

**Meramec Regional Planning Commission**  
**Minutes**  
**May 15, 2025**

**Call to Order**

Chair Mary Heywood called the May 15, 2025, meeting of the Meramec Regional Planning Commission to order at 7:30 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 Shane Anselm, Joey Auxier, Kent Bagnall, Steve Black, Earl Brown, Donald Claycomb, Leeann Demouche, Tasia Gordon, Darryl Griffin, Jan Haviland, Chrystal Heenan, Mary Heywood, John Money, Ray Mortimeyer, John Smith, Steve Smyth, Steve Vogt and Jason Ward. MRPC board members participating via Zoom were T.R. Dudley, Rich Eisterhold, Patricia Heaney and Dawn Bell. MRPC staff members participating in person were Bonnie Prigge, Tammy Snodgrass, Linda Loughridge, Caitlin Jones, Linda Carroll and Samantha Sherman. Anne Freand and Donald Keeney with MRPC participated via Zoom. Guests participating in person were Dr. Kwame Awuah-Offei, Missouri S&T and Grant Wilson, Representative Jason Smith's office. Participating were Angelina Billo, Missouri S&T and Seth York with Representative Bob Onder's office.

**Consent Agenda**

The following consent agenda items were presented for approval:

a. Minutes – April 10, 2025

b. Local Review  
None.

c. State Review  
None.

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

• Phelps County Floodplain

Permission is requested for MRPC's chairman and/or executive director to approve and sign a Phelps County Floodplain technical assistance contract for the period July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, and for MRPC's chairman and/or executive director to sign any necessary documents.

• Meramec Local Emergency Planning District

Permission is requested for MRPC's chairman and/or executive director to enter into a contract with MLEPD for administrative and technical assistance for the period July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, and for MRPC's chairman and/or executive director to sign any necessary documents.

• City of Salem

Permission is requested for MRPC's chairman and/or executive director to approve and sign a city of Salem floodplain technical assistance contract for the period of July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, and for the MRPC chairman and/or executive director to sign all necessary documents.

- City of Meta Floodplain

Permission is requested for MRPC's chairman and/or executive director to approve and sign a city of Meta Floodplain technical assistance contract for the period July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, and for MRPC's chairman and/or executive director to sign any necessary documents.

Commissioner Shane Anselm made a motion to approve the consent agenda; Commissioner Steve Vogt seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Chair Heywood reported there was a change in the presentation at tonight's meeting. She said Dr. Kwame with Missouri S&T would be providing an update on the Tech Hub project.

Bonnie Prigge, MPRC Executive Director, mentioned that MRPC and 14 regional planning commissions in southwest Missouri have been involved in this exciting project for a couple of years. She said that Dr. Kwame had reached out earlier in the week about presenting the project's progress, what has happened, the current status and future direction.

**Presentation:** Dr. Kwame Awuah-Offei, Missouri S&T

Dr. Kwame, Union Pacific/Rocky Mountain Energy Professor & Department Chair, Mining & Explosives Engineering and Executive Director & RIO, CM2AE Tech Hub with Missouri S&T provided an update on the S&T Tech Hub project.

Dr. Kwame highlighted the Tech Hub designation and strategic plan focused on global competitiveness in critical minerals production. He explained the benefits of the designation, including eligibility for Phase 2 funding and support letters for aligned grant efforts. Dr. Kwame shared that while the initial Phase 2 funding request was not fully approved, \$28.5 million was received for a test bed facility in Rolla and a governance project. However, this funding was rescinded, and the project will now compete again in a new funding opportunity, with Dr. Kwame expressing confidence in their chances given the increased importance of critical minerals under the current administration.

Dr. Kwame discussed the importance of developing mineral processing capabilities in Missouri, particularly for critical minerals like zinc, copper, cobalt, and nickel. He explained that while these minerals are currently mined in the state, they are sent overseas for processing due to cost and regulatory challenges. The Tech Hub initiative aims to support local businesses in developing processing capabilities, which could lead to significant economic benefits. Dr. Kwame encouraged board members to reach out to smaller businesses, including recycling operations, to join the Tech Hub and emphasized the need for support in preparing a new application for funding after their initial proposal was not selected.

**Updates from State and Federal Legislators:**

Grant Wilson from Rep. Jason Smith's office provided an update on the Ways and Means Committee's markup of the Reconciliation Bill, which includes extending and expanding provisions from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, such as permanent tax rates, increased deductions, and expanded child tax credits. He highlighted the bill's benefits for workers, farmers, small businesses and families, preventing a 22% tax increase. Commissioner T.R. Dudley raised concerns about significant cuts to senior centers in the region, funded by the Older Americans Act, and questioned the purchase of a headquarters by Aging Best. Mr. Wilson acknowledged these concerns and promised to research further, noting potential cuts to the Older Americans Act funding.

Seth York from Rep. Bob Onder's office added that he would follow up on potential cuts to the Older Americans Act. He also asked if there were any other rumors of funding issues in counties within the 3rd district.

Ms. Prigge responded that there were no new rumors but noted concern over a delay in EDA (Economic Development Administration) planning funds, which were supposed to start on April 1 but are still under review. Mr. York confirmed they hadn't heard back yet on the EDA funds and said he would follow up again.

Ms. Prigge also mentioned that the US DOT is reviewing 3,200 applications, including MRPC's awarded Build grant and MRPC is seeking ways to have MRPC's awarded application reviewed sooner. Ms. Prigge discussed the status of Homeland Security funds, which are flowing to the state. Ms. Prigge again expressed concern about the EDA planning grant, as work has been halted and there is uncertainty about the retroactive start date, which could affect matching funds. The discussion also covered the ongoing indirect cost rate negotiation with the Department of Interior, which Ms. Prigge noted is delayed due to staffing cuts.

**Transportation Advisory Committee: Bonnie Prigge**

The committee did not meet this month but will meet in June, said Ms. Prigge. She also mentioned staff would be meeting with MoDOT's Central District next week to discuss high-priority unfunded needs.

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

Commissioner Anselm reported on External Relations activities as follows:

The External Relations Committee recommended holding the annual dinner at the Salem Armory on October 23. He added that award nominations are due by June 3, and nomination forms had been sent out.

Commissioner Jason Ward made a motion to accept the recommendation to hold the annual dinner at the Salem Armory on Oct. 23; Joey Auxier seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Commissioner Anselm also presented proposed officer slates for MRPC and MRB for 2025-26, noting that MRB would vote on officers at its June meeting.

**MRPC Slate**

Chairman: Darryl Griffin  
Vice Chairman: Joey Auxier  
Secretary: Sean Wilson  
Treasurer: Jason Ward

**MRB Slate**

Chairman: Steve Vogt  
Vice Chairman: Vic Stratman  
Secretary-Treasurer: Tim Schulte

Commissioner Anselm made a motion to approve the proposed slate of officers for MRPC; Steve Vogt seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The board discussed the need to fill two at-large commissioner positions, seniors and tourism, and nomination forms were distributed for these earlier in the week.

**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 April 30, 2025.

Commissioner Jason Ward made a motion to approve the financials for the period ending April 30, 2025; Commissioner Donald Claycomb seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Linda Loughridge, MRPC Fiscal Officer, briefly discussed the draft budget for the coming year, which includes reducing employee healthcare contribution from 50% to 10% and implementing a 3% merit increase. She said current staffing levels will be maintained but MRPC will delay rehiring for a grant writer position.

**Planning Committee: Joey Auxier, chair**

Presiding Commissioner Auxier reported on planning activities as follows:

Donald Keeney, Housing Manager, reported there are 695 leased units across various counties, with \$292,124 paid in housing assistance payments in April. There are concerns about potential federal budget cuts to HUD payments

and housing choice vouchers. He mentioned that there are 655 people on the housing waitlist, but it's currently frozen due to a funding shortfall. Mr. Keeney also expressed concerns about potential cuts to discretionary spending, including HUD payments, with a proposed \$32 billion reduction for FY2025. He said the proposal includes a two-year cap on rental assistance for able-bodied adults, prioritizing support for elderly and disabled individuals. Concern was expressed that eliminating Housing Choice Vouchers could lead to vacancies and rental market disruption in the area.

Anne Freand, MRPC Project Manager, discussed the value of regional planning services, including comprehensive plans, zoning maps and development regulations. She also highlighted MRPC's work with Salem and other communities, offering support through contracts or grant assistance.

**Housing Advisory Board:** Tim Schulte, chair

The Housing Advisory Board meeting was postponed to June to review and approve administrative plan changes required by new legislation, including HOTMA and INSPIRE, before July 1st.

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

Ms. Snodgrass reported that the special collection held in Dixon on March 8 collected 3.6 tons of tires, 2.84 tons of appliances and .8 tons of e-waste. The next collection will be held in Rolla on June 14.

She also mentioned there were several Hazard Mitigation plans due to be updated in 2026. Funding for updating the plans had been submitted through the BRIC grant program, said Ms. Snodgrass. The BRIC grant program has been terminated and there would be no further funding through this program. Ms. Snodgrass said that SEMA staff are now looking for other ways to fund the updates.

A handout of environmental activities was provided.

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

Linda Loughridge, MRPC Financial Officer, reported MRPC and the Meramec Regional Development Corporation is in the final stages of decertification of the SBA 504 program. MRPC plans to focus on marketing and rebuilding the RLF program portfolio.

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

No report was given.

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

Ms. Prigge reported on several key initiatives, including the successful presentation of scholarships in Belle and Fatima and the upcoming launch of the Phelps County Disaster Relief Fund on May 19, which will distribute approximately \$95,000 to nonprofits, schools, churches, and local governments impacted by the March 14 tornado in Phelps County. She also mentioned that Missouri Ozarks Community Action has received disaster relief funds for housing assistance. Phelps County is still waiting for a federal disaster declaration.

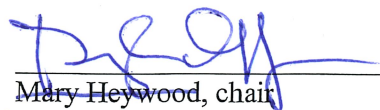
Mr. Wilson added that Congressman Smith has been staying connected with FEMA regarding a disaster declaration.

**Director's Report**

Ms. Prigge shared that the Potosi Comprehensive Plan was funded by the Delta Regional Authority and that LEPD funding was approved by the legislature. Legislation to increase regional planning commission funding caps remains pending in the Senate. Session ends on Friday, May 16.

**Adjourn**

Presiding Commissioner Joey Auxier a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 .m. Commissioner Jason Ward seconded the motion. The motion carried.



Mary Heywood, chair

Darryl Griffin



Attest

