

**Friends of the St. Joe River Association Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, March 18, 2013 – 2:00pm**  
**Sturges-Young Auditorium—Sturgis, MI**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

- **Directors:** Matt Meersman, Rachel Smith, Eric Kerney, Eldred Adams, Danielle Meersman, Ron Niezgodski, Ray Leising, Jim Coury, Geoff Cripe, Daragh Deegan, Melanie Stoughton, Bruce Barton
- **Watershed Council:** Grant Poole, Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians; Jen Miller, St. Joseph County CD; Marcy Colclough, SWMPC
- **Visitors:** Roxanne Barton

President Matt Meersman called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm, welcomed everyone to the meeting and called for introductions.

**Minutes** of the February 2013 board meeting were approved as submitted with a motion by Ray Leising and seconded by Jim Coury.

**Treasurers Report** was presented by Danielle Meersman. A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Ron Niezgodski and seconded by Daragh Deegan.

**Old Business**

**Wetland Partnership Project** – Updates on the wetland partnership project were short to accommodate for annual meeting preparation later in the evening. A reminder that an outreach workshop will be held on April 3<sup>rd</sup> from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm at Glen Oaks Community College in St. Joseph County. The next quarterly meeting will be held on Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup> at 10:15 am at the Three Rivers Library.

**Membership Development and Fundraising**— Tabled until the April meeting.

**“Greening the Bend” Partner Support**—Danielle Meersman gave a brief update on her progress on looking into possible IRS paperwork regarding the possibility of FotsJR handling funds for the “Greening the Bend” project discussed at the February board meeting. Danielle is continuing to look for a resource on the legal aspects of handling the request from Kathleen Petitjean from “Greening the Bend”. After considerable discussion the board tabled the issue of fiscal sponsorship until more information is obtained by Danielle Meersman from Kathleen Petitjean and the appropriate lawyers in non-profit law.

**Watershed Council Meeting (Last Minute Items)** – The silent auction currently has 32 items. The winning bids will be collected at 7:45 pm. Melanie Stoughton and Danielle Meersman will fill out winning bid forms, and provide winners with their receipts. Winners will be announced prior to the speaker's program. Other last minute organizational items were delegated to board members present at the afternoon meeting.

## **New Business**

**Election of New Directors**—Geoff Cripe of the Nominating Committee announced that all five board members up for re-election were interested in running again. Those members up for re-election are Melanie Stoughton, Bruce Barton, Ray Leising, Jim Coury and Ron Niezgodski. These members if re-elected will be serving new 3 year terms, and will be the first group of members to be required to take one year off of the board before running for a new term, except Ray Leising who would be serving his first full term. Geoff Cripe made a motion to accept the nominations for the new directors, with Rachel Smith seconding. Motion carried. This slate of 5 directors was elected by everybody present to serve on the board.

## **Other Items**

- Marcy Colclough announced that she is working on a project and would like to know if FotSJR could send a letter of support in developing a Lake Michigan Water Trail. The letter of support would simply be in support of the project, with no time or dollar amount required. This project would be for development of canoe and kayak trail on the shores of Lake Michigan. While the project would be working with all states around Lake Michigan, the grant in which the SWMPC would be applying for is specific to Michigan. The project would also in the future develop a website of access points and amenities for paddlers along Lake Michigan. Ray Leising made a motion to support the project and send a letter of support, with Jim Coury seconding. Motion carried. Marcy will provide a sample letter of support to Matt Meersman for further review and signature.

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm in Three Rivers at the Public Library.

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 pm