



November 23, 2020 – Zoom

I. **CALL TO ORDER** – 10:02 AM by Chairperson Bonnie McGlothlin

II. **ROLL CALL QUORUM: Yes**

**Commissioners Present:**

Mason County: Joe Lenius  
Muskegon County: Kay Beecham, Jennifer Hodges, Marcia Hovey-Wright,  
Ken Johnson, Bonnie McGlothlin, Bob Scolnik, Rillastine Wilkins  
Newaygo County: Burt Cooper, James Maike, James Rynberg  
Oceana County: Dean Gustafson  
WMSRDC Appointees: Rich Houtteman, James Kelly, Andrea Large  
Muskegon CC: Dale Nesbary  
West Shore CC: Crystal Young

**Commissioners Absent:**

Lake County: Howard Lodholtz  
Mason County: Nick Krieger, Charles Lange  
Oceana County: James Brown

Staff/Guests Present: Erin Kuhn, Amanda Snyder, Syndi Copeland, Kathy Evans

III. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion was made by Commissioner Maike and supported by Commissioner Cooper to approve the agenda for the November 23, 2020 Commission meeting. Motion carried.

IV. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion was made by Commissioner Hovey-Wright and supported by Commissioner Rynberg to approve the September 21, 2020 Commission meeting minutes. Motion carried.

The October 26, 2020, Executive Officer's minutes is attached for information only.

V. **PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA ITEMS**

There was no public comment.

VI. **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Commissioner McGlothlin has no report at this time.

VII. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Transportation** – An RFP to hire a consultant for the West Michigan Regional Transit Systems Governance and Organization Transition Study is currently being prepared, and will be sent to the Michigan Department of Transportation for approval before being issued in the beginning of 2021. The consultant will begin in April or May 2021.

**Economic Development** – WMSRDC staff continues to be very busy in Economic Development with technical assistance for potential EDA projects. EDA grant applications have been submitted for projects by the Newaygo County Regional Educational Service Agency (NCRESA) to run existing fiber that goes through the schools to downtown business districts and industrial parks in the cities of White Cloud, Newaygo, Fremont, and Grant; and the City of Muskegon to extend infrastructure in their industrial park site to the former prison site. WMSRDC staff has also met with leaders from Muskegon Community College FARM regarding a potential project to create a third bay in their current facility, and the City of White Cloud for infrastructure improvement in their industrial park.

Q: Commissioner Nesbary - Likelihood of success for grant approval for NCRESA

A: Erin: WMSRDC anticipates hearing 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2021.

Q: Commissioner Hovey-Wright: Are any efforts being made to reach Muskegon County rural areas with broadband?

A: Erin: Through the Commissions EDA CARES Act dollars, WMSRDC will be engaged in broadband facilitation and coordination. The process has begun to bring leadership together to start talking about issues with broadband in Muskegon County. This will be at the County level as well as a regional group for our five county area, and tapping into resources at the larger 13-county level. Connect Michigan is also involved.

Q: Commissioner Maike: Wondering how we're doing with letters of support for the NCATS project, and who should these letters be sent to.

A: Erin: Please send all letters of support to NCATS.

**Environmental** – WMSRDC is moving forward with design and engineering on Little Cedar Creek. Erin met with leaders from Oceana County to tour the Marshville Dam along Stony Creek. WMSRDC is working with local partners and NOAA to potentially include this project in our NOAA Regional Partnership grant. Kathy Evans was present to give an environmental update.

Q: Commissioner Houtteman: Is the Marshville Dam a removal project?

A: Erin: Yes

Q: Commissioner Hovey-Wright: Removing the dam?

A: Erin: Yes. This dam is very old and has pretty much failed.

**Other** - WMSRDC staff continues to work with local infrastructure owners (drinking water, waste water and road) to complete the Asset Management Self-Assessment. One perk for completing the assessment is any asset owner or local unit of government seeking funding from EGLE for water infrastructure improvements, will receive extra points on their grant applications for funding. We have set a goal to submit 15 Self-Assessments from our region by the end of 2020. Please go back to your local jurisdiction that you represent and encourage them to complete the self-assessments. Our staff is trained in the self-assessment tool and is ready to assist the asset owners with completing the assessment. Joel Fitzpatrick is the lead staff member for this project.

Q: Commissioner Houtteman – Anything encouraging self-assessment participation.

A: Erin: The Tool should only take one hour or less.

Q: Commissioner Cooper –Have any been submitted from Newaygo County?

A: Erin believes no one has replied from Newaygo. Burt asked for a copy of the Tool.

MERS Revised Policies 2020 Plan - Erin passed this to Amanda to briefly discuss the revised policies, asking for any questions. Motion was made by Commissioner Maike and supported by Commissioner Hovey-Wright to approve the MERS Revised Policies 2020 Plan. Motion carried.

**VIII. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Amanda presented the preliminary September 2020 financials. These are subject to change with the audit.

The first round of the audit, internal controls, went really well. The second round is currently in process, and is being conducted virtually due to the pandemic.

**IX. STAFF PRESENTATION – INFORMATION**

A. Kathy Evans – Environmental Update

**X. NEW BUSINESS** – WMSRDC will need to replace Commissioner Lange, Commissioner Gustafson and Commissioner Brown. Commissioner Lenius announced that he did not run for City of Ludington Council. Erin and several Commissioners thanked all of these Commissioners for their service on the board.

**XI. ROUND TABLE**

- Dean Gustafson – Expressed appreciation for allowing him to sit on the Board.
- Marcia Hovey-Wright – Nugent Sands, Muskegon County should find out next month if it is funded. The board should vote to approve the acquisition in December.
- Ken Johnson – It looks like the opening of the Convention Center in Muskegon may get pushed back a bit, but hoping for summer of 2021. Naming rights will be announced soon and should help with any new costs.
- Joe Lenius stated it's been a good run and interesting time serving on the Board.
- James Maike thanked Joe for his service on the Board. Mentioned that Newaygo County is ready for visitors and new snowmobile handbooks are available.
- Dale thanked Joe and Dean for their work on the Board. Mentioned FARM and over \$60M investment in the City of Muskegon.
- James Rynberg thanked Joe for serving on the Board, as well as Dean.
- Rillastine apologized for coming late from another meeting.
- Crystal Young announce the opening of their new building in Manistee.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Commissioner Rynberg and supported by Commissioner Lenius to adjourn at 11:30 AM. Motion carried.

NEXT MEETING: January 25, 2021 – Zoom

  
Bonnie McGlothlin, Chairperson

1-25-2021  
Date

  
Erin Kuhn, Executive Director

1-25-2021  
Date