

## Friends of the St. Joseph River Meeting Minutes

June 25, 2020

Virtual Meeting Held Using Google Meets

1:06pm Call to Order by President Jeff Reece

**Directors Present:** Jeff Reece, Matt Meersman, Kim Sinclair, Grant Poole, Carolyn Grace, Carol Higgins, Danielle Meersman, John Law, Plus 1 other via phone (name not recorded).

**Additions and Deletions to Agenda:** none

**Minutes:** Jeff asked if everyone had a chance to review the minutes from the last meeting on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020. After several responses Matt Meersman moved to accept the February minutes as presented. Carolyn Grace seconded the motion. **Motion carried.**

**Treasurers Reports:** Sinclair shared the Balance Sheet by sharing her screen. Danielle reported that our CD will be rolled over. Sinclair then shared a Profit and Loss report showing a loss of \$66.79. However, there was a \$130 donation from Crooked Ewe (Bill & Sue Lamie) that was not included, so technically there was not a loss. The report showed \$1050 in income from the annual meeting, which could change due to postponement and format change. We are going to reach out to people to see if they would like to donate the money to the Friends or refund.

There was no motion made to approve April or May reports, but Matt Meersman made a motion to table the approval of Fiscal Year End financial report until more information was gathered. Grant Poole second. **Motion carried.**

### Old Business:

- **Watershed Celebration:** Guest speaker may now only be available for a virtual presentation. Matt will check into that. Discussion was had by the board about holding an informal celebration at Conservation Park in Three Rivers on August 14, 2020. Several members had concerns about holding any in-person events during the pandemic. There was discussion about the purchase of the Zoom meeting platform to be used for future meetings. It was reported that Zoom costs about \$250.00 per year. Matt Meersman made a motion to purchase a business subscription to Zoom to be used for Board meetings as well as public meetings. Sinclair support. **Motion passed.**

After further discussion Sinclair made a motion to hold the Annual Celebration virtually using Zoom or another online meeting platform. If people who already registered for the in-person event request it, their money will be refunded. Poole second. **Motion carried.**

There was consensus to remove the silent auction portion of the event. Michigan Lakes & Streams Association provided a gift basket for the auction. Meersman will reach out to Melissa Desomine to see what she would like us to do with their gift. There was also some discussion concerning the winner of the stewardship award and how they will be recognized at the event.

- **Membership Meeting in July:** Questions were discussed about the election of officers. Daragh Deegan reached out to the people who were up for re-election (Carol Higgins, Kim Sinclair, John Law, and Ron Niezgodski). Each person said they would be interested in staying on the board. Annie Klehfoth of the Elkhart Environmental Center agreed to serve the term left vacant by Bob Jones. Each term begins and ends after the annual membership meeting. Since we have not been able to hold an annual membership meeting, Jeff Reece will send out a slate of board members to be elected via email to be approved in July. When it is safe to meet in person again, we will have an official vote at a membership meeting.
- **Officers and appointment:** Donna Hunter has indicated she wishes to step down as Secretary. Matt Meersman expressed interest in becoming the President. Carolyn Grace offered to become the new Secretary. Kim Sinclair agreed to continue as Treasurer. This slate of officers will be voted on at the next board meeting or via an email vote in July.
- **Meeting Locations:** Board meeting will be held virtually for the time being. Discussion was held concerning meetings at a safe outside place. Temperatures could be taken and with only 10-20 people in a park, it could be safe. However, there was consensus that business meetings should still be held virtually. Sinclair likes the idea of an in person and zoom meeting to be held so several people can attend. Grace explained that she may be able to find a meeting room (Three Rivers Community Room or the ISD in Centreville) that has the capability for people to participate virtually and in-person. Grace will investigate and let the board know what she finds out.
- **Portage Dam Removal:** With the recent dam failure in Midland, Higgins would like to have the FotsJR push for the removal of the dam on the Portage River in Three Rivers due to safety issues. Grace reported that the US Fish & Wildlife Service has \$70,000 to be used for dam repairs, but the dam is privately owned by Monty Learn. Reece explained that based on his knowledge of the owner, he will not be willing to have the dam removed. Poole would like to have some light shed on the possible problems at that dam, and maybe he will be willing to talk about repairs.

#### **Other Announcements:**

- **Responsible Recreation in Indiana:** A big push to get outside and do it responsibly.
- **Pucker street dam:** Update the dam may be completed in the spring 2021.
- **Watch for fraudulent emails.**

**Next Board Meeting:** Virtual meeting planned for July 16<sup>th</sup> at noon.

[EDITORS NOTE: July meeting was later cancelled. Next meeting planned for 1pm on 9/24/20.]

**Motion to adjourn at 2:17 by Matt Meersman and second by Sinclair. Motion passed. Virtual meeting ended.**

Minutes recorded by Carolyn Grace, Secretary-elect