

**Meramec Regional Planning Commission**  
**Minutes**  
**April 10, 2025**

**Call to Order**

Chair Mary Heywood called the April 10, 2025, meeting of the Meramec Regional Planning Commission to order at 7:45 p.m. The meeting was conducted in person and via Zoom.

**Welcome**

Chair Heywood welcomed everyone to the meeting. Board members participating in person were Gary Larson, John Smith, Tim Schulte, Duane Kraettli, Vic Stratman, Steve Vogt, Darryl Griffin, Joey Auxier, Tom Coots, Leeann Demouche, Sean Wilson, Donald Claycomb, Jan Haviland, Shane Anselm, Taisia Gordon and Mary Heywood. MRPC board members participating via Zoom were Tammy Bruckerhoff, T.R. Dudley, Rich Eisterhold, Patricia Heaney and Steve Smyth. MRPC staff members participating in person were Bonnie Prigge, Tammy Snodgrass, Linda Loughridge, Caitlin Jones, Kelly Sink, Linda Carroll and Samantha Sherman. Donald Keeney with MRPC participated via Zoom. Brett Hendrix SEMA Region I Coordinator and Brad Woods, city of Rolla EMD, participated in person.

**Consent Agenda**

The following consent agenda items were presented for approval:

- a. Minutes – March 13, 2025
- b. Local Review  
None.
- c. State Review
  - 1. State of Missouri, Jefferson City, MO  
81.042 – Weatherization Assistance for Low-Income Persons  
Weatherization Assistance for Low-Income Per  
Federal: \$8,668,017  
Total: \$8,668,017
  - 2. State of Missouri, Jefferson City, MO  
81.041 – State Energy Program  
Missouri State Energy Program FY26  
Federal: \$1,226,550  
State: \$6,300,000  
Total: \$7,526,550

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

- 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, 2025, through June 30, 2026, 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, 2025, through June 30, 2026, and for MRPC's chairman and/or executive director to sign any necessary documents.

Presiding Commissioner Joey Auxier made a motion to approve the consent agenda; Commissioner Ray Schwartze seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Presentation:** Brett Hendrix, Region I SEMA

Brett Hendrix, Region I SEMA Area Coordinator, provided an update on disaster response and recovery for the March 14 tornado in Rolla and Phelps County and discussed the FEMA process that is expected.

Mr. Hendrix said SEMA areas follow the same regional boundaries as the Highway Patrol and is under the Department of Public Safety. He reported he serves Laclede, Pulaski, Crawford, Dent, Phelps and Maries counties. Washington, Gasconade and Osage counties are in different SEMA regions and Mr. Hendrix said he would be happy to put the counties in touch with the regional coordinators in those areas.

Mr. Hendrix discussed the emergency management cycle and the role of emergency managers. He highlighted the importance of preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation in disaster management and shared his experience with the recent tornado in Rolla, emphasizing the need for flexibility and effective communication with partners. Mr. Hendrix also mentioned the challenges of managing an influx of volunteers and the importance of capturing volunteer hours for potential FEMA assistance. The main disruption in Rolla was the power outage, which lasted up to 10 days in some areas, he said.

He discussed the shift from short-term to long-term recovery after a disaster, emphasizing the need to focus on unmet needs and the potential for a FEMA disaster declaration. He outlined the three main FEMA programs: emergency assistance, public assistance, and individual assistance, explaining that public assistance is reimbursement for government entities and individual assistance funds go directly to households. Mr. Hendrix also mentioned the potential for a grant program and the need for a damage assessment to determine the level of assistance needed. He noted that the recovery process can take a long time, as seen in the Joplin tornado case, and that the damage assessment process can be slow due to safety concerns. Mr. Hendrix also mentioned the upcoming flood recovery process and the potential for mitigation projects to reduce the impact of future disasters.

Mr. Hendrix discussed the complexities of FEMA's disaster response process, emphasizing that it's a learning experience for everyone involved. He highlighted the challenges of navigating the system, including the need for continuous advocacy and the potential for reforms to improve the process. Both Mr. Hendrix and Brad Woods provided additional insights, but both acknowledged that they were also learning as they went.

Bonnie Prigge mentioned the establishment of a disaster relief fund for Phelps County, which has received significant donations and will be distributed through a grant process to address unmet needs.

The positive response from Congressman Jason Smith to the tornado relief efforts in Rolla was discussed and the collaborative work of various groups and the successful management of the situation was highlighted. Mr. Hendrix also mentioned the ongoing process of disaster declarations in Missouri and the potential involvement of FEMA.

**Updates from State and Federal Legislators:**

Taylor Blackwell from Sen. Josh Hawley's office updated the group on the Senator's efforts to address issues with USPS, particularly the St. Louis Distribution Center, and the introduction of legislation to restore Fort Leonard

Wood housing. Ms. Blackwell also raised concerns about delays in fire truck deliveries and requested information on the matter.

Grant Wilson from Rep. Jason Smith's office discussed the passing of the budget resolution, which sets up the process of reconciliation for funding the government for fiscal year 2025 and setting budgetary levels for 2026 and 2034. The resolution also requires a cut of \$2 trillion dollars and if not cut, Congressman Smith, as chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, would not be able to get the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act extended, said Mr. Wilson. This would result in \$4.5 trillion dollars more in taxes for people. The resolution also includes no cuts to social security, Medicare, and Medicaid, and aims to protect these benefits from waste, fraud, and abuse. He also discussed the U.S. Trade Representative Jameson Greer's appearance before the committee to discuss the President's tax, trade and tariff policies. He mentioned that the resolution requires proof of U.S. citizenship to vote in elections, which has raised concerns about married women's ability to vote easily.

Ms. Prigge discussed the impact of executive orders on MRPC, specifically regarding the Economic Development Administration grant and the Homeland Security jurisdictional funds. She mentioned the EDA planning grant, which was supposed to start on April 1, is on hold due to the executive order review process. She reported that MRPC is cash-flowing \$115,000 worth of homeland security projects that have not been paid for due to the state's non-payment. The federal government has not paid the state, therefore the state has not paid Homeland Security lead RPCs. Ms. Prigge also mentioned a grant for a truck that needs to be fulfilled by August and the need to purchase an item by the end of the month. She expressed concerns about the MRPC's ability to continue cash-flowing these projects.

Ms. Prigge discussed the cancellation of the BRIC program by FEMA, which will impact the funding for hazard mitigation plans in Gasconade, Pulaski, and Phelps counties. She explained that these counties are now ineligible to apply for grants without an approved plan, and the deadline for the plan is in 2026. Ms. Prigge also mentioned that the city of Saint James is interested in a safe room, but they cannot receive an award without an approved plan. She expressed concern about the ripple effect of the program's cancellation and the need for decision-making to avoid waste in government.

Commissioner Ray Schwartze mentioned the challenges faced by local doctors in Missouri, who are not allowed to prescribe medicine without seeing the patient. He also mentioned HB 207 that would allow the Department of Revenue to raise fees and expressed concern about the governor's speech regarding planning commissions and the jail premium split deal. He also mentioned the recent passing of a capital gains tax bill, which he believes will negatively impact the state's finances. The board was encouraged to reach out to their representatives to express their concerns about these issues.

Commissioner Jan Haviland highlighted the importance of Missouri Enterprise for small and mid-sized manufacturers, urging the board to support it to prevent potential funding cuts.

#### **Transportation Advisory Committee: Bonnie Prigge**

The committee received an update from Preston Kramer with MoDOT on the Forward 44 project. This project is broken into 13 separate projects he said.

Ms. Prigge reported that there is funding to develop Active Transportation Planning for the communities of Steelville, Cuba and Mineral Point. The goal is to make communities more walkable and safer for walking.

The committee received an update on the Safe Streets for All program. Ms. Prigge mentioned that until the planning grant is completed local agencies are not eligible for SS4A implementation grants.

Mr. Kramer provided an update on on-going projects and the committee received an update on fatalities in the region.

**External Relations Committee:** Shane Anselm, chair

Commissioner Anselm reported on External Relations activities as follows:

The committee discussed the need for bids to host the Annual Dinner in October. Commissioner Anselm said two bids have been received and the committee is still accepting proposals, which are due May 2.

Commissioner Anselm reported that the committee discussed and finalized a tentative slate of officers for MRPC and MRB for the May elections and discussed the appointment of at-large commissioners whose terms are expiring. Staff informed the committee that the at-large positions for disabled and seniors need replacements, and several possible candidates were mentioned.

Ideas for speakers at board meetings were solicited. Staff will discuss and contact those suggested.

Staff provided a handout on legislative updates.

**Operations Committee:** Jan Haviland

Commissioner Haviland reported on operations activities as follows:

The committee reviewed MRPC/MRB and MRPC/MRDC-RLF and IRP program financial statements for the period ended March 13, 2025.

Commissioner Jan Haviland made a motion to approve the financials for the period ending March 13, 2025; Presiding Commissioner Darryl Griffin seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Staff presented the RLF Plans for LTED/SSSED, Disaster and Cares RLF program plans for discussion and recommended updates.

Commissioner Haviland made a motion to accept the recommended revisions to the RLF plan; Presiding Commissioner Joey Auxier seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Staff updated the committee on progress made and tentative schedule of the decertification of the CDC.

**Planning Committee:** Joey Auxier, chair

Presiding Commissioner Auxier reported on planning activities as follows:

The committee received an update from Kelly Sink on recently awarded CDBG grants in the region, including those in Bland, Gasconade County, Steelville and Potosi. She also discussed the CDBG Mitigation grants proposed for submittal and the quarterly Lightcast economic report.

**Housing Board:** Tim Schulte, chair

Presiding Commissioner Tim Schulte reported on housing activities as follows:

Linda Loughridge, MRPC Financial Officer, presented the housing financials which were approved by the board. Housing Program Manager Donald Keeney presented both the annual plan and the PHA five-year plan for approval. The board approved both plans which will be submitted to HUD.

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

Ms. Snodgrass reported that the winning Earth Day Trash Art and Poster entries are on display at The Centre in Rolla, Art Works on Main in Owensville and Town and Country Bank in Bourbon and Salem.

She also mentioned the special collections that will be held in Rolla on June 14, in Salem on Sept. 13 and in Owensville on Oct. 18.

A handout of environmental activities was provided.

**Business Loans:** Linda Loughridge, Fiscal Officer

Linda Loughridge, MRPC Financial Officer, provided an update on the decertification process of the CDC. She said the last SBA504 loan will be closing on April 16 and then her office will begin transferring those program files to the SBA in Birmingham.

She also reported that she has scheduled a Zoom meeting with area banks and commercial realtors to let them know about the RLF program.

**Meramec Community Enhancement Corporation (MCEC):** Vic Stratman

Presiding Commissioner Vic Stratman reported on MCEC activities as follows:

Presiding Commissioner Stratman reported that Bethany Ferrell, MRPC, presented the financials which the board approved. Ms. Sink provided an update on the Renewable Energy grant Vichy received and mentioned two other grants which weren't funded.

**Meramec Regional Community Foundation (MRCF):** Bonnie Prigge

Ms. Prigge reported on the Meramec Regional Community Foundation's activities, highlighting the recent invite-a-friend to lunch that was held on March 25. She mentioned that the MRCF board has three new members but is still looking for a representative from Pulaski County. Two grants were awarded at the meeting, one to the YMCA in Pulaski County and one to Kids Sight. Kids Sight is out of Kansas City, but the organization is conducting sight testing in the Meramec Region.

Ms. Prigge reported that approximately \$45,000 in scholarships will be awarded to Belle High School Seniors, including approximately \$21,000 in scholarships to State Tech. MRCF scholarships are still to be reviewed for award.

**Chairman's Report**

Commissioner Heywood reported that April is Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention month.

**Director's Report**

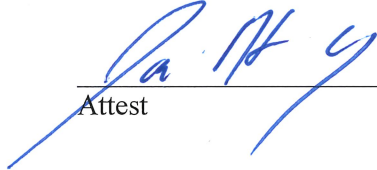
Ms. Prigge provided the following updates:

- MoDOT Survey
  - Encouraged board members to participate in the MoDOT Survey that was emailed. MoDOT is in the process of updating its current Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and State Freight and Rail Plan (SFRP) and is soliciting feedback from Missourians on transportation priorities to help determine the goals for the state's 25-year transportation vision.
- New Mayors
  - The cities of Edgar Springs, St. Robert and Crocker have new mayors.
- MRPC Staff Update
  - Nichole Zielke has left MRPC for new employment as Planning Director for Franklin County.
  - She had been working on the grants for emergency food plans and staff are working to transfer those grants to other agencies.
- Vehicles
  - Information will be sent out next week about two cars that are being replaced. The cars are an MRB expense. Cars being replaced are a 2016 Impala with a minimum bid of \$7,000 and a 2020 Equinox, which has a minimum bid of \$11,500.

**Adjourn**

Commissioner Shane Anselm a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10p.m. Presiding Commissioner Vic Stratman seconded the motion. The motion carried.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Heywood, chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Attest