

Friends of the St. Joseph River December 10, 2020  
Board Minutes: Submitted by Carolyn Grace

1:01 pm Call to Order by Matt Meersman via Zoom

**Directors Present:**

Matt Meersman  
Jeff Reece  
Kim Sinclair  
Grant Poole  
Carolyn Grace

Carol Higgins  
Eric Kerney  
Annie Klehfoth  
Daragh Deegan

**Watershed members and Guests;**

Jordan Shedd, Beth Clawson, Rebecca Shank, John Beebe, Mark Kieser and Anya Preston

**Additions and Deletions to Agenda:** none

**Board Minutes:**

Jeff Reece motioned to accept the October board minutes, Carol Higgins second. Motion passed.

**Treasurers Reports:** Sinclair shared the balance sheet via zoom

Higgins motioned to accept the treasurer report as presented, Reece second. Motion passed

**Old Business:**

- **Board action via email:** Letter of support was requested from the board by St. Joseph County Conservation District and their CISMA for \$500.00 to support the purchase of a water quality monitoring system. Kim Sinclair motioned to accept the request for the full \$500.00, Daragh Deegan second Motion passed. Carolyn Grace explained the Great Lakes Initiative Restoration Project that includes the surveying of the St. Joseph River mainstem along with a few of the tributaries that lead into the SJR.
- **Film Screening Opportunity: see below**
- **New Board:** In 2021 Daragh Deegan, Carolyn Grace, Danielle Meersman, Jeff Wenzel, and Eric Kerney terms will expire. Jordan Shedd would be interested. Also, Matt would be willing to ask members that have been serving for a long time to allow others to be engaged and nominated. We have others who want to step up.

**New Business:**

- **Annual Celebration:** Kim Sinclair and group discussed the possibility of showing the movie "Kiss the Ground" as our annual celebration. We are unsure at this time if we will be able to hold an in-person celebration in March 2021. So, looking at a virtual event may be the answer. This is a great movie on Netflix and the board can view the movie. We will keep this annual celebration discussion on the agenda for the January meeting. Continued support for the hosting of this movie whether as part of celebration or not.

## Other Announcements, Items from the Floor:

- **Grant Poole:** Dec 28<sup>th</sup> application for developing a tribal 319 program. They are looking for feedback from the public during the comment period Dec 28-Jan 28<sup>th</sup>. This would give the tribe Clean Water Act authority on trust lands in MI and IN. This includes a couple of creeks that go into Kankakee River. This is the first time they are expanding into Indiana. Kim Sinclair motioned to provide the Pokagon band of Nottawaseppi a letter of support for their application of a 319 non-point source program. Daragh second. Motion Passed
- **Matt Meersman:** received information from Matt Diana, EGLE representative, to share at our meeting about the Pucker Street Dam Removal. They are moving along very well, on the project. However due to covid19, no stocking of fish took place. In 2021, Schnook will be added to the list to be stocked.
- **Kim Sinclair:** explained that they received a 319 grant in 2017 and again in 2020. This grant was to measure the amount of sediment held back by cover crops and water structures. They compared this to fields that had no cover and no structures. Notre Dame helped analyze the data and it is very good. Kim hopes to continue the BMPs with others because of the data and findings. Also, she hopes to have the data available to the Friends in the near future. The project is in the St. Joseph Watershed.
- **Mark Kieser:** from Kieser and Associates, gave an update about his company and their willingness to partner with any group that wants to write a grant and have their support for the upcoming watershed EGLE grants. Comments included wanting to update St. Joseph watershed plan or implement any projects that have not been competed to date. These are a great deal of work, however, with several partners projects can get done.
- **Rebecca Shank:** Wonders how we reach our residents that live on the river and inform them and connect them to others to improve our watersheds. She suggests through the schools. Trees need to be replanted for wind breaks. Also, another concern is permits have been given to people to build on riverbanks without proper erosion control.
- **Carol Higgins:** Question: wondering if we are going to have a newsletter for 2021. Meersman would like someone to step up and take control of providing a newsletter. Higgins would like a list of contacts that include watershed councils, libraries, drain officials, Conservation Districts, and lake associations so she could send to them the newsletter. Eric Kerney would be willing to help put together along with Grant Poole. Further discussion in the next couple of months. Collection of pictures and short summaries of projects would be great to have for an online letter.
- **Beth Clawson:** MSUe Introduction to Lakes opens in January. This is a 6-week program. Clean boats and Clean Water combined with the MSU boat wash. They have a pot of money to offer mini grants that are invasive species directed. Page Felice is the person to talk to about these grants.

**Motion to adjourn at 2:17pm by Reece and second by Sinclair. Motion passed. Zoom ended**

**Next Board Meeting: January 28<sup>th</sup> via zoom.**