



May 23, 2022  
10:00 AM  
Lake County

**I. CALL TO ORDER – 10:01 AM by Chairperson Bonnie McGlothin**

**II. ROLL CALL QUORUM: Yes**

**Commissioners Present**

Lake County: Len Todd  
Mason County: Ron Bacon, Lewis Squires, Kathy Winczewski  
Muskegon County: Kim Cyr, Rachel Gorman, Jennifer Hodges, Marcia Hovey-Wright, Bonnie McGlothin, Roger Morgenstern  
Newaygo County: Bryan Kolk, James Rynberg  
Oceana County: Ron Christians, Phil Morse  
Muskegon CC: Dale Nesbary  
WMSRDC Appointees: Rich Houtteman, James Kelly

**Commissioners Absent**

Muskegon County: Rillastine Wilkins  
Newaygo County: James Maike  
West Shore CC: Crystal Young  
WMSRDC Appointees: Andrea Large

Staff/Guests Present: Erin Kuhn, Amanda Snyder, Jamie Way

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion was made by Commissioner Rynberg and supported by Commissioner Hodges to approve the agenda for the May 23, 2022. Motion carried.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion was made by Commissioner Morgenstern and supported by Commissioner Rynberg to approve the Commission meeting minutes of March 28, 2022. Motion carried.

The May 5, 2022, executive officer's meeting minutes are attached for information.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA ITEMS**

None

**VI. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

A. Election of Vice Chairperson – Motion was made by Commissioner Rynberg and supported by Commissioner Nesbary to elect Commissioner Hodges for Vice Chairperson. Commissioner Hodges accepted. Commissioner Kolk nominated Commissioner Houtteman for Vice Chairperson. There was no support.

Commissioner Houtteman then declined the nomination. Motion carried for Commissioner Hodges.

## VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

**Transportation** – The Unified Work Program (UWP) will go to the Policy Committee for approval in June. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is currently out for public comment and will also go to the Policy Committee for approval at the June meeting. Once approved by the Policy Committee, both documents will go on to the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) for final approval.

**Regional Transit Study** – WMSRDC has been meeting with the city managers of Norton Shores, Roosevelt Park, Muskegon Heights, and the City of Muskegon, as well as the township supervisors from Muskegon and Fruitport regarding the interest in the potential creation of a Transit Authority moving MATS from underneath a county authority governance to a regional authority governance. Discussions are happening now.

**Economic Development** – The Cares Act grant extension has been received. The Pandemic Response and Recovery Plan (PRPP) is on track to be complete in late June/early July, but technical assistance work will continue through the end of the year.

**Environmental** – The Great Lakes AOC Conference is being held this week in Muskegon. There will be a press event at Heritage Landing with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 5 Director and other organizations to announce all management actions as complete for the Muskegon Lake Area of Concern, with the delisting process continuing. The conference starts on May 24. Erin mentioned that WMSRDC and Ramboll, a contracted engineer, received the Quality of Life and Certificate of Merit award for the Muskegon Lake Area of Concern Amoco Fish and Wildlife project from the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Greg Mund, a contract employee of WMSRDC and a pillar of environmental stewardship in West Michigan, passed away on Friday, May 20, 2022. This is a huge loss to the environmental community, and he will be missed greatly.

**Local Government Services/GIS Mapping** – Erin talked about several cemetery mapping projects which Jamie Way will be mapping. There were comments and questions from Commissioner's Houtteman, Hovey-Wright, McGlothlin, Hodges, and Morse.

**Asset Management** – The Michigan Infrastructure Council (MIC) began the second class of Asset Management Champions in April. There were nearly 90 people participating. On behalf of the Michigan Infrastructure Council, Erin will be speaking at the Government Finance Officers Association's annual meeting in Austin, Texas, regarding MIC efforts in Michigan. This includes the Champions program, Self-assessments, and Project Portal. Erin responded to Commissioner Hovey-Wright's request on more information regarding the MIC.

Kathy Winczewski asked about drowned river mouths assistance, and if Ludington qualified for this. Erin stated that this is a federal designation, so yes.

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – ACTION ITEM

Amanda presented the April 2022 financials. She stated that she has created the first draft of the FY2023 budget, and it is coming along well. Commissioner Houtteman asked if there would be a review of the budget. Amanda stated that this is done each year at the September meeting. Commissioner Hovey-Wright had a question regarding

disbursements and the plans for the Boys & Girls Club. Motion was made by Commissioner Hovey-Wright and supported by Commissioner Hodges to approve the April 2022 financials. Motion carried.

### **VIII. STAFF PRESENTATION – INFORMATION**

Erin Kuhn and Amanda Snyder – Internal Controls and Commission Operations

Erin stated that since we have so many new board members and recent questions regarding policies and procedures, she thought it would be appropriate to take a deep dive into the internal controls and commission operations at WMSRDC. She also wanted to give information regarding the role of the board members. All questions and comments are welcome.

Questions/Comments:

Commissioner Morgenstern: Indirect cost applies to any grant we get, and it changes annually?

Amanda: Yes

Commissioner Houtteman: Help us understand things within the general fund budget, like the lease agreement and car lease. How does the general budget fall under the resolution for you to sign contracts?

Erin: The general fund budget, including office contracts, falls under the work program and the indirect cost proposal.

Commissioner Houtteman: The work program and indirect cost proposal annually with the budget is the boards guidance to the operations of the Commission, and it is accepted and agreed on by the board at various board meetings. Through these contracts, WMSRDC then has the authority to sign any general fund contract?

Erin: Yes

Commissioner Morgenstern: It appears that the officers committee doesn't have any roles. He suggested more responsibilities for the officers, more meat there for the things that are outside of the state and federal grants. Commissioner Houtteman chimed in to agree with Commissioner Morgenstern. He suggested looking at things like the car lease and other decisions for the officers to have more engagement and a deeper dive on the general funds and spending and not just on the federal or state funding. Commissioner Houtteman also mentioned input on personnel decisions.

Commissioner Morgenstern: Do we have 2 different auditing firms who would each do one of the yearly audits?

Erin/Amanda: Our auditor, Brickley DeLong, does both audits. Their contract is up soon. We will likely put out an RFP just to see our options. That decision will come to the officers and the board. Our federal grantors have specific qualifications for our auditors.

Commissioner Winczewski: If they go out to RFP, Brickley DeLong could change their rate to significantly higher. Would it be worth negotiating a new rate instead to save money? If you are satisfied with the current auditor, why change?

Commissioner Cyr: Is all the staff full time?

Erin: We have 8 full-time staff, two part-time staff, and two part-time interns. Staff continues to work a hybrid schedule.

Commissioner Morgenstern: How many individual contractors do we have?

Erin: We just had Greg.

Commissioner Christians: Looking at the economics and the cost of the office lease. Is the lease around \$5,000 per month. He then asked about owning our own building.

Erin: The current office lease is \$17 per square foot but will be decreasing to \$14.25 psf starting in July.

Commissioner Hovey-Wright: When renewing or getting a new vehicle lease would you ever consider electric or hybrids?

Erin: We would consider this, depending on price. Erin then gave details on current lease savings.

Commissioner Houtteman: WMSRDC leases a car, and it is sort of leased like a fleet car. Help us understand the dynamics of the car lease.

Erin: Our insurance, MMMRA, does not differentiate between a fleet vehicle and individual use vehicle.

Amanda: The car insurance is built into the umbrella coverage. Amanda contacted MMMRA to ask about changing to a fleet vehicle. MMMRA strongly advised that WMSRDC would have to have a very robust policy which vets all employees to cover our liability.

Commissioner Houtteman: So basically, this vehicle is exclusively for the Executive Director's use?

Amanda: Yes

Commissioner Houtteman: How does the Commission handle the fuel for the car.

Erin: Fuel is paid for by the Commission credit card. Receipts are submitted to Syndi who verifies payment on the Visa statement.

Commissioner Houtteman: Once upon a time the Commission decided to give a car lease instead of a car allowance. My question regards the separation of personal use verses agency use. Does Erin turn in personal mileage for the use of the car.

Erin: The personal mileage put on the WMSRDC car is less than 5% of total miles.

Commissioner Houtteman: So, you have a personal car besides the WMSRDC car.

Erin: Yes.

Commissioner Houtteman: We all trust Erin but what is the right thing to do. What perception are we giving? Some thought should be put into the options regarding the leased car. Should she continue driving it home; park the car on the Hinman property; end the car lease and give the Executive Director a car allowance, etc.

Bonnie: Storage at Hinman would cost more to have it in the garage. It would likely be sitting out in the parking lot. This brings up the question of safety as well as sitting out in the elements. If you are talking about other staff use, it likely could be used.

Commissioner Houtteman: This is a very, unique situation. Usually, a director or city manager is afforded a car allowance and mileage is paid.

Erin: When I became Executive Director in 2014, the officer's and I had this conversation. At the time, Susan vetted the costs comparing the lease and gas against using a personal vehicle with mileage reimbursement. Because I was traveling so much, it was practical to continue the lease option. Amanda vetted the current car lease, and it was still cost effective.

Commissioner Houtteman: I still think this conversation should be addressed with the executive committee before a new lease is signed. I think having a maximum spending authority for the director does prompt those conversations. It is very normal to have a \$5,000 to \$10,000 spending limit for a director for travel.

Commissioner Morgenstern: Maybe the executive committee should review the car and other expenses like this. Does the board ask the executive committee to come up with their own guidelines for what they will review? Most leaders get car allowances.

Erin: I wouldn't have any issues with a car allowance. It is just how it has been done at WMSRDC. I did follow historical approval processes.

Commissioner Kolk: Is there a written policy on the use of the lease vehicle?

Erin: No

Commissioner Kolk: That might be a good place to start.

Commissioner Todd: After receiving several phone calls from another WMSRDC board member, the first thing he realized was that the current process puts Erin on the spot. Having the executive committee make the decision would eliminate that. Something else to consider is the type of car itself. If it is super fancy, then that might be a problem.

Commissioner McGlothin: What else should be considered by the executive committee? Lease of building, car, what else?

Commissioner Todd: The executive committee needs to create and agree on a policy that will protect Erin.

Commissioner McGlothin: Erin did contact me prior to signing a new vehicle lease. I had no objections and went by current policies. I couldn't change that. The executive committee can look over things, but it's up to this body to vote it in. No one has ever mentioned anything in the by-laws about approving higher dollar costs.

Commissioner Todd: As I mentioned, for emergent issues that letter of authorization (resolution) is great. But for general business, higher value dollar items need to go back to the executive committee, who needs to establish their own guidelines for the threshold for bringing it to the committee versus a general cost where Erin is on her own.

Commissioner Morgenstern: Maybe set a dollar amount limit, like 15K or so and that takes the burden off the individual. If they can vote by email, this would be helpful as well, so it doesn't hold up processes.

Commissioner Nesbary: Great conversation to have. The conversation needs to happen here in the boardroom, and everyone is in the loop. There isn't really a 'norm' for this issue, but this board can set the norm as they see fit as a unified group.

Commissioner Hodges: I believe Dale was alluding to having the executive committee review the rules and the norms. Then make suggestions and set new rules to be reviewed and agreed upon by the full board.

Erin: This is a good time to review and enhance the bylaws. We can start the conversations at the June executive committee meeting to bring forth edits at the July meeting for board input, and final approval at the September board meeting. The organization policies and procedures can be looked at following the by-law updates

Commissioner Hodges: We hired an executive director to run this organization and to make certain decisions. To revamp the policies to become too detail oriented at our level, is inappropriate. We do not want to get into the weeds too much.

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

## **X. PUBLIC COMMENTS – WMSRDC PROGRAMS**

There were no comments on WMSRDC programs.

## **XI. ROUND TABLE**

- Ron Christians – Oceana County has a new administrator, Tracy Byard, from Clare County. We're sorry to see Dr. Sobie retire. Glad to see more work is being done on Big Sandy Bend. Pentwater received more money since the Army Corp of Engineers found us a recreational-type entry into the channel. We received \$100,000 to get an emergency dredge underway. Oceana County contributed \$20,000 ARPA to this project. Work has begun on a master plan for a new sheriff's office and jail. Bice and Associates will help with that. We hope this will go to voters in August. Oceana County has partnered with Life EMS Ambulance to try and recruit more young people to train as EMTs.
- Kim Cyr - Dune Harbor Park in Norton Shores dedicated 214 acres on the south lake. Funding for the 163 acres on the north lake will come later this year. Majority of funds came from a DNR trust funds grant and donations of private funds.

Muskegon County Airport is seriously looking at a proposal from Southern Airways Express as the main airway provider.

- Rachel Gorman – Happy to be part of the WMSRDC board. A road diet experiment in Muskegon will happen later this year. The board will get an invitation to an open house presentation. The city manager search has begun. Three firms have been interviewed to complete this task.
- Jennifer Hodges – The water policy board continues work on the channel crossing project. Muskegon Area District Library hired a new director. Ron Suszek is coming from San Antonio, Texas.
- Rich Houtteman – Wastewater has a large solar project coming together. They are seeking solar sights and looking for sites.
- Marcia Hovey Wright – Dune Harbor Park will provide an opportunity for public input, and hopefully they will donate to the park as well. Muskegon County approved the appointment of Matt Farr as the Deputy Administrator. The county is moving to Baker College Campus for all non-court business. This saves the county several million dollars in renovation expenses. The county is discussing how to spend the marijuana tax dollars, and they approved a clerical staff raise for the prosecutor's office.
- James Kelly – The Industrial Assessment Center, through a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy, is a service that is looking to pick up more activity in west Michigan specifically. This involves an assessment regarding energy waste and productivity in manufacturing and commercial businesses. First Impressions Tourism (FIT) Assessment Program has a community development team which works across the state, providing a secret shopper in local small businesses, and relating to tourism. They are working with MEDC to bring it to more communities as well as larger communities. MSU Extension is hosting a garden day here in Lake County this Saturday.
- Bonnie McGlothlin – Thanks to Dr. Nesbary for his service on the board, and we wish him well in his future endeavors.
- Roger Morgenstern – City of Norton Shores received 3.6M in ARPA funding which are being discussed. Happy to hear about discussions between MATS and the transportation authority. Want to thank the county for the work at Dune Harbor Park and great example of collaboration. Norton Shores is building a new cemetery near Ellis Road as their old cemetery is almost full.
- Dale Nesbary – Muskegon Community College thanks Consumers Energy and Commissioner Houtteman for the \$200k investment in young kids and high school. MCC is taking the lead in a surgical tech apprenticeship program. The new President, John Selman, begins on July 1.
- Jim Rynberg – Aldi's is coming to Fremont. There is a seven-acre piece of land which the city negotiated with Nestle/Gerber, for a housing development for new single-family housing, apartments, and senior housing. The Baby food festival is coming in July.
- Lewis Squires – The budget is very stable at \$16 million. We received a good report from health department and good vaccination rate. Our senior agency is coming back. Mason County is the Brownfield authority and has more restrictions than other areas. There was a vote about changing some of the restrictions, but it did not go through. There is a big meeting regarding broadband coming soon, and they are also looking at solar.
- Len Todd – GIS system just came online in Lake County. The Commission took the ARPA funds and asked the community what projects they would like to see accomplished. Conservation Resource Alliance has four major projects. Erin is working with them to coordinate this work. Lake County Models and Flyers RC jet shows on June 11 and August 20. Join Lake County for the festivities!
- Kathy Winczewski – The City of Ludington and Mason County are at odds over brownfields situations. They want to come together and work on a solution. The city wants development, and the county wants to limit what can go in there. Memorial

Day is the beginning of their summer season. Marijuana is a big issue right now in Ludington. The city is divided and extremely controversial. No Mow May – the idea is to mow the front and leave the back to help the bees.

Commissioner McGlothlin announced President Nesbary's retirement open house on June 2, from 3:00 – 6:00 PM, at Muskegon Community College. There will be speakers and food.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Commissioner Houtteman and supported by Commissioner Kelly to adjourn at 12:08 PM. Motion carried.

NEXT MEETING: **July 25, 2022** – Oceana County

  
Bonnie McGlothlin, Chairperson

  
Erin Kuhn, Executive Director

7-25-2022  
Date

7-25-2022  
Date