

Meramec Regional Planning Commission
Minutes
January 8, 2026

Call to Order

Chair Darryl Griffin called the Jan. 8, 2026, 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 Griffin welcomed everyone to the meeting. Board members participating in person were Steve Black, Jason Ward, Gary Larson, Shawn Bolerjack, John Smith, Duane Kraettli, Vic Stratman, Steve Vogt, Ray Schwartze, Darryl Griffin, Joey Auxier, Dawn Bell, Kent Bagnall, Sean Wilson, Matt McCarter, John Money, Shane Anselm and Aimee Campbell. Board members participating via Zoom were James Breckinridge, Earl Brown, John Casey, T.R. Dudley and Steve Smyth. MRPC staff members participating in-person were Bonnie Prigge, Tammy Snodgrass, Linda Loughridge, Caitlin Jones and Linda Carroll. Donald Keeney and Anne Freand with MRPC participated via Zoom. Guests participating in-person were Rep. Tony Harbison, Rep. John Hewkin, Rep. Bruce Sassmann and Rep. Tara Peters.

Consent Agenda

The following consent agenda items were presented for approval:

- a. Minutes – Dec. 11 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

• MO DNR/MO State Parks

Permission is requested for the Chair or Executive Director to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to allow MRPC staff and its subcontractors and consultants to access the undeveloped sections of the Rock Island Trail for planning purposes to carry out the federal BUILD grant, and to sign all necessary documents.

• Bootheel Regional Planning Commission

Permission is requested for the Chair or Executive Director to enter into a contract, with Bootheel Regional Planning Commission for the completion of small town comprehensive planning services in 2026, and for MRPC's chairman and/or executive director to sign any necessary documents.

• Frisbee Engineering

Dec. 12, 2025: MRPC Executive Director entered into a technical assistance contract with Frisbee Engineering for an asbestos inspection of a building located at 1000 Hospital Road, Waynesville, MO.

• City of Potosi

Jan. 8, 2026: MRPC Executive Director entered into a technical assistance contract with the city of Potosi for an asbestos inspection of two buildings located at 10871 State Hwy. 21, Potosi, MO.

Presiding Commissioner Joey Auxier made a motion to approve the consent agenda with noted additions; Commissioner Shane Anselm seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Introduction of State Legislators: Bonnie Prigge, MRPC Executive Director

State legislators in attendance introduced themselves and shared their legislative priorities and committee assignments.

Rep. Tara Peters: Serves on Children and Families, Emerging Issues, Health and Mental Health and Commerce committees. She reported she would be focusing on healthcare legislation including an Omnibus Health bill.

Rep. John Hewkin: Serves on Education, Financial Institutions, Professional Registration and Insurance committees. He noted that income tax reduction will be a major focus.

Rep. Bruce Sassman: Serves on Conservation and Natural Resources, Corrections and Public Institutions, Higher Education and Workforce Development and Joint Committee on Rural Economic Development committees. He mentioned that he had filed legislation requiring driver's license exams be given in English and extending term limits.

Rep. Tony Harbison: Serves on Agriculture, Veterans, Health and Mental Health and Property Tax Reforms committees. He indicated he would be working on legislation for seniors, veterans and children, including a "destination tax" to benefit rural counties.

Presentation: Idea Exchange with State Legislators: Darryl Griffin, Chairman and Bonnie Prigge, MRPC Executive Director

Bonnie shared that board members would like to bring some of the Meramec Region's top priorities to the attention of the legislators. A full copy of the priorities would be provided to the legislators when a delegation from MRPC visits the Capitol later this month. She added that, each year, MRPC goes through a process of surveying board members to determine state priorities. These priorities are then voted on, and the top priorities are summarized in a report that will be presented to the region's legislators. Tonight, Bonnie said the board would like to share some of those top priorities.

Healthcare and Social Services: Commissioner Shane Anselm

The commissioner spoke about the need for adequate funding for behavioral health services, substance abuse treatment and mental health facilities that are accessible in rural areas.

Local Government: Presiding Commissioner Tim Schulte

The presiding commissioner expressed the board's opposition to legislation that erodes the taxing authority of municipalities and counties. He also mentioned concerns about SB3 removing tax revenues.

General: Commissioner Ray Schwartze

The commissioner spoke of the need for childcare to enable workforce participation, particularly in rural areas where costs are prohibitive for working families.

Regional Economic Development: Mayor Sean Wilson

The mayor mentioned the need for advocacy for tax incentives, grants and renovation support for small businesses in rural areas to stimulate local economies.

Education: Commissioner Jason Ward

The commissioner spoke of the need for adequate funding for rural school districts, which often have fewer resources than urban districts but provide essential services beyond education. Presiding Commissioner Tim Schulte mentioned that SB3 would hurt the schools. Rep. Harbison acknowledged that smaller schools face challenges and that one size doesn't fit all. He said he is trying to bring money back to rural communities.

Regional Planning: Bonnie Prigge, MRPC Executive Director

Bonnie mentioned that the state association for planning commissions is requesting support for legislation to increase the cap on RPC state aid from the 1965 level of \$25,000 to \$65,000 for rural councils.

Environmental: Presiding Commissioner Steve Black

The commissioner brought up the need for increased funding for water and sewer projects in small communities so they can meet environmental standards. He noted that most smaller communities don't have the funds to meet those standards.

Regional Transportation: Presiding Commissioner Joey Auxier

The commissioner addressed the need to prioritize the four-laning of Highway 63 and Highway 50 to address safety concerns and improve regional connectivity.

The representatives acknowledged the concerns and invited board members to continue to communicate their concerns.

Bonnie mentioned that a delegation from MRPC would be visiting the Capitol on Jan. 27 and would bring a full report of state priorities to share.

Rep. Peters said she and Rep. Bennie Cook would be hosting a Phelps/Maries County Day at the Capitol on Feb. 3.

Updates from Federal Legislators:

No reports were given.

External Relations Committee: Shane Anselm, chair

Commissioner Anselm reported on External Relations activities as follows:

The committee discussed the need to fill the vacant at-large position for underrepresented. Staff informed the committee that there was a possible candidate and more information would be available at the February meeting.

The committee discussed the results of the federal legislative priorities survey and selected the top priorities to include in the federal report. He noted that only 12 responses were received and encouraged members to participate in future surveys. Commissioner Anselm shared the committee's top selections with the full board. He said the committee added support for funding for Missouri S&T's Tech Hub and continued support for Fort Leonard Wood.

The committee discussed a date change needed for the February board meeting as the normal date of Feb. 12 is a holiday. It was decided the meeting would be held on Wednesday, Feb. 11. Bonnie added that TAC will also be meeting that day.

Operations Committee: Jason Ward, chair

Commissioner Ward reported on operations activities as follows:

The committee reviewed the MRPC/MRB and MRPC/RLF program financial statements for the period ending Dec. 31, 2025.

Commissioner Ward made a motion to approve the financials for the period ending Dec. 31, 2025; Presiding Commissioner Joey Auxier second the motion. The motion carried.

Staff presented the revised budget for fiscal year 2025-2026, including the leases between MRPC and MRB.

Commissioner Ward made a motion to approve the revised budget for fiscal year 2025-2026, including the leases between MRPC and MRB; Mayor Sean Wilson seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The committee reviewed proposed changes to the job descriptions for the senior housing coordinator and housing coordinator positions.

Commissioner Ward made a motion to approve the job description change for the senior housing coordinator position; Presiding Commissioner Joey Auxier seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Commissioner Ward made a motion to approve the job description change for the housing coordinator position; Presiding Commissioner Vic Stratman seconded the motion. The motion carried.

The committee tabled a discussion on a loan modification request.

Planning Committee: Joey Auxier, chair

Presiding Commissioner Auxier reported on planning activities as follows:

Presiding Commissioner Auxier reported that the committee continued its review of the CEDS goals and objectives and discussed actions that occurred over the last year.

The commissioner said the committee reviewed the Request for Proposal (RFP) for the FY26 Board Retreat.

Presiding Commissioner Joey Auxier made a motion to approve the RFP; Commissioner Jason Ward seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Housing Advisory Board: Vic Stratman, secretary

Presiding Commissioner reported on housing activities as follows:

Presiding Commissioner Stratman reported the board approved the financials for the period ending Dec. 31, 2025.

Staff presented the PHA fiscal year 2024-2025 audit report, noting it was a clean audit, and the board approved the audit report.

The revised budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year was presented by staff and approved by the board.

Transportation Advisory Committee: Anne Freand, MRPC Planning Manager

No report was given.

Environmental: Tammy Snodgrass, Assistant Director Environmental Programs Manager

Tammy reported that the Ozark Rivers Solid Waste Management District is continuing to gather surveys for its solid waste plan. She requested that cities and counties share the survey link on websites and their social media to get as much feedback as possible.

A handout of environmental activities was provided.

Meramec Community Enhancement Corporation (MCEC): Vic Stratman

Presiding Commissioner Vic Stratman reported on MCEC activities as follows:

Presiding Commissioner Stratman reported there were no current projects and no new grants since the last meeting.

Staff presented financials through Nov. 30, 2025 and the committee approved them. It was noted that the main expense was the audit.

There was a discussion of how tax benefits work for donations to MCEC and clarification that MCEC's reserves covered expense overages.

Meramec Regional Community Foundation (MRCF): Bonnie Prigge
Bonnie gave an update on grant and scholarship opportunities:

- The MRCF grant program is open until the end of January, offering two \$1,000 grants for community projects with one benefiting low-income families and the other for a non-profit.
- Scholarship programs through the Community Foundation of the Ozarks are open until mid-March.

She reported that the MRCF would meet Feb. 24 to award grants based on submitted applications.

Chairman's Report

No report was given.

Director's Report

Bonnie provided updates on various initiatives and accomplishments:

- MRPC membership dues – A committee has been formed to review the dues structure and develop recommendations by the April 1 board retreat. Serving on the committee are board members Shane Anselm, Earl Brown, T.R. Dudley, Steve Vogt, Jason Ward, Dawn Bell, Darryl Griffin, Vic Stratman and Joey Auxier.
- CDBG grants – The cities of Vienna and Dixon and the Village of Caledonia received CDGB grants. Vienna and Dixon will be doing demolition projects and the Village of Caledonia received some funding for stormwater drainage and improvements.
- Statewide CEDS – The statewide CEDS has been approved by EDA and it will be rolling out soon.
- Transportation – MoDOT is finalizing its long-range transportation plan. It's expected to open in February for public comment.
- CDBG – The CDBG program is working on its consolidated plan and action plan. Once completed, it will be open for comment, probably in February.
- Missouri Regulatory Sandbox Program – This is a new program that is designed to address regulations impacting small businesses or manufacturers and how they grow and succeed. More information to come.
- Inner-city bus survey – This is a survey designed to find the gaps in rural areas and especially in getting the elderly and disabled to medical facilities in the city.

Miscellaneous

There was extended discussion concerning the impacts of SB3. Multiple board members expressed concerns about revenue losses to counties, cities and school districts. They said implementation costs are significant while benefits to citizens are minimal. A comparison was made to the previous SB190, which board members said had similar negative impacts. Members also expressed concerns about the combined effect of income tax cuts and potential sales tax increases.

Board members were encouraged to attend MRPC Day at the Capitol on Jan. 27 to voice their concerns.

Adjourn

Commissioner Steve Vogt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 p.m. Commissioner Jason Ward seconded the motion. The motion carried.


Darryl Griffin, chair


Attest

