

**NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
April 22, 2026**

MEMBERS PRESENT

LORETTA BAUGHAN
ROCKY GILNER
DAVE LAFONTAINE
PAUL MILLAN
RON NYE

STAFF PRESENT

SAM WESSEL

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

BETTY MANSON
TED CUSHING

OTHERS PRESENT

1. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 A.M. by Chair Millan.

2. Approval, Additions, or Corrections to the Minutes of the January 28, 2026 Meeting

On a motion by MR. LAFONTAINE, second by MR. GILNER, the minutes were approved with no changes; motion passed.

3.1 Executive Director's Report

Senior Planner/Assistant Director Sam Wessel shared that Executive Director Dennis Lawrence was currently on leave, but everything was running as usual. NCWRPC is currently busy starting new projects and adding new projects for 2026 and beyond. There will be more details on the organization's 2025 financial position when Leah Lasecki from CLA presents the audit at the Full Commission meeting later today.

3.2 Current Financial Report

The Executive Committee reviewed the financial report. LaFontaine asked if we were getting the best return possible on investment accounts and if it was risky to have them above the \$250,000 FDIC deposit insurance limits. Millan remarked on NCWRPC's current position.

On a motion by MR. LAFONTAINE, second by MS. BAUGHAN, the Financial Report was placed on file; motion passed.

3.3 Programs, Grants, and Agreements

Wessel reviewed the handout containing the status of the latest programs, grants, and projects NCWRPC is working on. Nye, LaFontaine, and Millan discussed the proposed passenger and freight rail line from Medford to Spencer just outside the region and how a lack of users and high renovation/rail replacement costs made it unfeasible. This led to the question of what continuation of supporting the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission should look like when it seems few people are interested in using rail. Millan mentioned that Forest County also has few people interested in rail despite a desire by some to have rail access, but there might be more interest in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and its neighboring counties than in the North Central Region.

There was also mention among committee members of how Marshfield successfully brought rail to its industrial park, while Mosinee is seeing a portion of the paper mill close despite having direct rail access, so results seem to vary regarding rail availability and economic development.

3.4 Review 2025 Audit

Wessel stated overall the 2025 Audit was very similar to other recent audits. He reviewed pages the Balance Sheet and Income Statement. The Balance Sheet showed a net positive position very similar to the previous year, with an unrestricted amount of \$2,042,635. The Income Statement was also very similar to the prior year. Overall, the NCWRPC remains in a strong position.

3.5 Fund Balance Designation of 2026

Wessel distributed the list of designated funds and explained that they are earmarked for various uses. These are used to restrict the unrestricted funds in the audit. Basically, it is a savings account for future capital and other expenditures.

As an example, every three to five years we replace our office vehicles. So we save a certain amount each year to have the funds to make the purchase. Baughan asked if \$35,000 was enough for a new car these days. Wessel mentioned that we purchase our vehicles under the state contract which provides substantial savings. LaFontaine asked about the \$500,000 in reserve and if it was generating as much income as it could be and if it was split up appropriately to be covered by deposit insurance. Wessel mentioned that Lawrence could break down the rationale behind how our investment accounts are allocated at the next executive committee meeting. LaFontaine mentioned that credit unions are often 1 percent higher than banks for CDs, money markets, etc.

On a motion by MR. LAFONTAINE, second by MR. GILNER, the Fund Balance Designation was approved; motion passed.

3.6 Title II of the ADA – Website Standards Discussion

Wessel described the new accessibility requirements for website contents, various approaches that can be used, and deadlines.

Baughan elaborated on the various approaches to fulfilling these requirements as she has considerable experience designing websites in a way that vision or other impaired readers can access the material. She agreed that this is an important requirement to meet and gave some ideas on how websites can be accessible on a variety of devices by designing them to be “responsive” instead of “static” (floating menus, hamburger menus, drop-down menus, pages that adjust to screen size, etc.). This topic will be brought back in the future.

3.7 Roundtable Discussion

Baughan is interested in having a guest speaker present about Data Centers and what can be done about non-disclosures that keep companies hidden from the public as they seek approvals.

LaFontaine would like to see a follow-up presentation on Broadband due to the amount of money that was put into it, and how much infrastructure seems to be installed with no one using it. Where did the money go, and what are the results of the expansion? He would also like to have an in-depth look at NCWRPC's support for Economic Development beyond just its planning documents. With current economic trends, war, oil prices, a possible recession, inflation, the future of farming/food, and a possible loss of countries willing to trade with the United States, how can we support our local economy considering all these issues?

Nye mentioned that there are new irrigation techniques in the southern great plains that save water and money, which may be of interest to our region.

Millan mentioned that the closure of a portion of the Mosinee paper mill would impact forest production and is curious about information on that topic.

Some on the committee thought it be useful to have a presentation on the future of mail and shipping as mail sorting centers consolidate and are often understaffed. Additionally, there are reduced hours (especially overnight) and higher costs for mail and shipping.

3.8 Announcements

The next executive committee meeting will be July 22, 2026, at 9:30 a.m.

4. Adjournment

Millan moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

The meeting was advertised and open to the public.
Minutes Approved on July 22, 2026.
