Resolution No. 03-04/17

Urging the Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission to Expedite the Immediate Removal of the Sauk City Bridge Due to Serious Public Safety Concerns

Moved/Sponsored by: Public Works Committee

WHEREAS, the Sauk City Bridge (Bridge B-428W) on the Wisconsin & Southern Railroad (WSOR) near Sauk City, WI, which spans the Wisconsin River, owned by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission (WRRTC) and operated and maintained by WSOR (hereinafter “Bridge”); and,

WHEREAS, the Bridge was closed in 2002 with the removal of Pier 4 and Span 4, and the remaining bridge is functionally obsolete as defined in the Federal Highway Administration’s federal policy guide; and,

WHEREAS, a study was undertaken by the WRRTC to ascertain the stability of the Bridge, and an underwater inspection was performed by Westbrook Associated Engineers on November 2, 2016; and,

WHEREAS, the Underwater Inspection Report determined pier 1 to be in serious condition, pier 2 to be in failed condition thus rendering span 2 and span 3 susceptible to collapse, pier 3 to be in poor condition and pier 5 to be in poor condition; and,

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), upon reviewing the 2016 Underwater Inspection Report, has officially taken the position of having “no confidence” in piers 1, 2 or 3 to hold any structure of any type; and,

WHEREAS, the WRRTC, due to significant safety concerns, took action to accept a plan to remove spans 1, 2 and 3 along with piers 1, 2 and 3; and,

WHEREAS, the WRRTC has taken action to submit an emergency application for the WisDOT’s Freight Railroad Preservation Program (FRPP) grant; and,

WHEREAS, no further action has been taken by the WRRTC to remove the Bridge due to lack of funding; and,

WHEREAS, the Bridge as it currently exists poses a potential hazard to boaters and to navigation; and,

WHEREAS, removal of the Bridge from the river after it fails will be far more expensive and disruptive than resolving the issue now.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Walworth County Board of Supervisors hereby supports the repair and restoration of the Bridge and if that is not viable, removal of the Bridge.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Walworth County Board of Supervisors urges the WRRTC to take action to increase the 2018 annual fees paid by each member county to include local government matching funds as required for the FRPP grant.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Clerk is hereby directed to forward a copy of this Resolution to be set forth upon the minutes of this meeting, and that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to Alan Sweeney, Chair of the WRRTC, to be placed on the next WRRTC agenda for discussion and possible action.

Nancy Russell County Board Chairperson
Kimberly S. Bushey County Clerk

County Board Meeting Date: April 18, 2017

Action Required: Majority Vote X Two-thirds Vote Other

Policy and Fiscal Note is attached.
Reviewed and approved pursuant to Section 2-91 of the Walworth County Code of Ordinances:

David A. Brett Date 3/30/17
County Administrator/Corporation Counsel
Nicole Andersen Date 3/30/17
Deputy County Administrator - Finance

If unsigned, exceptions shall be so noted by the County Administrator,

This Resolution/Ordinance was:
Adopted; Roll Call/U.C./Voice
Rejected/Referred/Laid Over
Ayes: Noes: Absent:
Date April 18, 2017
Policy and Fiscal Note
Resolution No. 03-04/17

I. Title: Urging the Wisconsin River Rail Transit Commission to Expedite the Immediate Removal of the Sauk City Bridge Due to Serious Public Safety Concerns

II. Purpose and Policy Impact Statement: The purpose of this resolution is to support the removal of the Sauk City Bridge B-428W. Piers on the bridge are either in poor condition or have already failed, and the bridge is in danger of collapsing into the Wisconsin River. The condition of the bridge poses a serious risk to public safety, the environment and navigation on the Wisconsin River.

III. Budget and Fiscal Impact: It is currently estimated that the cost of removing the bridge will be $990,000. Costs could potentially be higher if the bridge collapses into the Wisconsin River. While the 9 member counties that make up the WRRTC have submitted a FRPP grant application, there is no guarantee WisDOT will award a grant for removal of the bridge. If a FRPP grant is awarded, approximately $198,000 in matching local funds will be required of the nine WRRTC member counties. If an assessment were divided equally among the WRRTC members, it would result in an expense to Walworth County of approximately $22,000.

IV. Referred to the following standing committees for consideration and date of referral:

   Committee: Public Works    Meeting Date: March 20, 2017

   Vote: 3-0

   County Board Meeting Date: April 18, 2017

Policy and fiscal note has been reviewed and approved as an accurate statement of the probable policy and fiscal impacts associated with passage of the attached resolution.

[Signatures and dates]