



# TRI-COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

EST. 1958

## EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

456 Fulton St. Suite 401

Peoria, IL 61602

**Greg Menold, CHAIRMAN**

**(Chuck Nagel, Camille Coates, Russ Crawford, Rita Ali, Autum Jones,  
John Kahl, and Danny Phelan)**

***Monday, February 10, 2025 9:00 a.m.***

## MINUTES

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Greg Menold called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. **Roll Call**

Present: Greg Menold, Chuck Nagel, Russ Crawford, Rita Ali, Autum Jones, John Kahl and Danny Phelan. Also present were Patrick Urich-Peoria City Manager, Amanda Beadles-Chillicothe Economic Development Director, and Eric Miller, Ray Lees and Lori Reynolds from TCRPC.

3. **Public Input:** None

4. **Motion to approve November 18, 2024, minutes**

Chuck Nagel motioned to approve the November 18, 2024 minutes, and John Kahl seconded the motion. Motion carried.

5. **Motion to Retain as Confidential or Release to Public the following Executive Session minutes: August 17, 2014, February 23, 2015, March 2, 2015, March 11, 2015, March 16, 2015, June 20, 2016, October 15, 2018**

John Kahl motioned to retain as confidential, Russ Crawford seconded, and the motion carried. Tracking sheets were circulated for signatures.

6. **Executive Director report**

New administration has put us in an awkward position. When writing grants, we tend to use buzz words that conflict with the DEI which are no longer favorable. So we took some time to smooth out the LRTP. There's not a project on the high priority list that's not necessary. EPA Brownfield is set, first meeting is tomorrow. It is hoped that Peoria Lake will be used for U of I students to do surveys and studies.

7. **Discussion regarding probable requests from local jurisdictions requesting financial assistance in support of high priority projects**

a. **City of Chillicothe - IL29 BNSF viaduct**

Eric Miller stated this project has been around for many years and rail projects are notoriously hard to deal with. There is conflict between the state and BNSF railroad. Chillicothe doesn't really have an interest other than resident safety. Tri-County hired

Hanson Engineers to do a benefit cost analysis, but it won't get federal funding at this point. Chillicothe observers say there are 75 trains a day but BNSF reports to the government there are 50. BNSF says it would take 48 hours to repair if it fails. In reality, it would be 2 weeks. Hanson would like an additional \$30,000 for additional tasks including engaging the railroad directly, to assist with getting the score higher in order to receive federal funding.

Amanda Beadles reported that the additional Hanson fee would be \$10,000 for design, and \$20,000 for meetings with all parties involved. The viaduct is over 100 years old and this project has been being worked on for 25 years. The concern is the crumbling cement eventually causing a catastrophic accident. The railroad's 48 hour plan is to dump the area full of material and build the railroad across the top of it, essentially blocking the road from any use. Chillicothe is trying to plan ahead to avoid that. The City Council agreed to \$15,000, with the other half coming from Tri-County in order to increase/continue Hanson's work.

Eric stated that this needs to move quickly and go to the Commission for approval this fiscal year, for \$15,000 in local funds. Hanson said road improvements also need to go into a multi-year plan. Chillicothe has a plan, which speaks volumes to their commitment. If the viaduct fails, it affects their commerce. Congressman LaHood's office is engaged in the plan and has funded similar projects. We're having incremental progress, let's keep moving forward.

Danny Phelan stated that Peoria County has federal lobbyists who might be interested in helping. Russ offered to talk to lobbyists.

Eric stated that a resolution will be put together for the March Commission meeting.

**b. City of Peoria Passenger Rail**

Eric Miller stated that we have identified a list of high priority projects for the region, and we need to put our best efforts out there, and do the groundwork in order to submit the best possible applications to compete for the discretionary dollars that are available. The City of Peoria has a project that is really a regional project, in fact a statewide project, and local funds are needed to move the project forward.

Mayor Ali reported that this project really started 4 years ago when former US Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood and 20 local leaders in the areas of education, business, health care, the trades, employers, Peoria County, and Tri-County, which has now grown to about 50 members up and down the corridor to Chicago, after doing several studies, and it is now an official state rail plan. Step 1 of the project came with \$500,000 in funding, so it didn't cost anything. Step 2 requires 10% of the total project cost and the federal government pays the rest, and Step 3 requires 20% of the total project cost and the federal government pays the rest. Once Step 3 is completed, you're in the pipeline for implementation and construction. In the process of working with Federal Railway

Administration (FRA), we found out we only need to get to Joliet, then IDOT takes it the rest of the way to Union Station in Chicago.

City Manager Urich explained that Step 2 is where we put together the actual service plan and beef up the initial feasibility study. This will take \$4million and about 30 months to complete. That will be about 2.5 years and about \$2million for CSX to do their analysis. In 2022, there was an intergovernmental agreement to raise \$260,000 for the grant application, and there is \$53,000 unspent from that. Need an additional \$86,000. Can we go to IDOT to contribute? Since it's moving from a local project to statewide, they should be able to. Can we ask all of the communities to re-up at the same level and spread it over multiple fiscal years?

Eric asked if there is momentum to take a resolution to the Commission to commit \$50,000 from local funds. We don't want to start over having come this far. Those that give to Tri-County don't need to give again, they've already given.

City Manager Urich sent an email to the participating communities to let them know that if they're not comfortable, we can spread it over several years, so he expects them all to be able to budget for it.

Danny Phelan would like to have an exact dollar amount before going to the Commission.

City Manager Urich stated that Mayor Ali has already reached out to IDOT to stay on their radar. There are about 69 of these projects around the country, and about 11 of them touch on Chicago.

Eric stated there will be a resolution at the March Commission meeting for \$50,000 payable over 2 fiscal years.

**8. Other**

- a. Danny asked how the staff is feeling about the change to IMRF. Eric stated there are no complaints other than the excessive amount time spent switching funds over from Nationwide.
- b. Next meeting will be March 17, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

**9. Adjournment**

John Kahl motioned to adjourn, seconded by Chuck Nagel. Meeting was adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

Submitted by: Eric Miller, Executive Director  
Recorded and transcribed by: Lori Reynolds