

Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission
Commission Meeting – Friday May 8, 2026 at 10:00 am APPROVED

1. 10:00 AM **Call to Order – Marty Krueger, Chair 10:02**

2. Roll Call **Establishment of Quorum**

Crawford	Carl Orr, <i>1st Vice Chair</i>	X	Jefferson	Matthew Tracy	<i>Absent</i>
	Mark Gilberts	X		John Kannard, <i>Vice Secretary</i>	X
	Tom Cornford	<i>Excused</i>		Jeff Smith	X
				Mark Groose, <i>Alternate</i>	<i>Alternate</i>
Dane	Kevin Potter	X	Rock	Dave Homan, <i>2nd Vice Treasurer</i>	<i>Absent</i>
	Jeff Huttenburg, <i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Excused</i>		Tom Brien	X
	Jim Bolitho	X			
Grant	David Wiederholt	<i>Excused</i>	Sauk	Brian Peper	X
	Mike Lieurance	X		Gaile Burchill	X
	Robert Keeney	X		Marty Krueger, <i>Chair</i>	X
	Gary Kjos, <i>Alternate</i>	X		Tim McCumber, <i>Alternate</i>	X
Green	Harvey Kubly, <i>1st Vice Treasurer</i>	X	Walworth	Al Stanek	<i>Absent</i>
	Larry Kranig	<i>Absent</i>		Richard Kuhnke, <i>2nd Vice Secretary</i>	<i>Excused</i>
	Mark Gundlach	X		Allan Polyock	X
Iowa	Charles Anderson, <i>Secretary</i>	X	Waukesha	Rick Beutler, <i>3rd Vice Treasurer</i>	<i>Excused</i>
	John Meyers	X		Karl Nilson	<i>Excused</i>
	Craig Hardy	<i>Alternate</i>		Wayne Euclide	<i>Excused</i>
	Michael Gates	X			

The commission met quorum.

Others present for all or some of the meeting:

• Lisa Stern, WisDOT • Sarah Simonson, WisDOT • Michelle Brokaw, WisDOT • Ken Lucht, WSOR • Chris Jacobson, WSOR • Julia Potter, Boardman Clark • Troy Maggied, WRRTC Administrator • Natalie Strait, PRTC Administrator	• Alan Anderson, Pink Lady • Steve Krallis, Department of Corrections • Leigh Streit, BWBR • Arun Rao, Amtrak • Robert Hoffmann, DNR • Carrie Cimbalnik, WE Energies (remote) • Courtney Cooper, BWBR (remote) • Nick Skelton, ComEd (remote) • Dave Sumwalt, Department of Corrections (remote)
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3. Action Item. **Certification of Meeting's Public Notice**

Motion to approve meeting's public notice – Orr/Lieurance. Passed unanimously

4. Action Item. **Approval of Agenda** – Prepared by Admin.

Motion to approve agenda as presented – Peper/Gates. Passed unanimously

5. Action Item. **Approval of draft April 10, 2026 Meeting Minutes**

Burchill noted a typo in the minutes and recommended correction.

Motion to approve the minutes with the noted correction – Kannard/Smith. Passed unanimously

6. Action Item. **Commission officer appointments**

- **Election of Chair:** Marty Krueger was nominated as chair – Anderson/Orr. Motion to close nominations – Burchill/Gates. Motion passed.
- Election of all other officers: Motion to nominate the following officers – Peper/Gundlach. Motion to close nominations – Peper/Gates. Motion passed.
 - Orr – 1st Vice Chair
 - Keeney – 2nd Vice Chair
 - Huttenburg – Treasurer
 - Kubly – 1st Vice Treasurer
 - Anderson – Secretary
 - Kannard – 1st Vice Secretary
 - Homan – 2nd Vice Treasurer

- Kuhnke – 2nd Vice Secretary
- Beutler – 3rd Vice Secretary
- **Litigation committee appointments:** No appointments. This committee will be appointed based on need.

7. Updates. **Public Comment** – Time for public comment may be limited by the Chair.
None.

8. Updates. **Announcements by Commissioners**
Reimann expressed her gratitude for being able to serve and thanked the Commission.

REPORTS & COMMISSION BUSINESS

9. **Discussion and possible action on a temporary authorization permit to Commonwealth Edison for pole replacement at the intersection of the railroad corridor and North Solon Road in Solon Mills, McHenry County, Illinois**
ComEd presented their plan of work and noted it is a standard replacement similar to other past operations on the line. The new pole will be placed further from the tracks than the existing pole. WSOR supports approval of this permit.

Motion to approve the temporary authorization permit as presented. Burchill/Gilberts. Motion passed unanimously.

10. **Discussion and possible action on a utility permit to WE Energies for the removal of poles and overhead power lines between Dunbar and North West Avenues in the City of Waukesha**
WE Energies presented the permit request. DOT clarified that this is an area owned by WRRTC. WSOR supports approval of this permit.

Motion to approve the utility permit as presented. Kannard/Lieurance. Meyers abstained. Motion passed unanimously.

11. **Discussion and possible action on a utility permit to WE Energies for the replacement of a pole and overhead power lines along Maple Avenue in the City of Waukesha**
WE Energies presented the permit request. DOT clarified that this is also an area owned by WRRTC. The pole is located outside of the right of way but connections need made to the new pole and so the permit is for the line work only. WSOR supports approval of this permit.

Motion to approve the utility permit as presented. Kannard/Anderson. Meyers abstained. Motion passed unanimously.

12. **Discussion and possible action on a utility permit to the Department of Corrections for installation of underground fiber optic cable their new facility in the City of Fitchburg, north of County M and west of US Highway 14**
BWBR architects presented the permit application on behalf of the Department of Corrections. Several clarifications were provided, including the work being directionally board and the 15-foot clearance between the rail bed and the fiber. WSOR requested approval conditioned upon review by WSOR's engineers, which should be complete in 2 weeks.

Motion to approve the utility permit conditional to WSOR's review and approval. Orr/Kanard. Motion passed unanimously.

13. **WRRTC Financial Report**
The monthly financial statements for March 2026 were presented, including accounts payable and receivable. March LGIP interest is 3.69%. All 2026 county contributions have been received and deposited to LGIP. There was one bill for payment – Balance due for UW Extension Waukesha County's work on the freight rail economic impact study for Q1 for \$21,097.

Motion to approve the March 2026 Treasurer's Report and invoice for payment as presented. Anderson/Burchill. Motion passed unanimously.

14. **Wisconsin & Southern Railroad's Report on Operations**

- **Update:** WSOR is working with three customers seeking new rail-served sites in Reedsburg. Conversations are going well. They are also working to develop a new rail spur in Milton. Both Reedsburg and Milton are working with WSOR on these projects. WSOR is working with two other new prospects outside of the WRRTC-owned corridor. The Merrimac bridge ribbon cutting went well. Krueger thanked those who prepared the event and stated there was good turnout and visibility for the project. Lucht noted that the private-crossing dispute with Middleton was settled by courts who determined this is not a public crossing, WSOR is not supportive of a new private crossing and will be fencing off any gaps at this crossing.
- **2025 production summary:** The 2025 work plan invested \$14 million into the system, equal to 20 cents of every dollar earned. Once the state invests in the system, WSOR invests in maintenance. Jacobson reported that the cost of new tie is \$76 plus installation, and the life of a tie is 30 years. These investments also improve safety; two past derailments on the Fox Lake Subdivision in Illinois were due to internal defects in the 130-pound rail. WSOR has 40 maintenance employees.
- **2026 track maintenance plan:** This year's maintenance budget is projected to be equal or greater than 2025 due to a substantial number of ties being installed on the Milwaukee subdivision. They will be improving 1 at-grade crossings and performing bridge rehabilitation on the Prairie subdivision.

- **10-year rail and tie improvement plan:** Renovations on the Prairie subdivision will not require county funding. The biggest priority are the five bridges in Janesville. New rail will be installed on the Monroe subdivision.

15. WisDOT Report

Preliminary design for the Janesville bridges are approved. DOT has an open position for a supervisor / manager in the Rail and Harbor section. They are working with the Cities of Sun Prairie and Madison on a grant application to make safety improvements on the Watertown subdivision and they may bring a draft letter of support for the project to the next meeting.

16. Discussion and possible action on the 2027 administration contract with SSWRPC

The 2027 contract reflects the same contract value as 2026.

Motion to approve the contract as presented. Orr/Gates. Motion passed.

17. Discussion and possible action on Attachment 18 to the WRTC and WSOR operating agreement

This attachment to the operating agreement defines the rent paid by WSOR for use of the rail each year. This is typically set to be sufficient to cover operating costs and is developed during budget timeline. There are no anticipated changes this year and the Attachment will be brought to the next meeting with the operating costs included. Gates stated that Iowa County is interested in the rate increasing in order to reduce the financial commitment of counties.

18. Discussion and possible action to accept the plans for the design of the Cap City Trail inclusive of additional safety fencing, and to waive the Commission's first right of refusal on the sale of additional right of way required for the Cap City Trail

This project has been in developed for several years and was presented at the April meeting. The trail will run from Vondren Road on the south side of Madison and connect to the Glacial Drumlin trail. It requires a sale of approximately 25' of corridor and requires the city to fence along the trail between the trail and rail corridor. WisDOT recommends moving forward. Commission needs to approve this and has first right of refusal. Lucht stated that the railroad has surplus ROW in this area and this will remove a future public crossing. WSOR supports this project.

Motion to approve the project and plans as designed with safety fencing, and to waive the Commission's first right of refusal on the sale of the additional right of way and approve the sale of the right of way. Gates/Kannard. Motion passed.

19. Presentation by Amtrak on the Service Development Plan for the proposed Hiawatha West Passenger Rail Service

Rao shared the traffic and ridership of the Empire Builder and Borealis lines. Trains are full and sold out. This project is the proposed Hiawatha West line extending the line to Chicago via Milwaukee. The proposal uses track between Watertown and Madison. The project evaluated rail needs along the line, such as improvements to continuous welded rail, tie replacement, upgrades to grade crossings, etc. The plan is for 2 round trips per day from Madison to Chicago. Ridership is expected to increase to 260 thousand annual passenger trips. Rao reported on the economic impacts from the new passenger line are in addition to the impacts from freight rail on the line. The capital investment is between \$215-275 million.

There are 33 crossings in Madison and Waterloo which are close together and redundant. WSOR and Amtrak are concerned about this and want to see consolidations of these crossings. This will be included in the service development plan.

20. Adjournment.

Motion to Adjourn at 11:48 am. Gilberts/Kubly. Passed unanimously.