

**Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting of the
West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC)
Thursday, February 12, 2026; 10:00 a.m.
Banbury Place, Building 2 Room 405H, Eau Claire, WI**

Commissioners Present: John Frank, Louie Okey, Joe Waichulis, George Rohmeyer, Sharon Kelly, Adam Accola (virtual), Ryan Sicard (virtual)

Staff Present: Scott Allen (virtual), Susan Badtke, Erin Whyte, Kim Zimmerman

1. **Call to Order** - Chair Frank called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and requested that Office Manager Erin Whyte take roll call; a quorum was present for the purpose of doing business.
2. **Review and Approve Minutes of December 11, 2025, Executive Committee Meeting** - A motion to approve the minutes was made by Waichulis, seconded by Okey; motion carried.
3. **Discuss Recommended Appointment to the Regional Business Fund, Inc. (RBF) Board of Directors** – Executive Director Allen gave a background on the request, stating that WCWRPC makes an appointment to the RBF Board of Directors every three years. With the term of the current appointment having expired in March 2025, the Committee is requested to make a recommendation to the full Commission for the March 19, 2026, meeting. Staff recommends continuing for one final term the reappointment of Dan Lytle. A motion to reappoint Dan Lytle for the remaining two years was made by Okey, seconded by Waichulis; motion carried.
4. **Update to WCWRPC Employee Handbook to Add a Generative Artificial Intelligence Policy** – Allen gave a brief background on this policy, stating that he, Finance Manager Kim Zimmerman, and Chair Frank have prepared a revised draft policy for review and discussion that incorporates changes and suggestions from the December 11, 2025, Committee meeting. Several modifications were discussed, including: adjusting the definition for Artificial Intelligence, defining the term “hallucinations”; adding content from the email/voicemail policy to Sec. VII.B. on A.I. monitoring; adding a Sec. VII.D. to have the policy reviewed annually by the Executive Director with a summary report to be shared with the Executive Committee; adding the Executive Committee as oversight under Sec. IX on reporting requirements and to Sec. XII on policy violations. A motion to make the revisions and modifications as discussed was made by Sicard, seconded by Accola; motion carried.
5. **Update to WCWRPC Office Procedures Manual to Revise the Meal Allowance While Traveling Policy** – Allen explained, last revised in 2017, dollar amounts and expense guidelines are recommended to be updated going into 2026. Finance Manager Kim Zimmerman prepared a draft revision for consideration and has researched member counties and neighboring RPCs as requested at the December 11, 2025, Committee meeting. A motion to approve the revision for changes to the meal allowance was made by Okey, seconded by Waichulis; motion carried.
6. **Motion to go into Closed Session** – Frank stated that pursuant to the provisions of Section 19.85(1)(c) of Wisconsin Statutes to “consider employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility” and pursuant to the provisions of Section 19.85(1) (e) and (g) of Wisconsin Statutes to “review loan applications, negotiate the terms for investment of public funds, and confer with legal counsel for the governmental body who is rendering oral or written advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved,” a motion to go into closed session was in order, and was so motioned by Waichulis, seconded by Kelly.

7. **Roll Call Vote** - Frank requested that a roll call vote be taken for closed session. After unanimous roll call vote, the meeting went into closed session; Office Manager Whyte stepped out for the closed session.
8. **Discussion of Open Associate Planner Position** – Allen explained, as approved in the 2026 budget, recruitment is pending to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Associate Planner Edwin Rothrock. Allen outlined the proposed staffing updates and recruitment process and timeline.
9. **Any Appropriate Motion/Action** – Motion to approve the timeline as presented was made by Okey, seconded by Kelly; motion carried.
10. **Preview of Annual Levy for 2027 Budget** – A handout of the options was in the packet for the Committee to preview, and Allen opened the discussion on the annual levy amount to be charged to member counties for the 2027 calendar year. A motion to bring a recommended 3% increase (Option 4) to the full Commission at the March meeting was made by Okey, seconded by Kelly; motion carried.
11. **Report on Funding Set-Aside Balance Relating to Sick Leave Inventory for WCWRPC Staff**
A policy was adopted in 2019 to calculate and set aside funds for sick leave payouts and report the yearly amount to the Executive Committee. A handout of the balance sheet was provided in the Committee packet. Zimmerman explained we have one new retiree for sick pay out, and the fund is in good standing. This item was informational only – no action taken.
12. **Community Needs Survey** – Allen explained, with the pending implementation of both a new Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and a new Long Range Transportation Plan, staff have been reviewing opportunities to broaden our outreach efforts throughout the region's communities. One tool under consideration is a basic community needs survey, of which staff requested feedback from the Committee prior to launching after the April election cycle. The Committee gave suggestions such as focus on comprehensive plans, community health, and working with other nonprofits. Recipients to include in a survey were also suggested, including lake districts and school districts. Survey language or questions highlighting growth pressures and impacts from the Twin Cities was suggested for St. Croix County and Polk County. This item was informational only – no action taken.
13. **Any Other Business or Updates** - Allen gave an update on a new project for the City of Altoona Safe Steps Home Improvement Program and noted the Committee may need a special meeting soon to approve the agreement. There is also interest in the RPC partnering with Momentum West to facilitate discussion on data centers.
14. **Next Commission Meeting Date** - Thursday, March 19, 2026 – Chippewa County Highway Department, 801 E. Grand Ave., Chippewa Falls, WI
15. **Next Executive Committee Meeting Date** - Thursday, April 9, 2026, unless the City of Altoona agreement needs approval, in which case a virtual-only meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 2:30 p.m.
16. **Adjourn** - The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.