

**Minutes of the
East Wisconsin Counties Railroad Consortium
Meeting of March 11, 2026**

East Wisconsin Counties Railroad Consortium Meeting was called to order by Chairman Thomas E. Winker on March 11, 2026, at approximately 10:05 a.m., at the Dodge County Administration Building, Administration Auditorium, 127 E. Oak Street, Juneau, Wisconsin.

The Consortium rose to say the Pledge of Allegiance.

Certification of Public Notice: Kim Nass certified that the notice of this meeting complies with all applicable requirements of Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law.

Present: Char Holtan and Steve Balsiger, Columbia County; Jeffrey Caine and Jim Mielke, Dodge County; Karen Madigan and John Zorn, Fond du Lac County; Dennis Mulder and Charlie Wielgosh, Green Lake County; Shawn Rolland, Milwaukee County; Tom Winker and Marty Wolf, Ozaukee County; Jon Kuhlow and Chuck Born, Sheboygan County; Robert Hartwig and Jeff Schleif, Washington County; and Donald Nussbaum and Howard Miller, Winnebago County.

Excused: None.

Others Present: Ken Lucht, WSOR/WATCO; Lisa Stern, WisDOT; and Kim Nass and Kelly Lepple, Dodge County Corporation Counsel Office.

Public Comment: None.

Approval of Draft Minutes of September 10, 2025: Motion by Zorn/Mielke to approve the minutes of September 10, 2025. Motion carried.

Financial Report: Jeff Caine reported for the period ending February 28, 2026. The balance in the checkbook as of August 31, 2025, was \$1,003.69. Deposits – \$10,404.34, Expenditures – \$5,555.41, and Transfers – \$4,852.00. Total EWCRC money on deposit in the Local Government Investment Pool as of December 18, 2025, is \$1,795,585.30. The interest rate for December 2025 was 3.82%. Motion by Caine/Schleif to approve the Financial Report as read. Motion carried.

Report of WisDOT Railroads and Harbors: Lisa Stern reported that Sarah Simonson was recently hired as the new Freight Rail Program Manager and will attend the next meeting of the EWCRC.

Lisa Stern gave a Power Point presentation on the Janesville Bridge Project. The presentation outlined the background of the bridge project, the location of the five bridges, the funding sources for the bridge project and the scope of work for each of the five bridges. The presentation also outlined the railroad operations and provided an estimated project schedule. The Union Pacific Final design is projected to be completed by the end of 2026 with construction starting in 2027.

Lisa Stern also reported that the Merrimac Bridge work is complete and a ribbon cutting event will occur in late April of 2026. When WSOR knows that date for sure, they will let everyone know and all are welcomed to attend.

Report of WSOR: Ken Lucht reported the following:

Ken Lucht and Tom Winker contacted Senator Johnson's Office, and they went to Madison and met with Senator Johnson's staffer, Tom Petri. Tom Petri is going to continue to do follow ups with WisDOT to make sure that nothing falls through the cracks.

On March 4, 2026, Ken Lucht and Tom Winker attended Railroad Day on Capitol Hill wherein professionals from Class I and short line railroads, rail suppliers, and community and business leaders spread out across Capitol Hill for hundreds of meetings with lawmakers and staff to support policies that strengthen freight rail's ability to invest, innovate, and serve communities nationwide. Some of the top policy priorities shared with congress was modernize the 45G tax short line maintenance tax credit, sustain and strengthen rail safety grants and encourage innovative technology deployment, advance federal permitting reform, and restore the highway trust fund and oppose heavier trucks.

WSOR is pursuing a grant agreement with WisDOT regarding a continuous welded rail project on the Prairie Subdivision which is between Madison and Prairie du Chein. The continuous welded rail project will consist of installing approximately 15 miles of continuous welded rail from Wauzeka to Boscobel.

At the next EWCRC meeting, Ken Lucht will present WSOR's production totals for 2025. Ken Lucht and Roger Schaalma will also present WSOR's ten-year capital plan.

The final report for the Systemwide Economic Impact Study of the publicly owned railroad system is almost complete. Once UW Extension provides the final report, Ken Lucht will provide a link to share with the Consortium to share with their respective committees and county boards that need to see it and learn more about the benefits of this public/private partnership. A representative from UW Extension will give a presentation of the Study at the next meeting of the EWCRC.

Dennis Mulder stated that he recently read an article regarding engine emissions pollution. Ken explained the emissions controls on engines and how a State of California bill was defeated because of the response by railroads and how much net positive impact of rail. Dennis Mulder encouraged Ken Lucht to respond to the pollution complaint article.

Jim Mielke inquired about the Lycon Project in Oshkosh. Ken Lucht stated that next quarter Lycon should be operational. The new public at grade crossing is still under construction.

Karen Madigan stated that Fond du Lac County will be reconstructing CTH VV and they are concerned about the substantial cost it will be to pay for gates and signals at a crossing located east of Main Street. Karen further stated that its Highway Commissioner has considered using Fond du Lac County 2026 EWCRC member county contribution for its expenses on this project. Ken Lucht stated that that the crossing and the line is the subject of a petition, and the Office of Commissioner of Railroads is the authority that will review the petition and make a decision. A public hearing will be held, and this would be a good opportunity for Fond du Lac County to submit its concerns. Ken Lucht stated that he will reach out to Fond du Lac County representatives regarding this matter.

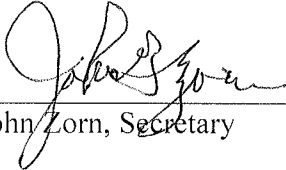
Reeseville: Tom Winker and Jeff Caine gave an update on the Reeseville train derailments. The NTSP has not completed its final report regarding the derailments. The railroad is maintaining slower speeds and completed a lot of remediation to enhance the roadbed. Once the final report is complete, it will give more clarity to prevent another derailment.

Reports from Customers on the System: Ken Lucht and Tom Winker met with Kristina Boardman, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation about the concerns of the stakeholders and the impact to the private sector regarding the weight restrictions of the Janesville bridges. There are a lot of additional costs due to the weight restrictions of the Janesville bridges and five customers showed up and talked about how that impacts their businesses on an annual basis.

Date, time, and place of next meeting (May 13, 2026): The next regular EWCRC meeting will be held on May 13, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. Dodge County will host the meeting, to be held at the Dodge County Administration Building, located in Juneau, Wisconsin.

Motion by Schleif/Caine to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



John Zorn, Secretary

Disclaimer: These are draft minutes. These draft minutes may be approved, amended, or corrected at the next meeting of the East Wisconsin Counties Railroad Consortium.