

**Friends of the St. Joe River Association Membership Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, March 22, 2018—1:00 PM**  
**Three Rivers Public Library—Three Rivers, MI**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

**Directors:** Bill Courliss, Carol Higgins, Dona Hunter, Bob Jones, Danielle Meersman, Matt Meersman, Ron Niezgodski, Jeff Reece

**Watershed Council:** Daragh Deegan, City of Elkhart; Tara Lee, Steuben County SWCD

**Visitors:** Jamison Czarnecki, Elkhart Environmental Center; Heath Hurst, ISDA

**CALL TO ORDER:**

President Matt Meersman called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM, welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked for introductions.

**Minutes** of the February 22, 2018 meeting were reviewed. Jeff Reece moved to accept the minutes as printed, Bill Courliss seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

The **Treasurer's Report** was presented by Treasurer, Danielle Meersman. Danielle inadvertently duplicated the year-to-date figures in the monthly section. Bob received a corrected treasurer's report on March 28, 2018. Income reflected membership dues of \$680.00 and event income of \$2,031.00. We also had a contribution of \$385.00 from Bill and Sue Lamie from Alliance Architects. Expenses included bank service charges of \$43.10 and event expense of \$1,172.50 leaving a net income of \$1,921.57 for February 22, 2018 through March 22, 2018. The balance for Fiscal Year April 1, 2017 through March 22, 2018 is \$203.81. The Total Assets and Equity Liability Balance is \$68,721.54. Ron Niezgodski moved to accept the treasurer's report as discussed, Carol Higgins seconded the motion. **Motion carried.** We will need to approve the Treasurer's Report as amended at our next meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**2018 Watershed Council Celebration Recap**

Bob Jones presented a summary of the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Watershed Council Celebration. Approximately 60 people attended the event. All seemed to have a good time. The Al Smith Watershed Stewardship Award winner was Daragh Deegan, aquatic biologist from the City of Elkhart. The silent auction raised \$880.00. Knowing that Matt and Danielle will be stepping down as President and Treasurer this year, on behalf of the Board of Directors, Bob presented Matt and Danielle a gift certificate for a 3-day/2-night stay at a cabin on the Little Manistee River in Irons, Michigan for their devoted work as President and Treasurer of the FotSJR for the last eleven years. Program presenters Manuela Johnson from Indiana Homeland Security and Dr. Jerry Sweeten from Manchester University gave a very informative and lively talk on low-head dams, *Dam Dangerous*. Bill Courliss moved to accept the summary as printed, Ron Niezgodski seconded the motion. **Motion carried.** Matt shared two items with the board. He said he would serve as emcee for next year's Celebration if we would want him. Secondly, knowing he will not be a board member next year, he would be eligible for the Al Smith Award. He explained that although Al Smith was the inspiration for the award, he created the award and he does NOT want to be considered for the award while he is alive.

**Adoption of Bylaws Amendments for 2018**

The bylaws amendments had been e-mailed with the agenda and minutes. Danielle Meersman moved to accept the amendments to the bylaws as printed, Bill Courliss seconded the motion. There was no discussion. **Motion carried.**

**Partner Survey Results & Strategic Planning**

Matt initiated a discussion of where do we see the FotSJR going in the future. He sees the FotSJR as being an organization that welcomes people who care about water and the environment. In addition to providing a forum for these people come together, the FotSJR has developed resources like the watershed management plan and the wetland functional data site that can be used by the FotSJR and others in the St. Joe River watershed. Other ideas included being

a resource for other sub-watershed organizations or by networking with others. We might have a series of guest speakers at our meetings to help draw in some new members. We will continue our discussion at April's meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Election of New Directors**

Those directors going off the board this year are Rudy Kappe, Eric Kerney, Matt Meersman, Danielle Meersman, and Jeff Wenzel leaving five vacancies. Jeff Reece, nominating committee chairperson, presented a slate of new directors. Eric Kerney, Danielle Meersman, and Jeff Wenzel agreed to run again. Daragh Deegan and Carolyn Grace agreed to run replacing Rudy Kappe and Matt Meersman. The floor was opened for other nominations. None were given. Ron Niezgodski moved to accept the slate of new board members as presented, Dona Hunter seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

**Adoption of Budget**

The end of year financial report will not be ready until next month which will help in determining a new budget for 2018-2019. Bob Jones moved to table the adoption of a 2018-2019 budget until the April meeting, Ron Niezgodski seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

**2018 Meeting Schedule**

Matt was asking about the meeting dates for the rest of 2018 to reserve the Three Rivers Public Library room. Jeff Reece mentioned that we might consider moving the meeting site around the different counties of the St. Joe River watershed to encourage some new attendees to our meetings. We might lose some members who could not travel that far for one meeting but would return when closer to home. We normally meet 10 times a year (off in July and December) but our bylaws say we have to meet at least quarterly. Several felt we should meet at least 6 times a year. All agreed Matt should reserve the library for the rest of this year and discuss what we want to do at our next meeting.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- Steuben County SWCD will be starting a Spring Series of programs for six weeks on Tuesday evenings starting on Tuesday, April 3, 2018 – Landscape Design & Plant Selection – Steuben County Community Center – 317 South Wayne Street, Angola, IN – 6:30 PM to 7:30 PM
- SJRBC Symposium will be on Friday, May 11, 2018 at Fernwood Botanical Gardens – Main speaker is Melissa Widhalm from Purdue University Climate Change Research Center
- Elkhart Family Fish Fest – June 2, 2018, 8:30 AM to June 3, 2018, 6:00 PM – Downtown Elkhart

**Next meeting will be on Thursday, April 26, 2018, at 1:00 PM – Three Rivers Public Library, Three Rivers, MI.**

**Adjournment:** Ron Niezgodski moved to adjourn, Jeff Reece seconded the motion. **Motion carried.** Meeting adjourned at 2:57 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Bob Jones*