

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-SIXTH MEETING

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

DATE: February 27, 2009
TIME: 8:00 a.m.
PLACE: Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Commissioner’s Conference Room
W239 N1812 Rockwood Drive
Waukesha, WI
(Teleconference Meeting)

Board Members

Karl Ostby, Chairman Kenosha County Representative
Len Brandrup City of Kenosha Representative
David Eberle Racine County Representative
Joseph “Jody” Karls City of Racine Representative
Sharon Robinson City of Milwaukee Representative
Julia Taylor Governor’s Representative from City of Milwaukee
George A. Torres Milwaukee County Representative

Staff Members

Kenneth R. Yunker Executive Director, SEWRPC
Albert A. Beck Principal Planner, SEWRPC

Consultant Team (Transit Advocacy and Communications)

Elizabeth Kelly
H. Carl Mueller
Lori Richards

Guests

Brian Dranzik Fiscal and Policy Administrator, Milwaukee County
Department of Transportation and Public Works
Eric Englund Attorney representing Racine Area
Manufactures and Commerce
Karen Schmiechen Planner, Wisconsin Department of
Transportation, Southeast Region

ROLL CALL

Chairman Ostby called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and asked the Board members on the telephone line to identify themselves. The presence of a quorum was confirmed. The individuals who had dialed-in to the conference call, or who were present in the Commission offices, also identified themselves to the Board members.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There were no changes to the meeting agenda identified by the Board.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 10, 2008, MEETING

A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Mr. Torres, seconded by Mr. Eberle, and carried unanimously by the Board.

UPDATE ON THE RTA REPORT AND THE GOVERNOR'S 2009-2011 BUDGET

Chairman Ostby asked Mr. Mueller to brief the Board on the Governor's proposed 2009-2011 budget and, in particular, on the how the provisions of the bill related to the recommendations contained the final report of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority (RTA).

[Secretary's Note: The Governor's budget bill proposes establishing a new, permanent RTA for southeastern Wisconsin, with the area covered to include the counties of Kenosha, Milwaukee and the urbanized portion of Racine County defined as the area in Racine County located east of I-94. To join the RTA, the governing bodies of Milwaukee County, Kenosha County, or any municipality located in the urbanized portion of Racine County will need to adopt a resolution authorizing membership in the RTA. Up to a 0.5 percent sales tax may be levied by the RTA to serve as a dedicated source of funding to support bus transit, commuter rail, and other transit projects. The bill provides for a seven-member RTA governing board with Kenosha County, the City of Kenosha, the City of Racine, Milwaukee County, and the City of Milwaukee to each appoint one member, and the Governor to appoint two members. The RTA would be authorized to subcontract with the current public transit operators for local transit services, or to assume operations of the existing public transit systems following negotiations with the appropriate municipality. The RTA would also be granted bonding authority for transit projects. The existing RTA in southeastern Wisconsin would be disbanded.]

Mr. Mueller stated that the RTA provisions in the Governor's proposed budget did not completely incorporate the recommendations presented in the RTA report to the Governor and Legislature. He and Board members indicated that the budget bill required local government action to join the RTA; did not include language requiring sales tax revenues to be spent in the county where they were collected; did not provide for an offsetting reduction in property taxes for the sales tax revenues collected; did not include the preparation of five-year transit service plans and budgets by local planning groups in each County to provide the basis for the local sales tax revenues needed in each county; and, did not provide for a Racine County representative on the RTA Board.

Mr. Eberle indicated that the Racine County Executive was concerned that there would no longer be a representative from Racine County on the Board of the new RTA. Mr. Mueller noted that one of the Governor's two appointments could be a representative for Racine County. Mr. Englund commented that it was also possible that the Governor could appoint another representative from Milwaukee. Mr. Karls stated that while he liked the Governor's RTA proposal overall, he was concerned about there not being a Racine County representative.

Ms. Taylor stated that she believed that one of the Governor's concerns was providing consistent language for the creation of RTAs throughout the State. She and Mr. Mueller noted that the bill was a work in progress and that there was potential for changes to be made. Chairman Ostby stated that he

considered the differences between the budget bill and the RTA's recommendations to be modest, and that the having RTA language included in the budget bill made him optimistic about the chances for the creation of a permanent RTA in southeastern Wisconsin.

Mr. Englund observed that gaining favorable votes from two legislators from Racine County-- Representative Mason and Senator Lehman--would be important to the passage of the RTA provisions in the budget. Mr. Eberle noted that Senator Lehman has opposed instituting a sales tax to provide local funding for the RTA. Mr. Brandrup stated that it would be important for legislators to understand that the City of Racine, as well as other southeastern Wisconsin transit systems, will need dedicated local funding for its bus transit system to survive in coming years.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT PRESENTATION ON PHASE IV

Ms. Richards reviewed the proposed work plan and budget for Phase IV with the Board (see Attachment 1). She stated that the work plan had been prepared to respond to feedback provided by local public officials and various other groups and organizations which included requests for briefings and forums on the RTA recommendations. She indicated the primary focus of the work plan would be providing information to the public and acting as a liaison for the RTA to key business and community groups. Mr. Mueller stated that the consultant team was proposing to provide education and public outreach on the RTA recommendations.

Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission staff, as staff to the RTA, had been trying to assist help the Board with briefing others on the RTA recommendations, but found it difficult to be at every meeting dealing with RTA issues including the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) commuter rail project, the public transit funding crisis, and the existing and future transit needs of the Region. He indicated that the informational outreach efforts of the consultant team have been an invaluable asset to the Board and the Commission.

Mr. Karls stated that the consultant has always helped him prepare for various meetings on RTA issues and that he supported the Phase IV work proposal in its entirety. He moved that the Board approve the work plan and budget. His motion was seconded by Ms. Taylor. The motion failed on a vote of 5 aye and 1 nay, with Mr. Eberle voting no and Mr. Torres abstaining from the vote.

Mr. Eberle stated that he personally agreed with the comments of other Board members that the consultant had done a good job in its outreach efforts and in keeping the Board informed. However, he noted that he, and others in Racine County, were concerned with the structure of the RTA proposed in the Governor's budget. Mr. Torres explained that he had resigned from the Milwaukee County Department of Transportation and Public Works, and that a new the Milwaukee County representative to the RTA had been nominated by the Milwaukee County Executive. He stated that he did not believe it was appropriate for him to vote on this motion.

Mr. Englund noted that there was a considerable amount misinformation being generated on the RTA proposal. He indicated that the Legislature may be expected to move the budget bill along quickly and address the proposed RTA quickly as well.

Ms. Taylor expressed her concern that the RTAs for the two other areas addressed in the budget bill will get the RTAs they desire and southeastern Wisconsin will miss out again. In response to a question from Mr. Eberle, Mr. Brandrup noted that the Board's vote on the Phase IV proposal could be the last significant action it would need to take if the RTA provisions in the Budget bill are passed.

Mr. Torres suggested that the Board delay the final vote on the Phase IV work plan until the following week to allow both he and Mr. Eberle to discuss their votes with their appointing authorities. It was the consensus of the board to schedule another teleconference meeting for Monday March 2, 2008 at 8:00 a.m. to reconsider the motion.

UPDATE ON BUSINESS COMMUNITY'S PUBLIC AFFAIRS EFFORTS

Mr. Englund briefed the Board on the business community's public affairs efforts. He indicated that the business community supported the creation of a permanent RTA funded through a sales tax. He indicated that the business group met weekly and the RTA proposal was gaining support throughout the Region. In response to a question by Mr. Mueller, he stated his belief that the votes of the State legislators from the RTA counties will ultimately decide the issue.

UPDATE ON THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL RTA STUDY COMMITTEE

Mr. Brandrup briefed the Board on the work of the Legislative Council RTA Study Committee that was reconvened by Senator Robson on February 11, 2009. He stated that the council was writing legislation that could be used to establish RTAs in the areas of the state not addressed in the Governor's 2009-2011 budget bill. He noted that the bill being prepared by the Committee could become a fallback position for southeastern Wisconsin if the RTA provisions in the budget bill are not passed. He stated that the RTA Study Committee would vote on the draft legislation next week.

Mr. Englund noted that there had been some discussion on the possibility of merging the RTA Study Committee bill with the budget bill to provide a broader piece of legislation.

UPDATE ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD

Mr. Yunker stated that Commission and consultant staff had met with the Union Pacific (UP) Railroad regarding the proposed KRM commuter rail project, and anticipated continuing review by the UP Railroad of the proposed KRM operations and physical improvements. He indicated that the railroad has begun expressing more interest in the KRM commuter rail service as work progresses toward submittal of the new starts application.

REPORTS ON OTHER ACTIVITIES RELATIVE TO THE WORK OF THE RTA

Mr. Karls briefed the Board on the recent appointment of alderman Tom Friedel as interim Mayor to replace Gary Becker. He stated that Mayor Friedel and the City of Racine strongly support the RTA recommendations provided to the Governor and Legislature, including using a sales tax to fund public transit.

CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING DATE AND PLACE

The Board agreed to schedule a teleconference meeting for 8:00 a.m. on Monday March 2, 2009, to continue consideration of the proposed work plan and budget for Phase IV.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 a.m. by Chairman Ostby.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth R. Yunker
Recording Secretary

KRY/AAB/lgh
03/23/09
#143197 v1 - SEW RTA - Minutes of 02/27/09 Teleconference Meeting (complete)



Mueller Communications, Inc.

Public Affairs • Crisis & Corporate Communications • Business-to-Business Marketing

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 23, 2009

To: RTA Chairman Karl Ostby

From: H. Carl Mueller

Cc: Ken Yunker

Re: Phase IV: *2009 Communications Recommendations*

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In order to fulfill and follow through on its mission to help develop a regional transit system in southeastern Wisconsin, the RTA should continue to execute its plan to explain and discuss its report with local decision-makers: elected officials, municipal representatives, and civic, community and labor leaders, and respond to continued requests for information and briefings. In fact, the RTA's work will not be done until the governor and legislature act upon its recommendations. The governor has made his position clear, but until the legislature acts, the RTA's work continues.

To follow through on our recommendations to the governor and legislature, we believe it is vital to continue this outreach to the community, thoroughly explaining the RTA's research and recommendations and responding to new and increasing questions and issues. Developing a thorough and factually accurate understanding of how the RTA's recommendations evolve at the state level and affect current transit operations is important to completing the RTA's mission.

To accomplish the communications, information and public outreach responsibilities of this assignment, we have refined the next phases of our plan for your review and approval. These communications and public outreach efforts are essential to providing the Governor and Legislature feedback that could assist us in completing our report. The RTA will continue exercising a leadership role in the ongoing public discussion of how best to serve the transit needs of the region going forward.

To date, we have presented the RTA's recommendations to all the groups and organizations recommended in the Phase III plan approved by the RTA, however, we have received many additional requests and inquiries for information and are requesting additional

Outreach recommendations

resources to fulfill them. More than a dozen organizations throughout the region have endorsed or are in the process of endorsing the principles represented in the RTA report, or the report as a whole.

Your support team proposes the following next phase strategies and tactics to help address the challenges listed above.

Objective: Respond to ongoing requests from local governments and business and economic development groups to provide member briefings and host public forums regarding the RTA's recommendations and potential impact on the community, providing critical feedback to the Governor and Legislature.

Tactics to execute this objective:

- **Respond to requests** from groups such as UEDA's Coalition for Advancing Transit (CAT), the South Suburban Chamber of Commerce, SE Wisconsin Labor and the Racine Interfaith Coalition and Rotary to **hold public forums** in each county regarding the RTA's recommendations, coordinating speakers, informational displays and event logistics and creating awareness of each with paid and unpaid advertising;
 - Budget: \$40,000
 - Timeline: ASAP – requests already received
- **Work with local government task forces and study groups** that have been assigned to reviewing and developing a position on the RTA report, such as Milwaukee County, the M7, Racine County and local municipal governments;
 - Budget: \$12,000
 - Timeline: ASAP – July 2009
- **Respond to requests for additional public outreach and information with local municipal leaders and community groups**, including those in the urbanized area of Racine County. These efforts include responding to requests for meetings, presentations, local research and development statistics and potential tours of the proposed rail corridor;
 - Budget: \$17,000
 - Timeline: February – July 2009
- **Continue to serve as business liaison** with local chambers of commerce, and economic development groups, including the UEDA's Coalition for Advancing Transit, GMC, MMAC, RAMAC, KABA and others, which have developed a public affairs plan to support a regional transit effort;
 - Budget: \$36,000
 - Timeline: February – July 2009
- Serve a continuing role in **educating the young professional population** in the region about this effort and seeking feedback regarding the RTA's recommendations through regular electronic news updates, blogs and other online and social media resources targeted to an online network supporting regional transit issues. In addition, continue to connect this group with other educational initiatives, such as public forums and task force efforts from which they can gather additional information; and
 - Budget: \$15,000 (supplemented with remaining budget from Phase III)
 - Timeline: February – July 2009

Outreach recommendations

- Conduct **additional public outreach with past participants** in the Environmental Impact Study to determine the public's understanding of the RTA's recommendations, the state budget proposal and to offer additional materials and/or presentations to ensure accurate information about regional transit is being disseminated.
 - Budget: \$18,000
 - Timeline: March 2009