

NORTHWOODS RAIL TRANSIT COMMISSION

MEETING SUMMARY

GLTPA – Rhinelander

July 26, 2019

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Johnson called the meeting to order at approximately 10:01 am.

2. Introductions and Public Comment

Ms. Johnson asked for introductions from around the room. The following were present: Stacey Johnson Oneida County Economic Development Corporation, Dale Kupczyk Ashland County, Al Koskela Houghton County Board, Mike Cassidy Marinette County, Joe Pinardi Iron County WI Board, Dave Nutting Marathon County Board, John Varda WCG, Bill Korrer WI Counties Association, Tom Klimek Klimek Rail Consulting, Brian Buchanan CN, Jim Rosenberg WEDC, Dan Rickel Tomahawk Rail, Kelly Klein Iron County WI Economic Development, David Sederholm Citizen, Susan Sederholm Citizen, Jay Verhulst Vilas County Board, Sandra Verhulst Citizen, Rick Bliese Lincoln Wood Products, Jeff Ratcliffe KEDA, Bill Menge Baraga County Board, Andy Albarado Rusk County, Steve Gromala Menominee County Board, Kevin Koth Lincoln County Board, Kelly Westlund Senator Baldwin's Office, Gary Frank Oconto County, Senator Janet Bewley WI Legislature, Scott Kiser Louisiana Pacific Corp, Rich Kedzior WisDOT, Sara Guild Representative Duffy's Office, Jerry Wuorenmaa WUPPDR and Darryl Landeau NCWRPC.

Editor's Note: If you or someone you know attended the meeting in person or via teleconference but are not reflected here, please forward that information to dlandeau@ncwrpc.org. Thank you.

Public Comment: Mr. Sederholm addressed the group regarding his interest in reestablishing rail service in northern Wisconsin. Mr. Cassidy responded that the track in his area was deteriorating badly.

Senator Bewley indicated that her office has received calls regarding the condition of the line between Park Falls and Ashland.

Mr. Buchanan, CN, said that the Company wants people to come to them when they have concerns. Senator Bewley indicated that she has done that but would try again.

Mr. Verhulst announced that Vilas County intends to discontinue membership in the NRTC for 2020 and suggested that effort be made to lobby the County.

3. Approval of NRTC Meeting Notes from May 10, 2019

On a motion by Mr. Verhulst - Vilas County, seconded by Mr. Cassidy - Marinette County, the meeting notes of the May 10, 2019 meeting were approved with all in favor.

4.1 Agenda Amendment – DOT Informational Item

Ms. Johnson asked for an amendment to the agenda to allow for WisDOT to give an update and request NRTC input on a pending matter.

On a motion by Mr. Verhulst - Vilas County, seconded by Mr. Kupczyk - Ashland County, the meeting agenda was amended for a WisDOT informational item with all in favor.

Mr. Kedzior from WisDOT gave a brief update on DOT's rail programs. Of particular note is the Freight Rail Preservation Program (FRPP) which is being revised by WisDOT. There was general discussion regarding rail funding. Mr. Kedzior requested NRTC review and comment when the proposed changes come out.

4.2 Chair Person's Report

Ms. Johnson reported some of her legislative efforts with WI Paper Council; and on the announcement of legislative listening sessions on rail service in northern Wisconsin and the UP of Michigan in August. Senator Tiffany is cosponsoring these events (2 dates) with Michigan Senator McBroom. Details on these events will be sent out to the group when they become available.

5. CN Transload Locations

Mr. Buchanan with CN followed up on his presentation from the last NRTC meeting where he provided an overview of how rail operations (CN) work. The intent is to set up an interactive and on-going discussion regarding cooperative programming of rail transloading services between NRTC and CN. With that basis in mind, Mr. Buchanan presented a map of sites where, from CN's perspective, additional transloading operations might be accommodated by the railroad. The first step is to identify the businesses moving bulk commodities but not currently using rail in these areas so we determine where it might make the most sense to set up some kind of transloading operation; where those products could be brought in by truck from the surrounding area to be loaded onto trains.

There were wide-ranging questions with discussion regarding the transloading presentation. Discussion topics included commodities, location pros and cons, successful and failed examples, effective trucking distances, (75 mi. ?), road restrictions, line maintenance, and service.

6. Approve NRTC Budget for 2020

Mr. Landeau presented the proposed budget for 2020. The budget expenditures are comprised of the fee for administrative services to fund the day to day operations of the NRTC and a small reserve for miscellaneous expenses identified by the Commission. Revenue is the county membership dues. Again, there is another small incremental increase for MI counties to continue closing the dues gap between the WI and MI counties. For 2020 the increase will help maintain funding levels to compensate for the loss of Price County and pending loss of Vilas County from membership.

On a motion by Mr. Koth – Lincoln County, seconded by Mr. Klein – Iron County (WI), the Budget for 2020 was approved with amendment to reflect departure of Vilas County, with all in favor.

7. Renew NRTC Administrative Services Agreement for 2020

Mr. Landeau reviewed the agreement for administrative and fiscal services between the North Central WI Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) and the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission (NRTC). It has been set up as an annual renewal process. Basically, NCWRPC staff provides the day-to-day operational services for the NRTC including organizing meetings, preparing agendas and minutes, webpage maintenance, banking, etc.

On a motion by Mr. Kupczyk – Ashland County, seconded by Mr. Pinardi – Iron County (WI), the Administrative Services Agreement for 2020 was approved as presented, with all in favor.

8. MI Tech/LSSA Data Coop Project Update

Mr. Varda gave an update on the Data Coop study wrap up and the “next steps” coming out of the study. Essentially, pushing for the organization of action committees to focus on the restoration of specific line segments of the Great Lakes Forest Region rail system.

9. Next Meeting Date: Conflicts with the next regular quarterly date resulted in selection of *October 18, 2019* for the next NRTC meeting. (Note: the original date selected was in September to accommodate review of WisDOT material which then was not ready, so the Chair pushed the date.)

10. Adjourn

On a motion by Mr. Koskela - Houghton County, seconded by Mr. Kupczyk – Ashland County, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:40 pm with all in favor.