

Friends of the St. Joe River Association Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 24, 2019 – 1:00 p.m.
MACOG – 11th Floor Conference Room, County-City Building, South Bend, IN

IN ATTENDANCE:

- Directors: Daragh Deegan, Carol Higgins, John Law, Danielle Meersman, Ron Niezgodski, Jeff Reece, Kim Sinclair, Dona Hunter
- Watershed Council Members: Nancy Carpenter, Berrien Co. CD; Matthew Hanauer, Michigan EGLC; Annie Klehfoth, Elkhart Environmental Center; Matt Meersman, St. Joseph River Basin Commission Director; Jan McGowan, LaGrange Co. SWCD
- Visitors: Jamie Miller, Indiana DNR; Jordan Beehler, Branch Co. CD; Pete Kelly; Patrick Wiltshire

CALL TO ORDER – Jeff Reece called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and asked for introductions of those present.

MINUTES of the September 26, 2019 meeting held at St. Patrick’s Park, South Bend **were approved on a motion made by Ron Niezgodski and seconded by Kim Sinclair.** Jeff Reece thanked Carol Higgins for recording the minutes in secretary Dona Hunter’s absence.

TREASURER’S REPORT – Treasurer Kim Sinclair presented the financial report for October. **The treasurer’s report was approved on a motion made by Daragh Deegan and seconded by Danielle Meersman.**

OLD BUSINESS

- **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

- **Funding Request Guidelines Committee** – Matt Meersman, Jeff Reece, Kim Sinclair, Daragh Deegan, and John Law met before the regular board meeting to put together some draft guidelines for funding special projects. There was a lot of discussion concerning this issue. Discussion included setting a small grant program versus funding special small projects, as requests are made. Due to the amount of funds that are available, it does not seem feasible to announce availability of funds for special projects to the general public. Even letting all of the membership/stakeholders know is opening it up to a lot of people. It was generally agreed that it would be great to be able to set up a small grant program open to anyone in the watershed that supports the mission and vision of the organization, but funds are just not available at this time.

Also discussed was how to make sure that all board members saw a proposal before it was voted on. A vote could be taken at a board meeting where there was a quorum present. This might be ok for small projects, but for large outlays of funds, the entire board needs to be able to see the project proposal and an electronic vote taken.

After reviewing the “Funding Request Guidelines Draft” presented by the committee and some detailed discussion Daragh Deegan moved to accept the guidelines as presented by the committee; John Law seconded the motion; motion carried with one nay vote.

SEE ATTACHED GUIDELINES BELOW!

- **Newsletter** – The costs for having Kieser and Associates format the newsletter will increase dramatically for the next one. Last year it was around \$700, but this year will probably be closer to \$2,000. After discussing alternatives, Daragh Deegan agreed to work with the committee to format

the newsletter. The cost of printing was also discussed and whether it was just as feasible to post it on the website and send it electronically to the email contact list that has been compiled. Nancy Carpenter says she can put a link in their district newsletter to the website, so others will know how to find it. Other conservation districts would probably be willing to do the same. **Danielle Meersman made a motion, that if we do another newsletter, to send it out electronically only; Daragh Deegan seconded the motion; motion carried.** Danielle volunteered to print a few copies if there were those that did not have access to an electronic version and preferred a hard copy.

- **2020 Meeting Schedule/Locations** – Jeff Reece reminded everyone that there will be no board meetings in November and December. He has been in contact with Three Rivers Public Library and that the library will not be available in March or April. Ron Niezgodski suggested other locations for meetings, including Lawless Park and Fabius Township Hall.
 - **January 23, 2020** – Three Rivers Public Library
 - **February 27, 2020** – Three Rivers Public Library
 - **March 20, 2020** – 13th Annual Watershed Celebration – Sturges-Young Center for Arts
 - **March 26, 2020** – Location TBD; **April 23, 2020** – Location TBD; **May 28, 2020** – Location TBD; **June 25, 2020** – Location TBD; **July** – No meeting; **August 27, 2020** – Location TBD; **September 24, 2020** – Location TBD; **October 22, 2020** – Location TBD; **No meetings in November and December.**
- **Watershed Leadership Training Opportunity** – Matt Meersman reported that applications are due on Monday, October 28. So far there are 10 applications to review. The committee will meeting to review them on October 31.
- **Al Smith Watershed Stewardship Award Applications** – Jeff Reece reported that no applications had been received as of today.
- **13th Annual Watershed Council Celebration Planning Update** – Date for the event is set for March 20, 2020 at the Sturges-Young Center for Arts. Melissa Wildham with the Purdue Climate Change Research Center is the scheduled speaker. She will be able to gear her presentation to the general public. Since she has to travel from West Lafayette, an honorarium of \$300 - \$500 was suggested since she may want to stay overnight and not travel that late at night. Carol Higgins offered to provide lodging for Melissa at her home as an alternative. **John Law made a motion to approve \$500 as an honorarium with a seconded from Kim Sinclair. Motion carried.**

NEW BUSINESS

- **Board Member Recruitment** – Daragh Deegan will chair a board member recruitment committee. He will contact those whose terms are expiring to find out if they are willing to stay on the board. There are two vacancies. One vacated by Bob Jones when he moved out of the watershed and the other by Bill Courliss who resigned for personal reasons. Matt Meersman has been talking with someone who is interested in becoming a board member. This individual has attended past meetings. If the board is receptive, Matt is interested in serving out the remainder of Bill Courliss' term, which expires in 2020. **Kim Sinclair made a motion to appoint Matt Meersman for the remainder of the vacant board seat; motion seconded by John Law. Motion carried.**

OTHER/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- John reported that the pump house has been dismantled at the Pucker Street dam site. Equipment is on site and they are working on the land around the area.

- Daragh Deegan reported that the only progress that has been made on the Elkhart Dam Project is that Amy Corp has hired a contractor. The hope is that the project will be started this year, but probably not until 2020.
- Kim Sinclair announced that Matt Meersman's birthday is Monday, October 28. Carol Higgins birthday is Wednesday, October 30.

NEXT MEETING – January 23, 2020 at Three Rivers Public Library, Three Rivers, Michigan

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

Minutes recorded by Dona Hunter, Secretary.

Friends of the St. Joe River Association
Funding Request Guidelines Draft

The Board of Directors will evaluate funding request received by the FotSJR. A description of the project/program for which funds have been requested shall be submitted in writing. The advice of members and Watershed Council representatives may also be considered. Any funds granted shall be used for efforts that support the vision and mission of the FotSJR as described in the bylaws. The following criteria should be considered when evaluating requests:

- Annual Budget
- Replicability
- Area Benefitted
- Local Match (in-kind or cash)
- Acknowledgement/Credit given (PR value)
- Need (requester's financial capacity)
- Impact
- Involvement (partners vs. others)
- Collaboration
- Reputability