe (Lafayette County), David Breunig (City of Darlington), Jerry Guth (Green County Doard), Deborah Krahenbuhl (TCTC), Amy Seeboth (PRTC Administrator).

3. **Certification of Public Notice** – Seeboth, PRTC Administrator
4. **Motion accepting the Agenda, prepared by Seeboth - Gant / Bartles** - passed unanimously.
5. **Motion approving the draft July Minutes** - Mrozinski / Bartles - passed unanimously.
6. **Public Comment** - Jerry Guth asked when the Economic Feasibility Study would be released. Huntington said that it has been completed as of yesterday. Seeboth said she had print copies with her, and would place the study online (<http://www.swwrpc.org/transportation/PRTC.php>)
7. **Correspondence & Communications** – Seeboth reported on a number of correspondences. The Commission received notification of a joint meeting in Sauk County to review the results of the Merrimac Bridge Study; The Commission has been in communication with Jerry Guth regarding the process by which the trail may be converted to rail again; the East WI Counties and Railroad Consortium posted a meeting notice, The Village of Gratiot copied the Commission on a letter to WDOT asking for assurances relating to the potential trail conversion, and Oscar Olson has been reappointed to the Commission by Green County.

### REPORTS & COMMISSION BUSINESS

8. **PRTC Financial Report** – Oscar Olson, PRTC Treasurer
  - **Motion approving Treasurer’s Report-** Weigel / Bartles - passed unanimously
  - **Motion approving payment of bills-** Sweeney / Gant -mpassed unanimously

2010 PRTC Budget. O. Olson asked if the Johnson Block fee is negotiable (It went up \$100 this year, Kubly has negotiated down to \$1000 for the past five years and recommends it is left on budget in this way. If Olson or Kubly negotiates it down, that is good.

  - **Motion adopting 2010 PRTC Budget** – Gant / Mrozinski – passed unanimously

PRTC 2010 Budget	
<b>Projected Expenses</b>	
SWWRPC – Staff Services	\$6,500.00
Kraemer & Brownlee – Legal Services	\$1,500.00
Johnson Block – 2009 Audit	\$1,100.00

Miscellaneous	\$200.00
PRTC Contribution to TCTC for Fencing	\$5,000.00
<b>Total Projected Expenses:</b>	<b>\$14,300.00</b>

<b>Projected Revenue</b>	
Operating Agreement – WSOR Lease (annual total)	\$12,000
Darlington- Buston Lease (Lane Number)	\$250.00
Darlington – Republican Journal	\$50.00
Browntown – Land Lease	\$100.00
Brewery Creek, Mineral Point	NA (was paid in advance)
Wuttke Lease (formerly Super Soy)	NA (was paid in advance)
Estimated Misc. Permits	Amount TBD
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,400.00</b>

**9. Wisconsin & Southern Railroad’s Report on Operations – Ken Lucht, WSOR**

*Monthly maintenance activities* – WSOR has finished brush cutting the entire Monroe subdivision and they now have a large sky trim machine in Juda, heading towards Monroe. They will soon be brush cutting the Reedsburg subdivision, and will next do the Plymouth sub on northern division. They are spending a lot of time dealing with snow and ice and repairing equipment right now. In Whitewater, they recently finished a substantial bridge project, funded partially by the State and WSOR. They recently had to do emergency repairs on a bridge over the Wisconsin River in Spring Green. That is now completed. They also just finished emergency repair on Watertown sub near Milwaukee Street in Madison.

*Update on Operations and Business Development:* WSOR continues to bring on some new customers. A number of customers have been utilizing transload services, particularly in Milwaukee. In Janesville they are bringing materials to North American Pipe. Seneca foods in Baraboo added a new production line recently, and WSOR is moving a lot of coiled steel into that facility. WSOR is working with a new grain elevator in Zenda (MoreAgra) and WSOR is working right now with UW-Madison who is working on converting their coal plant into a biomass facility, which will rely heavily on railroad for shipping the biomass in.

*Update on 2009 Capital Projects* – WSOR was awarded approximately \$5million in funds through WDOT from the 2009 Freight Rail Preservation Program. With this funding, they will install continuous welded rail from Milton to Edgerton, build switches and crossings between Milwaukee and Slinger, build corridor between Plymouth and Sheboygan falls, and install ties on the Monroe subdivision.

*2010 projects* – The WDOT application deadline is Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> for these projects. WSOR plans to apply for funds for Phase 2 welded rail project on the Madison sub.; more crossings, switches and possibly welded rail from Milwaukee to Slinger; upgrades to 3 bridges on their system; realignment of some corridor in Waukesha (about 2 miles); a phase 1 tie project between Plymouth and Saukville; and the extension project in Green County heading 2.5 miles west of Monroe.

*Other-* Wisconsin has now acquired property in Janesville that connects a number of subs. Now the State has a continuous public rail in southern Wisconsin. On Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>, in the afternoon, Bill Gardner is hosting a state of the Railroad Address. WSOR plans to show a 24 minute dvd on the evolution of the Wisconsin public railroad. Everyone is welcome to attend and should be receiving invites in the mail in the next week or so. Lucht has been compiling economic impact of railroad on each county- and will provide more information as it is compiled. WSOR just completed their January newsletter, if you didn’t get one but would like it, please let Lucht know.

*Consideration / Action on letter of support to congressional delegation regarding WSOR’s Economic Stimulus Proposal-* WSOR asked the Commission to author a letter for support for a project that WSOR is working on. About 1.5 years ago, WSOR submitted a list of shovel-ready projects to the state for stimulus consideration. WDOt did not consider rail projects at that time. WSOR is trying to reignite this issue for consideration by the state, if funds are or become available. Lucht passed around a handout outlining three major projects that WSOR feels are shovel-ready. 1- Whitewater to Madison, 2 – Slinger to north Milwaukee, 3- Brodhead to Avalon. WSOR has already received quite a bit of support for this project and will be presenting it to the Eastern Consortium next week. Gardner added

that he and Lucht visited Ray LaHood's office staff and other politicians in DC in December. They had a number of follow-up requests for information after that meeting. Kuznacic suggested that this letter should additionally be sent to Gov. Doyle's Washington Staff.

- **Motion to mail a letter to Wisconsin representatives showing support for stimulus funding of WSOR railroad shovel-ready projects, should funding be, or be made, available** - *Wiegel / Kuznacic- passed unanimously*
- 10. PRTC Administrator's Report**– Amy Seebth, SWWRPC Trans. Planning Program Manager / PRTC Admin., had no updates other than what is already in the agenda. She reviewed alternate dates for the April Commission meeting. The Commission decided to move the April meeting to May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010, at the same time and location, in order to better accommodate any possible Commission changes due to April elections.
- 11. WisDOT** – Frank Huntington, WisDOT, said again that a draft of the Feasibility study is done at this time and it provides a general overview of what is out here right now as far as shippers, etc., he said that there are not a lot of specifics in the report, but there is a lot of useful background information including a benefit cost analysis. Seebth provided each Commissioner with a copy of the study. The Commissioners requested that WDOT has one of the people who worked on the project come and present on it. Huntington continued, that railroad grant and loan applications are due to WDOT Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> and WSOR has a number of applications coming in. Monroe extension is one of them. WDOT expects to have a number of other projects as well. Huntington expects to know more about the other projects at next meeting. He also reported that the Janesville acquisition is now completed. WDOT has been trying to do this for close to 30 years. Finally, Huntington introduced WDOT's new staff member – Sheri Walz. She just started early this week and is Vicky Schafer's new replacement.
- 12. Review and approval of 2008 PRTC Audit with Johnson Block**
- **Motion to approve the 2008 PRTC Audit with Johnson Block, as presented** - *Sweeney / Mrozinski – passed unanimously*
- 13. Consideration of 2009 Audit Engagement Letter with Johnson Block**
- **Motion to approve the 2009 Audit Engagement Letter with Johnson Block at the \$1,100 amount** - *Mrozinski / Gant – passed unanimously*
- 14. Consideration of 2010 SWWRPC Staff Services Agreement**
- **Motion to approve 2010 SWWRPC Staff Services Agreement for an amount not to exceed \$6,500** – *Sweeney / Kuznacic – passed unanimously*
- 15. PRTC County Contributions – Increased Request** (from \$25,000 to \$26,520)-  
Seebth explained that this agenda item came up in past WRRTC and PRTC discussions- every county in an RTC and that had active railroad pays an annual contribution to the RTC. These funds help provide match funds for railroad improvements along the RTC lines. In PRTC, Lafayette County has no active railroad and so they pay no RTC contribution. Iowa and Rock Counties are members of WRRTC and so they make their Contribution to WRRTC. Green County is only in PRTC. WRRTC has raised their contributions to \$26,520 over the years, PRTC, however, has not raised their contribution. This item seeks to bring PRTC levels up to WRRTC contribution levels, and therefore Green County would pay the same contribution as do the other PRTC counties with active rail. Kubly expressed concerned that Green County Board (& Finance) are the groups that should approve this, not PRTC. Kubly said that he will see that this gets going.
- 16. Review of OCR Rules** – Seebth explained that The Office of the Commission on Railroads is conducting a regular update of their rules and have asked the RTC's to provide any opinions on this matter. Seebth provided each of the Commissioners with a copy of the current OCR Rules and the project Scope Statement. The OCR is holding two public meetings on this topic- one is Wed. January 20<sup>th</sup> @ 10am, another is Wed. January 27<sup>th</sup> @ 1pm. Seebth said that she would attend the meeting on behalf of the Commission if anyone had comments or concerns on the topic. No Commissioner had any comments at the time of the meeting.

Kubly reminded Seebth to handout an information sheet that Lucht provided the Commission. The sheet was a court testimony of the challenges and successes of rail banking. Huntington added that there are challenges in this, and the biggest problem in most cases is financing.

**17. 2:12 Adjournment** – *Kuznacic / Thomas - passed unanimously*