

Friends of the St. Joe River Association Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 23, 2019 – 1:00 p.m.
Three Rivers Public Library – Three Rivers, Michigan

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Directors: Carol Higgins, Dona Hunter, Eric Kerney, Ron Niezgodski, Grant Poole, Jeff Reece, Kim Sinclair
- Watershed Council Members: Tara Lee, Steuben Co. SWCD; Matt Meersman, St. Joseph River Basin Commission Director; Roey Marcon, LaGrange Co. SWCD
- Visitors: Doug McLaughlin, Kieser & Associates, Jennifer Kanine, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi; Bob Jones, FotSJR Life Member

CALL TO ORDER – In the absence of Jeff Reece, President, Ron Niezgodski called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. Jeff had contacted Ron to let him know he would be late getting to the meeting. Ron asked for introductions from those present.

MINUTES of the April 25, 2019 meeting were presented for approval. Eric Kerney stated he was glad to see representatives from Coldwater, MI/Branch County at the meeting. The directors also wanted to thank both Tara Lee and Janel Meyer, Steuben Co. SWCD for hosting the meeting and providing snacks. With no changes to the submitted minutes, **Kim Sinclair made a motion to approve the minutes with a second by Grant Poole; motion carried.**

TREASURER’S REPORT – Treasurer Kim Sinclair submitted a Balance Sheet, Profit & Loss Budget Sheet, and Profit & Loss for April 2019. **The treasurer’s report was approved on a motion made by Eric Kerney and seconded by Grant Poole.**

Jeff Reece arrived at 1:17 PM and Ron Niezgodski turned the meeting over to him. Jeff then introduced himself to those present as per meeting protocol, being a late arrival to the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

- **STRATEGIC PLANNING** – Two items were discussed. **SOCIAL MEDIA** - Grant Poole has the Facebook page up and running and reported there are 12 followers. He asked for pictures and events that could be added. Kim Sinclair has a press release written that she will submit to him. **NEWSLETTER** – It was agreed last month to just publish a newsletter once a year. The newsletter committee will get together before the August meeting to present a plan to move forward with the next newsletter to be published before the 2020 Watershed Celebration.
- **St. Joseph River Basin Commission Symposium** – Matt Meersman reported that the symposium was a huge success. It was held at Pokagon State Park for the first time this year which had plenty of room for more people to attend. Matt was pleased with the turn out. He mentioned that Fernwood, where the symposium has been held in the past, has built a new education center, which should have more room. He needs to check it out.
- **Watershed Stewardship Winners** – Daragh Deegan sent Jeff Reece a write up on Gene Lightner, but not a picture. Jeff will update the website with the winners, who are not listed.
- **2019 Meeting Schedule:**
 - June 27, 2019 @ 1:00 p.m. @ Par Gil Natural Resources Learning Center, LaGrange, Indiana – Speaker Jamie Miller, DNR – Topic “Bi-state Conservancy District”
 - July – no meeting

- August 22, 2019 @ Three Rivers Public Library, Three Rivers, Michigan – 1:00 p.m.
- September 26, 2019 – Hosted by Daragh Deegan in Goshen ???
- October 24, 2019 – MACOG in South Bend, hosted by St. Joseph River Basin Commission
- November and December – no meetings

Jeff received an email from James Gardner wondering about having evening meetings and holding a meeting in the St. Joseph, Michigan – Berrien County – area. Jeff will reply suggesting the possibility of an organization in that area hosting a meeting. Nancy Carpenter works for Berrien County and Kevin Haight is involved with the Two Rivers Coalition and one of them might be interested. It has been discussed holding evening meetings, but the majority of those who attend can come during the day easier than in the evening.

The question was raised about a list of all the sub-watershed groups included in large St. Joseph River Watershed. There really isn't an official list, since it is constantly changing. New groups are being formed and others disbanding and it would be hard to keep it current. The watershed management plan is on the website and there may be some listed there, but not an updated list.

Jeff Reece put Carol Higgins' news release on the website which summarized the April meeting held in Angola, along with his picture.

NEW BUSINESS

- Exhibit at Riverfest in Middlebury – Patrick Wiltshire contacted Jeff Reece about setting up a display and exhibit at the Riverfest on August 24. Dona Hunter has the FotSJR display & will work with Roey Marcon and Pat, as they were the ones who set up last year, to get them the information they will need.
- Three Rivers Water Festival is June 8 and Carol Higgins wondered about setting up the display for that event. She will contact Dona Hunter for the display, if she needs it.
- Carol Higgins had to be late today's meeting and didn't have an official contact person to text to let them know. Jeff Reece said if this happens to contact him at 574-350-8490.
- Carol Higgins was also wondering about Jeff Wenzel. He has not attended the last several meetings and she was wondering if anyone knew if he was still interested in being involved. Each director signs a paper stating they will attempt to make 75% of the meetings. He had said he would make meetings as he could, but might have to miss some. It was noted that we are still looking for someone to replace Bob Jones. A complete membership list is on the website.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Matt Meersman had talked with John Law. He apologized for not being able to make the last several meetings, but he is still interested in what is happening.
- Matt also asked everyone to save the date – June 19, 2019. There will be a 'Floodplain Management 101" training presented by DNR at the Wolfe Building in Shipshewana, Indiana from 9 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. There is no cost for the meeting and lunch will be on your own. The Maumee River Basin Commission will be participating in the presentation. Matt will get more info out when plans are finalized.
- Kim Sinclair offered copies of the current Food & Farm Guide from Van Buren County, Michigan for anyone who would like one.
- Grant Poole mentioned there will be a Potawatomi PowWow in Dowagiac.

- Doug McLaughlin asked if anyone had attended the River Rally. This year's is scheduled in Cleveland June 21-24. Matt said he had been for a couple of them and that they are very worthwhile attending. Doug is now a member of the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council.
- Carol Higgins reported that Carolyn Grace has completed the Watershed Academy Training and received her certificate. She was really excited about the program and felt fortunate to be able to be a part of it. Kris Thomas with the City of Angola also completed the program and was pleased to have had the opportunity.
- Eric Kerney announced a training session has been scheduled at Grand Rapids on June 9-11. Cost of the training is \$200. It is sponsored by "Imagine" and will provide hands on learning and a lab covering the use of drones and mapping in Michigan.
- Carol Higgins asked if the FotSJR has an adopted policy concerning the harvesting of mute swans and was told they do not have an official policy. They have been harvesting the invasive swans on a lake near her. They are good eating, but very toxic (PCBs).

NEXT MEETING – June 27, 2019 at Par Gil Natural Resources Learning Center near LaGrange, Indiana at 1:00 p.m.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned on a motion made by Kim Sinclair and seconded by Ron Niezgodski.

Minutes recorded by Dona Hunter, Secretary.