

Meramec Regional Planning Commission
Minutes
April 11, 2024

Call to Order

Chairman Mary Heywood called the April 11, 2024, meeting of the Meramec Regional Planning Commission to order at 7:31 p.m. The meeting was conducted via Zoom and in-person.

Welcome

Chairman Heywood welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced James Abrahamson who will be representing the mayor of Crocker and Joel Pikey with Mid-America Carpenters. Board members Tammy Bruckerhoff, Rich Eisterhold and Vic Stratman participated via Zoom. Board members participating in person were Steve Black, Erik Lowes, Gary Larson, Tim Schulte, Duane Kraettli, See Vogt, Darryl Griffin, Joey Auxier, Tom Coots, Kent Bagnall, James Abrahamson. T.R. Dudley, John Money, Shane Anselm, Tai Kimes and Mary Heywood. MRPC staff attending in person were Bonnie Prigge, Tammy Snodgrass, Linda Loughridge, Caitlin Jones, Samantha Sherman and Linda Carroll. MRPC staff member Donald Keeney participated via Zoom. Guest Dawn Bell, Rolla Community Development Director and Joel Pikey, Mid-America Carpenters participated in person. Guest Payton Ruddy with Rep. Mark Alford's office participated via Zoom.

Consent Agenda

The following consent agenda items were presented for approval:

- a. Minutes – March 14, 2024
- b. Local Review
 1. Richland Medical Clinic Inc., Richland, MO
93 – 243 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Projects of Regional National Significance
Central Missouri Treatment Court Expansion Project
Federal: \$3,999,997
Total: \$3,999,997
- c. State Review
 1. State of Missouri, Jefferson City, MO
81.042 – Weatherization Assistance for Low-Income Persons
Federal: \$8,523,892
Total: \$8,523,892

The Office of Administration issues the Missouri Federal Assistance Clearinghouse grant reviews weekly. Staff is sharing reports in between meetings with board members. If you have questions about grants listed, you can call MRPC staff, or the Office of Administration as listed on the reports.

- d. Contracts
 - Meramec Regional Development Corporation
Permission is requested for the chairperson/executive director to execute an amended contract by and between MRPC and MRDC for loan review and servicing recommendations for MRPC EDA Revolving Loan Funds and Intermediary Relending Program funds.

- Ozark Rivers Solid Waste Management District

Permission is requested for MRPC's chairman and/or executive director to enter into a contract with Ozark Rivers Solid Waste Management District for administration services effective July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024, and for MRPC's chairman and/or executive director to sign any necessary documents.

- Ozark Rivers Solid Waste Management District

Permission is requested for MRPC's chairman and/or executive director to enter into a contract with Ozark Rivers Solid Waste Management District for implementation and project coordination services effective July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024, and for MRPC's chairman and/or executive director to sign any necessary documents.

- Opioid Settlement Funds Administration

Permission is requested to enter into an hourly contract with each of the following counties: Dent, Maries, Gasconade, Crawford and Washington to assist with administration of opioid settlement funds to include proposal reviews, disbursement tracking, reporting and filing, should a contract be agreed upon between MRPC and the county.

- Sustainable Ozarks Partnership

Permission is requested for the executive director and/or chair to sign an agreement with Sustainable Ozarks Partnership to assist with the Military Installation Resiliency Report (MIRR) that was recently funded by the Dept. of Defense, Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation. Funding for SOP assistance was included in the grant budget.

T.R. Dudley made a motion to approve the consent agenda with noted additions; Steve Vogt seconded. The motion carried.

Presentation: Labor Issues: Employee vs. Independent Contractor, Shane Anselm, At-Large Commissioner for Labor

Commissioner Anselm reported there is potential for immense growth in 14 counties in the state, including several counties in the Meramec Region that is part of the Missouri S&T Tech Hub project. This growth could provide a lot of construction opportunities, both commercial and residential. In the Meramec Region, commercial opportunities include the State Tech Hub project with the university, hospital growth and growth at the university, which could spin off a lot of possibilities. Residentially, there is a housing crisis with a need for single-family homes, he said.

The commissioner informed board members that the University of Missouri-Kansas City conducted a study in 2020. Forty-two state agencies were surveyed, and it was discovered that employee misclassification was a major issue. Employers were incorrectly classifying employees as independent contractors when they should have been employees. He said the survey found that two million employers were not playing by the rules. Payroll fraud was found to be the dominant result of these illegal practices. Commissioner Anselm explained that payroll fraud is the result of two important factors, employee misclassification and paying workers off the books.

Abuse of the independent contractor designation has an impact on workers, said Commissioner Anselm. Many times, they are paid late or are only paid a fraction of the hours they worked. Misclassification of employees causes rising costs in workers compensation and increases the drain on other income supporting programs, including programs MRPC works on with the communities in its region. He added that federal income tax losses could be up to \$104 million and state income tax losses could be as much as \$45 million.

Commissioner Anselm offered suggestions on making the right determination between contractor and employee. If a worker receives intensive instructions on how work is to be done or provides training on required procedures and methods, that worker may be an employee. If a worker has a significant investment in the work, is not reimbursed for some or all business expenses and may realize a profit or incur a loss, that worker may be an independent contractor.

The commissioner provided board members with the Missouri Worker Misclassification Hotline number, 573-751-1099. He also shared two links to report fraud issues www.Sa.dol.mo.gov/fraud and www.Labor.mo.gov/offthebooks.

Board members were provided with two documents from the IRS. The first was a brochure "Independent Contractor or Employee?" and the second was a 20-point checklist for identifying independent contractors.

Update from State and Federal Legislators:

Payton Ruddy with Rep. Mark Alford's office:

Ms. Ruddy said there hasn't been much activity in recent weeks but did report on the following activities of the Congressman:

- She said the Congressman recently traveled to Israel to visit the memorials where the Hamas attack occurred.
- Ms. Ruddy also mentioned that the Congressman has sent a letter to the postmaster general regarding the backlog of mail in the system.
- She informed the board that the Congressman has been appointed as the new chair of the Small Business Caucus.

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC): Anne Freand

In the absence of Anne Freand, Bonnie Prigge reported on transportation activities as follows:

Active Transportation Planning Grant Opportunities: Bonnie explained that these grants are designed to make communities more walkable. Community groups will be formed to see where people are walking to in their communities and take a look at what infrastructure might be needed. The University Extension has grant funds to assist with projects. Bonnie said the grant is a five-year grant and will be looking at communities in Crawford and Washington counties. She said there isn't a contract in place yet but hopes to have a signed contract in place in the next couple of weeks. The first two communities to receive assistance are Bourbon and Caledonia. The group could look at adding things such as bike racks and benches. The plan is to work with two more communities next year.

Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A Grant Program): This is a two-year project through the Federal Highways program. Bonnie said focus groups will be established in each county to look at where fatality/injury accidents occur and what can be done to minimize these incidents. Road safety audits will also be conducted and then the group will prioritize the hot spots. These county reports will then become part of a regional plan.

Show Me Zero: Bonnie said fatalities in the state for the period of Jan. 1 to April 7 are up. Of the 196 fatalities in the state, 75% were unbuckled. She reported the Central District had 27 fatalities for the same time period but of those 27, 83% were unbuckled. Fatalities included one bike, three pedestrians, four motorcycles and six vehicle accidents.

Roadway Subdistrict Meeting: The Coalition for Roadway Safety will be holding a meeting next week at the MRPC office, said Bonnie. Project Graduation grants will be presented at the meeting. She said the Walmart Distribution Center has a program where they bring a semi-trailer and let

students sit in the driver's seat so they can view the blind spot that drivers have when they are on the road.

Other Roadway Safety Activities: Bonnie mentioned several other safety programs that MRPC staff bring out to the communities in the region. Those programs include Buckle Up/Phone Down, back to school fairs and docudrama and mock crash programs. She said MRPC was also granted a bike/pedestrian program grant from Highway Safety. If anyone would like MRPC to bring one of these programs to their community Bonnie asked them to reach out to Caitlin Jones.

Bonnie reported that the committee received updates from MODOT's Preston Kramer. She said that at the next TAC meeting she is hoping to have a consultant for the I-44 project at the meeting. The committee was also reminded that TAP applications are due April 26.

External Relations Committee: Darryl Griffin, chairperson

Chairperson Griffin reported on External Relations activities as follows:

The committee discussed the MRPC board vacancies for at-large for small business and at-large for lending. The committee learned that Commissioner Gary Larson volunteered to represent MRPC on the MRCF board.

Commissioner Darryl Griffin made a motion to nominate Commissioner Gary Larson to represent MRPC on the MRCF board; Commissioner Steve Vogt seconded. The motion carried.

Last month, the committee presented recommended minor changes to the MRPC bylaws. These changes need to be voted on by the full board tonight.

Joey Auxier made a motion to approve the MRPC bylaw changes as presented at the March meeting; John Money seconded. The motion carried.

Tammy Snodgrass explained an additional recommendation to the MPRC bylaws that was missed at the March meeting. This change involved changing the title of the minorities at-large position to underrepresented at-large. The committee approved the change, and it will be brought before the board for a vote at the May meeting.

The committee discussed RFPs for the annual dinner. Proposals are due by May 2. Annual dinner award nominations will be sent out in the next week or two.

Staff provided a handout on legislative updates.

Operations Committee: Jan Haviland, chairperson

In the absence of chairperson Jan Haviland, Commissioner Erik Lowes reported on operations activities as follows:

Commissioner Lowes mentioned that Linda Loughridge is very good at outlining where we are in the budget. MPRC is in a deficit position and will end the year, June 30, in a deficit position. There are reserves to cover the shortfall.

The committee reviewed MRPC/MRB and MRPC/MRDC-RLF and IRP program financial statements for the period ended March 31, 2024.

Commissioner Erik Lowes made a motion to approve the financials for the period ending March 31, 2024; Darryl Griffin seconded. The motion carried.

Planning Committee: T.R. Dudley, chairperson

Chairperson T.R. Dudley reported on planning activities as follows:

Staff reviewed timelines for upcoming projects recently awarded to MRPC. Those included:

- Hermann Comprehensive Plan – Work is expected to begin next month.
- Military Installation Resiliency Review (MIRR) – MRPC will meet with Pulaski County leadership to develop request for proposals.
- Active Transportation Plan – This includes the Safe Streets for All, a \$15,000 a year planning grant through the University Extension. It will begin in Crawford (Bourbon) and Washington (Caledonia) counties.

MRPC staff reviewed the March 22, 2024 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) meeting. Chairperson Dudley said housing was a new goal for the 2024 update. The next CEDS meeting will be April 24.

Staff reviewed economic data from Lightcast. It was noted that the region is losing 1% of its population per year, as well as losing jobs. Another notable statistic is that only 56.22% of the available workforce are actually working.

Housing Board: Donald Keeney, Housing Program Manager

Donald Keeney reported on housing activities as follows:

Donald Keeney updated the board on the number of families currently on the housing choice voucher program. Other updates he provided included an update on housing assistance payments and leasing.

The board also approved the agency plan, said Donald.

Environmental: Tammy Snodgrass, Assistant Executive Director/Environmental Programs Manager

Tammy Snodgrass provided a flyer on upcoming Ransomware tabletop exercises noting there was one on Nov. 13 in Phelps County. Caitlin added that she had attended one and found it informative. She encouraged board members to consider attending.

Tammy informed the board that April 22 is Earth Day, and that staff are assisting with the Missouri Recycling Association (MORA) virtual Earth Day Stewardship Showcase which will be available for viewing at 11:30 a.m. that day. She said the showcase will feature the CPG grant project for a community solar farm in Phelps County; Trashesaurus at the Brewer special collection; the Rolla Mission grant project; and the Rolla HHW program. A link to the 2023 showcase was included on the handout that was provided.

A handout was provided.

Business Loans: Linda Loughridge, Fiscal Officer

Linda Loughridge reported the next full board meeting for MRDC would be April 17, 2024, at noon.

Meramec Community Enhancement Corporation (MCEC): Vic Stratman

No report was given.

Meramec Regional Community Foundation (MRCF): Bonnie Prigge

She reported the MRCF board held its invite-a-friend to lunch meeting in March. Two community grants were awarded during the meeting.

- The Bourbon Economic Development Group received a \$750 grant to help with computers for its tourism center.
- Hope Alliance in Rolla received fund a \$75- grant to help with its backpack program.

Bonnie informed board members that April 14 is the deadline to apply on CFO's website for scholarships. April 24 has tentatively been set as the date to evaluate scholarships on the regional level. Belle community scholarships are scheduled to be evaluated on April 26.

Chairperson and Director's Report

Bonnie reported that MRPC has been interviewing to fill positions in its fiscal department. She said staff are close to hiring, which will bring MRPC up to a fully staffed status.

Other topics she touched on included:

- MO S&T Tech Hub – She informed the board a virtual site visit with the EDA will take place on April 16.
- SBA Smart Review – Bonnie said this review is designed to make sure policies are compliant with SBA.
- Work Keys Testing – Two hundred students in six schools were tested. COPIC, a workforce contractor, stepped in to do the proctoring. The Gasconade Valley Enterprise Zone (GVEZ) just paid for mileage, which a state grant will reimburse.
- Opioid Program – Bonnie said MRPC staff would be visiting Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Maries and Washington counties to discuss the program and what services the counties might want.

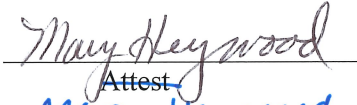
Adjourn

Steve Vogt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.; Joey Auxier seconded the motion. The motion carried.



~~Mary Heywood, chairperson~~

Joey Auxier, Secretary



Attest
Mary Heywood, Chair