



# Regional Railroad Authority Agenda

15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102  
651-266-9200

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**April 9, 2024 - 10 a.m.**

**Council Chambers - Courthouse Room 300**

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## **ROLL CALL**

1. **Agenda of April 9, 2024 is Presented for Approval** [2024-126](#)  
Sponsors: County Manager's Office  
Approve the agenda of April 9, 2024.
2. **Minutes from March 19, 2024 are Presented for Approval** [2024-127](#)  
Sponsors: County Manager's Office  
Approve the March 19, 2024 Minutes.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

3. **2024 Funding Commitment to the Great River Rail Commission** [2024-106](#)  
Sponsors: Public Works
  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.

## **CORRIDOR UPDATES**

## **ADJOURNMENT**



# Regional Railroad Authority

## Request for Board Action

15 West Kellogg Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102  
651-266-9200

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**Item Number:** 2024-126

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

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**Sponsor:** County Manager's Office

**Title**

Agenda of April 9, 2024 is Presented for Approval

**Recommendation**

Approve the agenda of April 9, 2024.

# Regional Railroad Authority

## Request for Board Action

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**Item Number:** 2024-127

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

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**Sponsor:** County Manager's Office

**Title**

Minutes from March 19, 2024 are Presented for Approval

**Recommendation**

Approve the March 19, 2024 Minutes.

**Attachments**

1.March 19, 2024 Minutes

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**March 19, 2024 - 10 a.m.**

**Council Chambers - Courthouse Room 300**

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The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority met in regular session at 10:12 a.m. with the following members present: Frethem, Martinson, McGuire, Moran, Reinhardt, Xiong and Chair Ortega. Also present was Johanna Berg, County Manager.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Frethem, Martinson, McGuire, Moran, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Xiong

1. Agenda of March 19, 2024 is Presented for Approval [2024-088](#)

Sponsors: County Manager's Office

Motion by Martinson, seconded by Xiong. Motion passed.

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

2. Minutes from February 6, 2024 are Presented for Approval [2024-089](#)

Sponsors: County Manager's Office

Motion by Reinhardt, seconded by Xiong. Motion passed.

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

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

3. First Amendment to the Operating Agreement with National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) [2024-007](#)

Sponsors: Public Works

Discussion can be found in archived video.

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

Resolution: [R2024-006](#)

4. Second Amendment to Station Lease Agreement with National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) [2024-006](#)

Sponsors: Public Works

Motion by Martinson, seconded by McGuire. Motion passed.

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

Resolution: [R2024-007](#)

5. Lease Agreement with Double Track Interactive, LLC dba Choo Choo Bob's Train Store for Retail Space at Union Depot [2024-073](#)

Sponsors: Property Management

Motion by Martinson, seconded by McGuire. Motion passed.

Aye: Frethem, Martinson, McGuire, Moran, Ortega, Reinhardt, and Xiong  
Resolution: R2024-008

### **CORRIDOR UPDATES**

Discussion can be found on archived video.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Ortega declared the meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m.

# Regional Railroad Authority

## Request for Board Action

**Item Number:** 2024-106

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

**Sponsor:** Public Works

**Title**

2024 Funding Commitment to the Great River Rail Commission

**Recommendation**

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.

**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.greatriversrail.org/>

**County Goals** (Check those advanced by Action)

☐ Well-being

☒ Prosperity

☒ Opportunity

☒ Accountability

**Racial Equity Impact**

The Commission advocates for the implementation of faster and more frequent passenger train service between Saint Paul, MN and Chicago, IL. The Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Second Train Project will add another affordable and accessible travel option that is better connected to urban centers and other destinations. Demographic data for the entire service area is undetermined; however, Union Depot is the only passenger train station in the Twin Cities, serving all of Ramsey County and the entire metro area population. Contracts for construction of track and signal improvements will comply with federal rules for hiring of disadvantaged and minority-owned businesses.

**Community Participation Level and Impact**

The Commission discussed the draft 2024 Work Plan and Budget at their meeting on June 1, 2023 and adopted the final version at its meeting on September 7, 2023. This board action serves to inform the public of the Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority's funding commitment to the Commission.

☒ Inform      ☐ Consult      ☐ Involve      ☐ Collaborate      ☐ Empower

**Fiscal Impact**

Funding in the amount of \$16,400 for Ramsey County's funding commitment to the Commission is available in the 2024 Public Works Multimodal Planning operating budget. The Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Transportation will manage the construction of the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Second Train improvements.

**Last Previous Action**

On February 21, 2023, Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority approved a payment of \$15,060 to the Great River Rail Commission for its financial commitment to the 2023 Commission budget (Resolution R2023-007).

**Attachments**

1. Great River Rail Commission adopted 2024 Work Plan and Budget



## **Great River Rail Commission**

### **2024 Work Plan and Budget: Approved September 7, 2023**

#### **1. Passenger and Freight Rail Advocacy Activities**

The Great River Rail Commission (Commission) will work with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Amtrak, state and local government stakeholder partners, and others to continue the advancement and development of more frequent and faster passenger train service between Chicago and Saint Paul along the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Rail Corridor. To accomplish this, the Commission will do the following:

- Monitor progress and offer guidance on the development and implementation of the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Second Train and other passenger rail service initiatives.
- Provide a means for public engagement and an outlet for public information during the development and implementation of the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Second Train and other passenger rail studies where public engagement is part of the work scope.
- Monitor progress and offer guidance on freight rail studies that impact the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Rail Corridor and rail activities in the United States that could have an impact on the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Second Train.
- Provide comments on the draft Minnesota State Rail Plan during its update cycle.

General activities will be led by Commission staff working with agency staff to advise the Commission on when its involvement is needed.

#### **2. Legislative Advocacy and Coordination**

As needed, the Commission will continue to develop policy positions and work cooperatively with the Minnesota Department of Transportation and other passenger rail stakeholders to continue the advancement and development of more frequent and faster passenger train service in the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Rail Corridor. To accomplish this, the Commission will do the following:

- Lobby the Minnesota legislature and the Governor's Office in support of Minnesota Department of Transportation passenger rail project and program funding requests and policy initiatives, or to write separate bills.
- Develop advocacy materials and messaging to support Minnesota Department of Transportation passenger rail project and program funding requests and policy initiatives, or separate bills written by the Commission.
- Lobby the Minnesota legislature and Governor's Office in opposition to funding cuts or policy initiatives that could be detrimental to the Commission's position on passenger rail in the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Rail Corridor.
- Attend legislative hearings and arrange for Commission members to testify.
- Advocate for rail crossing improvements and other improvements that improve speed, safety and reliability of passenger and freight trains.
- Advocate for customer service staff and capital investments at stations to provide a better customer experience.





- Coordinate lobbying efforts and advocacy efforts with government affairs staff from the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Amtrak, state and local government stakeholder partners, and others.
- Consider membership in similar advocacy organizations such as the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission and Rail Passengers Association.

Advocacy and legislative coordination activities will be led by Commission staff working with the Chair to identify which items merit Commission involvement. If Commission involvement is merited and time allows, the items will be brought to the Commission for discussion. If time does not allow, the Chair will determine whether the Commission shall be involved. In all instances, the Chair shall be the first option as spokesperson for the Commission.

### **3. Public Engagement**

The Commission's public engagement activities will be developed to promote and increase public awareness of the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Second Train and any future phases of work, the larger Midwest Regional Rail Plan as it connects to and complements passenger rail service in the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Rail Corridor, and the importance of investing in more frequent and faster passenger rail service. These activities will be separate from but often coordinated with the public engagement activities by Minnesota Department of Transportation, Amtrak and others. Specific Commission activities will include:

- Promote the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Second Train to build awareness of the service and boost ridership.
- Promote the implementation of additional proposed passenger rail service in the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Rail Corridor that is shown in the Federal Railroad Administration's Midwest Regional Rail Plan and Amtrak's Connects US plan.
- Maintain and update the Commission website and social media channels. Send e-newsletters to a list of key stakeholders and news releases to media.
- Develop advocacy materials for distribution to legislators, key stakeholders, and the public.
- Revise the Strategic Communications Plan as needed, including maintaining and updating a list of key stakeholders and media.
- Assist in planning and holding special events, including presentations to civic and community groups throughout the Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago Rail Corridor.
- Support for similar advocacy organizations (e.g., All Aboard Minnesota).
- Facilitate meetings of the Business Roundtable groups in the Twin Cities, Red Wing, Winona, and La Crosse and assist in their development into an advocacy subcommittee to the Commission.
- Maintain communications with the Commission, area media, other passenger rail advocacy groups and the public about Commission meetings and outreach events, state legislation and federal laws affecting passenger rail funding and policy, and other news related to passenger and freight rail.





Public engagement activities will be led by Commission staff working with the Commission's public communications consultant. Public engagement strategies will continue to be discussed with the Chair before being brought to the Commission.

#### **4. Management, Policy, and Administrative Activities**

Commission activities will include but not be limited to the following:

- Prepare and adopt the 2025 Work Plan and Budget.
- Review insurance needs and procure appropriate insurance.
- Provide Commission and staff administration.
- Manage Commission finances and expenses.

Management, policy, and administrative activities will be led by Commission staff. The deliverables will continue to be brought before the Commission for their approval.





## 2024 Budget/Expenditures

<b>Expenditure Category</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Advocacy and Legislative Coordination	
- Materials	\$250
- Special Events/Mileage <sup>1</sup>	\$250
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$500</b>
State Legislative Lobbying	<b>\$0</b>
Public Communications Assistance	
- Implement 2024 GRRC Work Plan	<b>\$35,000</b>
Management/Administration	
- Federal Trademark	\$750
- Insurance	\$1,250
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>
Contingency	<b>\$2,500</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> Travel to out of state events/conferences would be the responsibility of each individual member.

Note: Multiple Financial Parties currently have contracts with federal and state lobbyists. These lobbyists may provide federal and state lobbying services as an in-kind contribution of the Financial Party members to the Commission.





## Final 2024 Revenue

Revenue Source	Amount
Federal Appropriations	\$0
Subtotal	\$0
State Appropriations	\$0
Subtotal	\$0

Financial Party	Percentage <sup>1</sup>	2024 Contribution
Goodhue County	11.5%	\$4,600
La Crosse Area Planning Committee	14.7%	\$5,880
Ramsey County	41.0%	\$16,400
Wabasha County	4.7%	\$1,880
Washington County	15.2%	\$6,080
Winona County	12.9%	\$5,160
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> Per the Amended and restated Joint Powers Agreement (adopted 2017) and rounded to the nearest tenth, the Financial Parties' contribution is based on the following formula: 50% based on the proportionate share of population among all Financial Parties; 10% based on the proportionate share of corridor mileage among all Financial Parties; 31% based on the location of existing or planned high speed passenger rail stations within the Financial Parties' jurisdiction; and 9% allocated equally among the Financial Parties.



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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:**

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**Recommendation:**

The Ramsey County Regional Railroad Authority resolved to:

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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

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

By: 

Mee Cheng, Chief Clerk - County Board