

Friends of the St. Joe River Association Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 19, 2013 – 1:00pm
Three Rivers Public Library—Three Rivers, MI

IN ATTENDANCE:

- **Directors:** Matt Meersman, Danielle Meersman, Ron Niezgodski, Ray Leising, Eldred Adams, Daragh Deegan, Melanie Stoughton, Bruce Barton
- **Watershed Council:** Grant Poole, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians;; Marcy Colclough, SWMPC; Bob Jones, LaGrange SWCD; Bill Courliss, Union Lake Com. Association; Dallas Chester, Two Rivers Coalition; Jeff Reece, IMP; Chris Bauer, MDEQ-WRD; Zac Martin, Steuben County SWCD
- **Visitors:** Sam Barton

President Matt Meersman called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm, welcomed everyone to the meeting and called for introductions.

Minutes of the October 2013 board meeting were approved as submitted with a motion by Maria Mast and seconded by Jim Ray Leising. Motion carried.

Treasurers Report was presented by Danielle Meersman. A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Eldred Adams and seconded by Maria Mast. Motion carried.

Old Business

Wetland Partnership Project –Matt reported that there was a quarterly partnership meeting held earlier in the day. Ray Leising was asked to briefly summarize the project to date, including the project plan and overall goals. Matt reported on education and outreach, summarizing the first municipal outreach event earlier in December. Approximately 50 people attended the meeting that was held in Indiana. There is also a goal of holding one more outreach event in Michigan at the Nottawaseppi Huron Band community center in the Athens area, as well as a handful of municipal outreach events. Daragh Deegan asked Matt if there were any outreach materials that were available to the group to have on hand for different events. Marcy Colclough passed out an outreach flier that has information regarding the project. Matt also noted that there is statistical information by county and sub-watershed on the website. The next Wetland Partnership Project meeting will be held on April 24th at 10:15 a.m.

Membership Development and Fundraising—Matt Meersman briefly summarized the Clean Water Campaign, and moved onto updates. Matt asked Bill Courliss of the Union Lake Association to discuss his meeting with the public utilities department in Union City. Bill noted that currently, Union City is in the middle of budgeting for the year, and he plans on meeting again with the city sometime after the first of the year.

New Business

Annual Meeting Planning—Meeting dates were discussed by the board members. The board tentatively set the Annual Meeting for Monday, March 10th 2014 at Sturges-Young Auditorium. Eldred Adams will contact the auditorium to finalize the date, and report to Matt if there are any issues. A

keynote speaker and theme are both still needed for the event. Marcy Colclough proposed the idea of using the hot topic of “Soil Health” as the theme for this year’s Annual Meeting. Marcy noted that there was a great speaker named Hans Kok at the Van Buren CD’s event “Farming for the Future” that could potentially speak as the keynote speaker. Matt accepted the task of contacting the potential keynote speaker to see if he had interest and time to speak at our event. Silent Auction Duties continue to be delegated to Treasurer Danielle Meersman, and Secretary Melanie Stoughton. Bill Courliss noted that last year, he did not receive a receipt for the donation that he provided for the Silent Auction. Treasurer Danielle Meersman stated that she will look into that issue, and provide Bill with a receipt.

Board Recruitment—Matt noted that there are five board members up for election this year. All of the board members that are up for election are currently serving their first terms, and will be able to run again if they desire. Brian Musser, who is a current board member, indicated earlier in the year that he will not seek re-election, however a formal resignation from the board was not submitted at that time. The group was reminded that Rachel Smith, board member, and Jen Miller, St. Joe County CD Administrator would serve on the nominating committee. Both Rachel and Jen were not in attendance at the meeting, and would be contacted by Matt at a later date to follow up on their outreach to directors with expiring terms. Vice President, Maria Mast, announced that she will be moving to Massachusetts on January 1, 2014. At this time, Maria Mast announced her resignation from the board of directors. Her resignation was accepted by Eldred Adams, and seconded by Bruce Barton. Motion carried. Ray Leising made a motion to appoint Daragh Deegan Vice President until officer elections in March, with Bruce Barton seconding the motion. Motion carried. Potential candidates for the board were discussed. Matt will be contacting Rachel Smith to discuss potential candidates at a later date. Officers will be up for re-election this year as well. It was implied that all officers, with the exception of Daragh Deegan, would remain in their officer position.

Other Items

- Melanie Stoughton announced that the Kalamazoo Conservation District Annual Meeting will be on January 31, 2014 at Kalamazoo Valley Community College from 12-1:30pm.
- Marcy Colclough updated the group on the dam removal projects with the City of Niles. The projects are currently funded through a USFWS Fish Passage Grant. More technical and engineering work is needed to complete the removal of the Pucker Street dam.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 23, 2014 at 1:00pm in Three Rivers at the Public Library.

Meeting adjourned at 2:25 pm