

NORTHWESTERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

October 7, 2025 / NIRPC Dune Room – 8:30 a.m.

Members present

Denise Ebert, Wendy Mis, Bob Carnahan, David Phelps

Staff and others present

George Topoll, Talaya Jones, Meredith Stilwell, Lisa Todd, Darin Sherman

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Phelps called the meeting to order at 8:41 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

The September 8, 2025 Leadership Committee meeting minutes were presented. The minutes were approved on a motion by Bob Carnahan, seconded by Denise Ebert, and with no opposition.

Review of Financial Status – August 2025 Budget vs Actual

The August 2025 financials, bank reconciliations for the NIRPC general fund, CARES funds, and Marquette Greenway accounts, and expense and revenue reports for the NIRPC general and CARES funds were provided electronically for review before the meeting. The reports were also provided in the Committee meeting packet.

Year-to-date, August 31, 2025, total expenditures were \$6,185,105, of the \$20,218,721 budgeted. Total General Fund revenue for the period was \$2,086,993 of the \$5,632,731 budgeted.

Total NIRPC CARES fund expenditures year-to-date, August 31, 2025, were \$373,121 of the \$272,569 budgeted. Total CARES revenue collected for the period was \$375,386 of the \$235,800 budgeted.

Approval of Claims Registers – August 2025

The August 2025 General Fund claims totaling \$989,031.40 were presented to the Committee. The claims of \$989,031.40 were approved by a motion from Bob Carnahan, seconded by Denise Ebert, with no opposition.

The August 2025 CARES claims totaling \$3,810.00 were then presented for approval. The CARES fund claims of \$3,810.00 were approved on a motion by Bob Carnahan, seconded by David Phelps, and with no opposition.

NIRPC Resolution 25-17: FY 2026 Budget

Talaya Jones presented the FY 2026 Budget to the Committee. The total budget is \$17,429,070, which is lower than the 2025 budget. Talaya explained that one reason is that the Federal Transit Administration is short-staffed and has only been reviewing lapsing-fund grants, and one of the larger grants written for 5307 funds did not include any lapsing funds. She explained that although the money has been appropriated for 2026, it has not yet been formally allocated as a grant.

Talaya presented the proposed changes to NIRPC's general fund budget categories. Revenue is projected to increase by 9%, anticipating resolution of issues related to the Marquette Greenway, which could generate additional income. The salary line rose by 4% to accommodate employee raises, including an adjustment for Ty's compensation. Occupancy costs saw a modest 1% increase.

The Equipment Service/Maintenance budget was raised by 13% in preparation for potentially purchasing or leasing a new black-and-white copier. Additionally, NIRPC's current telephone contract will expire in 2026, prompting the need to secure a new provider, while internet service costs have also gone up.

The Departmental budget increased by 9%, primarily due to travel expenses. Talaya noted that these areas will be closely monitored for potential reductions in 2027.

The Contractual line item was increased by 14%, again tied to the Marquette Greenway. Meanwhile, the Furniture and Fixtures budget was reduced by 50%, with no anticipated increases in the near future.

Talaya Jones presented the FTA Capital Projects, which are funded through grants that have already been executed. She highlighted the CY 2025 CARES Act 2020 Transit Capital Projects Fund grant for East Chicago Transit. Although East Chicago placed an order using these funds, the order has been delayed, raising the possibility of cancellation and reallocation of the funds. The CARES grant is set to expire in March 2026.

Talaya also explained that **Attachment C**, the CY 2025 Transit Operating Projects Fund, reflects funding that is already secured through annual grants allocated to NIRPC.

Lastly, she noted that while there may not be enough CARES Act Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) money available to issue new loans, administrative funds are still necessary in case an external assessment of the program is required.

Personnel updates

Meredith reported that one of the administrative assistants submitted their resignation. Their last day will be October 14.

Other Business

Bob Carnahan announced several upcoming events in Cedar Lake.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:41 am.