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**Sponsor:** Public Works

**Meeting Date:** 4/9/2024

**Title:** 2024 Funding Commitment to the Great River Rail Commission

**File Number:** 2024-106

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**Background and Rationale:**

The Great River Rail Commission (Commission) is a joint powers board established under Minnesota Statutes, Section 471.59. Member parties on the Commission include the regional railroad authorities from Ramsey County, Goodhue County, Wabasha County, Washington County and Winona County, the La Crosse Area Planning Committee, the cities of Cottage Grove, Goodview, Hastings, Lake City, Newport, Red Wing, Saint Charles, Saint Paul, Saint Paul Park, Utica, Wabasha and Winona, and Wacouta Township.

The Commission actively supports the implementation of the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Second Train, a new daily round-trip passenger train service between Union Depot in Saint Paul and Union Station in Chicago. In 2021, the Commission used its communication resources to inform the public and activate support for the project. The Commission also successfully lobbied state legislators to provide \$10 million as Minnesota's share of the matching funds to a federal grant secured by the Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation. The Minnesota Department of Transportation and Wisconsin Department of Transportation are leading the development and implementation of the project. The Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Second Train is expected to begin service in 2024.

Pursuant to the members' Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), the five regional railroad authorities and the La Crosse Area Planning Committee are financial parties, responsible for payment of annual dues that fund the Commission's annual work plan. The dues are based on a formula established in the JPA that includes population, existing passenger rail route mileage and station stops within the jurisdiction of each financial party and a base amount shared equally among all financial parties.

The Commission adopted its 2024 Work Plan and Budget of \$40,000 on September 7, 2023. Within the Commission's final, adopted budget, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority's 2024 funding commitment was identified as \$16,400.

More information on the Great River Rail Commission can be found at:

[<https://www.greatriverrail.org/>](https://www.greatriverrail.org/)

**Recommendation:**

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority resolved to:

1. Accept the Great River Rail Commission's 2024 Work Plan and Budget.
2. Approve the payment of \$16,400 to the Great River Rail Commission as the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority funding commitment to the Great River Rail Commission 2024 Work Plan and Budget.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Martinson, seconded by Commissioner Reinhardt. Motion passed.

Aye: - 7: Frethem, Martinson, McGuire, Moran, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Xiong

By: 

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Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board