

RESOLUTION**ROCK COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

Supervisor Jim Farrell
INITIATED BY



3/9/2023
DATE DRAFTED

Establishing an Ad Hoc Committee on Passenger Rail Development

WHEREAS, the Rock County Board of Supervisors, in Resolution R-2022-82 put forth by Supervisor Jim Farrell, expressed support for a Rock County Amtrak Service Connection; and,

WHEREAS, that resolution noted the many benefits of passenger rail, including economic development, workforce development, and a more stable and reliable transportation system; and,

WHEREAS, at the direction of the Board, the County Administrator submitted a letter to the Federal Rail Administration expressing interest in participating in the Corridor Identification and Development Program to be considered as part of the connection between Milwaukee and Madison; and,

WHEREAS, following the submission of this letter, Supervisor Farrell and the County Administrator have met multiple times with staff from the High Speed Rail Alliance, which advocates for the expansion of passenger rail; and,

WHEREAS, these experts have recommended that expanding passenger rail through Rock County may be more likely to come from an expansion of current Metra routes from Chicago through the northwest suburbs; and,

WHEREAS, the Janesville Planning Organization recommends the Ad Hoc Committee to read the 2021 Rail Study completed by the Beloit Planning Organization and consult the Janesville and Beloit MPO before embarking on a future regional transportation initiative; and,

WHEREAS, the High Speed Rail Alliance also suggests that a committee of local stakeholders is necessary to formalize the planning process and increase the likelihood that the federal government will provide a Corridor Identification and Development Program planning grant to Rock County during the March 2024 grant cycle.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rock County Board of Supervisors duly assembled this 13th day of April, 2022, does hereby establish an Ad Hoc Committee on Passenger Rail Development consisting of seven members, including three County Board members and four community members with knowledge of passenger rail. The Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee and all members shall be appointed by the Chair of the Rock County Board of Supervisors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Ad Hoc Committee shall be authorized to meet until April 2024, after which time the County Board may reauthorize the Ad Hoc Committee if necessary to continue the planning process.

FISCAL NOTE:

Per County Board Rule IV-C, County Board Supervisors who are members of additional special, single purpose or ad hoc committees are eligible for per meeting allowances and mileage reimbursement. Citizen members of such committees shall be eligible for mileage reimbursement only.

Sherry Oja
Finance Director

LEGAL NOTE:

The County Board is authorized to take this action pursuant to §§ 59.01 & 59.51, Wis. Stats., as well as Rule IV-C of the County Board Rules.

Richard Greenlee
Corporation Counsel

ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE:

If the County Board wishes to continue to pursue the possibility of expanding passenger rail into Rock County, establishing a planning committee would be the necessary next step. The initial goal of the committee would be to position the County to receive a federal Corridor Identification and Development Program planning grant. This grant would provide up to \$500,000 and not require any local match. Later planning, project development, and construction phases, which would need future authorization by the County Board before proceeding, would require between a 10% and 20% state or local match. The Board will want to balance the priority of moving ahead with passenger rail planning with potential future costs and any staff time that may be needed to support the work of the committee.

Josh Smith
County Administrator

Committee Action

Planning & Development Committee

Planning & Development Committee recommended this resolution for approval by a unanimous voice vote.