

**NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
FULL COMMISSION  
Meeting Minutes**

**January 27, 2021**

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**ROLL CALL**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

REINHARDT BALCERZAK  
LORETTA BAUGHAN  
WILLIAM CHANEY  
ANGELA CLOSE  
TED CUSHING  
PAUL GILK  
ROCKY GILNER  
CINDY GRETZINGER  
DANIEL GUILD  
ROBERT HANSON  
CHRIS HOLMAN  
DAVE LaFONTAINE  
HARLAND LEE  
DOUGLAS MACHON  
CRAIG McEWEN  
PAUL MILLAN  
JERRY NELSON  
JERRY NILES  
RONALD NYE  
RICK PEASE  
THOMAS RUDOLPH  
JAY VERHULST  
EDMUND WAFLE  
CATHERINE WINEMAN  
KENNETH WINTERS

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:**

**STAFF PRESENT:**

CARRIE EDMONDSON  
ANDY FAUST  
FRED HEIDER  
DARRYL LANDEAU  
DENNIS LAWRENCE  
ERIC SONNLEITNER  
PAM WINKELS

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

WILLIAM CLENDENNING, Board  
Member, Wood County  
  
JASON GRUENEBERG, Director-  
Planning & Zoning, Wood County  
  
GREGG WAVRUNEK, Regional  
Representative, US Senator Tammy  
Baldwin  
  
JAMES YACH, DNR-Secretary's  
Director-Northern Wisconsin

1.) CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS:

MR. MILLAN called the meeting to order at 11:04 AM and welcomed everyone. Guests in attendance were William Clendenning (Wood County), Jason Grueneberg (Zoning & Planning-Wood County), Gregg Wavrunek, and James Yach. The following NCWRPC staff members were also in attendance: Carrie Edmondson, Andy Faust, Fred Heider, Darryl Landeau, and Eric Sonnleitner.

2.) PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

3.) APPROVAL, ADDITIONS, OR CORRECTIONS TO THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 28, 2020 MEETING:

MR. MILLAN asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes as mailed. There being none, MR. VERHULST made a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes, and MR. RUDOLPH seconded this motion. Motion carried.

4.) BUSINESS & DISCUSSION:

4.1 Chairperson's Welcome

MR. MILLAN welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed his appreciation to attendees for participating and being patient during virtual meetings.

4.2 Executive Committee's Report

MS. BAUGHAN provided the Executive Committee's Report. The committee reviewed several items. The Executive Director provided an update on Commissioners terms, as well as a financial report along with year-end financial information. The committee also approved a budget amendment as the result of Portage County's membership. A variety of grants and new agreements were discussed, as was the need for an additional staff person. The committee authorized filling the vacant planner position. Staff is working on a new website and hopes to have it up and running by summer. Finally, the committee discussed the timeline for the update of the NCWRPC Strategic Plan. The process is being pushed back until we are able to safely meet in person.

#### 4.3 State & Federal Updates

GREGG WAVRUNEK, Regional Representative, US Senator Tammy Baldwin, provided several updates, some of which included: cabinet confirmations are in process as well as the impeachment trial, federal funding for state distribution of COVID-19 vaccine, Paycheck Protection Program, Loggers Relief Act, and broadband initiatives.

JAMES YACH, DNR, Secretary's Director-Northern Wisconsin, stated that most DNR employees are working remotely; as a result, some service centers are closed. He provided many updates: due to COVID-19, there was an increase in fishing and hunting licenses and park usage in 2020 (i.e. deer harvest was up by 15.8% in the state); drinking water sampling is being conducted in various locations to check manganese levels as well as PFOS (Perfluoro octane Sulfonate) contaminant levels; climate change information can be found on the DNR website; and a wolf season is expected to occur in late 2021.

#### 4.4 Adoption of the 2021 NCWRPC Work Program

MR. LAWRENCE reviewed the five basic program areas of Economic Development, Geographic Information Systems, Intergovernmental Cooperation, Land Use, and Transportation. Overall, there are approximately 70 projects included in the work program for 2021 at this time.

He highlighted an economic development project in Wisconsin Rapids, following the closing of the Verso paper mill. NCWRPC is finalizing two grant applications – one from EDA and one from WEDC for recovery funds for the city. Another program area highlighted was Land Use. There are over a dozen comprehensive plans in process throughout the region. He then mentioned Transportation. A variety of local road rating projects are anticipated, during the last cycle we assisted over 35 communities. Finally, he stated that more projects will be added over the year.

MR. VERHULST made a motion to adopt the Initial Work Plan, and MR. CUSHING seconded this motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

#### 4.5 Resolution 2021-1: Adoption of 2021 CEDS

MR. LAWRENCE reported that the CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) is updated every 5 years. There are two basic levels of activity: regional and local assistance. The Strategy is comprised of Demographics & Workforce, Regional Economy, Transportation & Utilities, Regional Integration & SWOT Review, Economic Development Resources, and Regional Strategy – which is the “heart” of the document as this section includes major goals and objectives. Also,

there is a list of Critical Priority Projects at the end of the document specific to each county in our Region as well as Regional projects. MS. CLOSE, Langlade County, mentioned natural gas utilities and pipeline infrastructure that have reached capacity, and MR. LAWRENCE stated that other modifications and tweaks will be made to the document before it is finalized.

MR. NYE made the motion to approve Resolution 2021-1: Adoption of 2021 CEDS with the addition of the items discussed related to the pipeline, and MR. RUDOLPH seconded this motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

#### 4.6 Presentation – Regional Safe Routes to School Program Summary

MS. EDMONDSON, planner at NCWRPC, provided an update of the Regional Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program. The NCWRPC has worked with 16 districts in our Region, but there are 41 total districts; therefore, there is plenty of potential. The SRTS process begins with establishing a task force; then data collection from students, teachers and parents; holding 3 task force meetings; creating a SRTS plan for each district and creating an Action Plan for each school; and, lastly, assisting with implementation. SRTS planning for the Wausau School District begins in July of this year, and the next TAP grant application deadline is January 2022. More information can be found on the NCWRPC website or contact either Carrie Edmondson or Fred Heider.

#### 4.7 Presentation – Regional Recovery Planning Overview & Timeline

MR. SONNLEITNER, planner at NCWRPC, presented an overview and timeline on Regional Recovery Planning. The COVID-19 pandemic affected our Region, state, nation, and world. Eric provided a timeline and statistics from when the pandemic first started until the present time. In 2020, the NCWRPC was awarded a CARES grant from the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) to assist the Region with economic recovery. The Scope of Work consists of 5 main areas: Regional Recovery Plan, Update of CEDS, Regional Health Pandemic and Future Response Report, Land Use and Business & Industrial Park Inventory, and Technical Assistance and Planning Support. Eric Sonnleitner and Carrie Edmondson have been designated as recovery coordinators.

#### 4.8 Presentation - NCWRPC 2020 Work Program Overview & 2021 Preview

MR. LAWRENCE stated that each year we take time to provide an overview of current and future work program projects. NCWRPC provides assistance in five main work areas: Economic Development, Geographic Information Systems, Intergovernmental Coordination, Land Use, and Transportation.

MR. LAWRENCE then highlighted some of the Economic Development projects completed over the last year. He stated that the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was updated, and that document is used as a framework for updating county and local comprehensive plan Economic Development Chapters. Next, he explained how NCWRPC uses EMSI (Economic Modeling Specialist International) software to create data reports for various projects. In addition, NCWRPC continues to manage revolving loan funds. A separate governing body (North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation) oversees the revolving loan funds, which is staffed by NCWRPC. A major effort over the past year had been assistance with EDA grant applications.

MR. FAUST reviewed Geographic Information Systems and Intergovernmental Cooperation. GIS entails project mapping and graphics, data creation and maintenance, special GIS projects and IT support. A few special GIS projects that MR. FAUST highlighted were Local Updates of Census Data, redistricting in 2021, providing online records for some counties in our Region, and work related to the 911 Sub-Committee and State Broadband Task Force. Intergovernmental cooperation includes such programs as NEWCOM (Northeast Wisconsin Public Safety Communications), WROC (Wisconsin Regional Orthophotography Consortium), NCWSC (North Central Wisconsin Stormwater Coalition), and Northwoods Rail Transit Commission. Communication tools such as newsletters and the NCWRPC website are also part of IGOV.

MR. HEIDER presented information regarding Land Use, which includes a variety of planning efforts, such as comprehensive plans, all hazard mitigation plans, land and water resource management plans, and outdoor recreation plans. MR. LANDEAU then reviewed Transportation including such projects as the Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, Safe Routes to School (SRTS) projects, County Transit Planning, Freight Rail, Pavement Rating Assistance, and other transportation projects, plans and assessments.

#### 4.9 Announcements

MR. LAWRENCE stated that the next meeting is scheduled for April 28, 2021. That meeting will be held virtually, with the hope that July we can meet in person.

MR. HOLMAN, new Portage County Commissioner-County Appointee, introduced himself and expressed interest in collaborating with other Commissioners and the NCWRPC.

MR. MILLAN then thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

5.) ADJOURNMENT:

MS. CLOSE made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:20 PM, and MR. RUDOLPH seconded this motion. All were in favor.

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The meeting was advertised and open to the public. The meeting was held via videoconference/Google Meet.

Minutes Approved on April 28, 2021:

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