

Friends of the St. Joe River Association Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 28, 2016—1:00 PM
Three Rivers Public Library—Three Rivers, MI

IN ATTENDANCE:

Directors: Bob Jones, Matt Meersman, Daragh Deegan, John Law, Jeff Reece, Bill Courliss, Rudde Kappe, Danielle Meersman, Grant Poole

Watershed Council: Jeremy Reiman, MACOG/SJRBC; Ron Johnson, Fabius Township

Visitors: Karen Kappe, Reynaldo Hernandez

President Matt Meersman called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM, welcomed everyone to the meeting and called for introductions.

Minutes of the March 2016 board meeting were reviewed for approval. Bill Courliss moved to accept the minutes as printed, seconded by Daragh Deegan. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report was presented by Danielle Meersman. Danielle presented the report for the month of March 2016 and the report for the fiscal year, April 2015 through March 2016. She noted several items. The Annual Watershed Meeting cost \$1,679.50 and received \$4,275.00 in income. We did receive \$1,275.00 from the silent auction and had received a \$1,000.00 donation from AEP to sponsor the meeting. Danielle also noted we paid our website provider \$831.69 for three years of service. They are going to increase their charges and we were able to lock in the three years at the current rate. We currently have a balance of \$63,433.83. Jeff Reece moved to accept the treasurer's report as printed, seconded by John Law. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

Annual Meeting Recap – Everyone felt the meeting went well and was received well by all in attendance. The meal was good though one wished we would have had a fish entrée as one of the meal's choices. Matt expressed thanks to our alternate keynote speaker, Chris Freiburger, for filling in for Robert Barr who was ill. Chris did an excellent job of explaining how drainage works through our streams and rivers. Matt commented what was memorable to him was the key phrase "stable system". This phrase applies to the farmer as well as the conservationist. John Law thanked all who helped in the set-up of that evening. Daragh Deegan suggested that we have an Annual Meeting Committee to work all year long on the planning and set-up for next year's meeting. Everyone concurred with this idea. Daragh volunteered to chair this committee with Bill Courliss, John Law, and Jeff Wenzel volunteering to assist Daragh. Jeff Reece made the suggestion on invasive species being a possible topic for next year.

CurrentCast MOU – Matt presented information from CurrentCast, a daily, 60-second syndicated radio series and podcast about water stewardship and sustainability in the Great Lakes and surrounding watersheds. They are wanting the Friends to partner with them to distribute their information through our website. Jeff Reece suggested we table action on this until all have a chance to review the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). Action was tabled.

NEW BUSINESS:

Adoption of Annual Budget – Danielle Meersman present an annual budget based on the last seven years of operation. It reflects the average costs and expenditures from the last seven years. Bill Courliss moved to accept the budget as printed, seconded by Daragh Deegan. Motion carried.

ACOE Sediment Work Presentation in May – The Army Corps of Engineers representative, Jim Selegean, would like to do a presentation on where sediment comes from and how to establish a monitoring system. He suggested our May meeting. Consensus was to have him come to one of our meetings. We had some who would like to hear this presentation but can not be at the May meeting. Matt will contact Jim Selegean about possibly presenting at our June meeting.

June Board Meeting location – Matt reminded us that we have normally had our June meeting at a satellite location and piggybacked some hike/canoe trip following the meeting. The last couple years, we have met at Pine Knob Park in Howe, IN. Matt asked if there were some other locations that might be considered. Several members said they liked the Pine Knob Park location and said let's hold the June meeting there again. Bob Jones will make reservations for Thursday, June 23, 2016 and contact John Senecal of the Trading Post for canoeing at Mongo, IN after the meeting. Those not canoeing will have the opportunity to walk the trails at Pine Knob.

OTHER:

Moving Annual Meeting to different date – Some members of the Friends asked about the possibility of moving the meeting date to April or May because of being out of town during the winter months. Matt suggested we send out a survey to members on this possible change. After some discussion, it was decided we keep the Annual Meeting of the Corporation in March for the election of board members and officers. We will then look into the feasibility of when to have the Annual Watershed Meeting.

Grant proposal to Healthy Watershed Consortium – Matt announced that we did not get the grant. At this point, we did not get much feedback as to why, but Matt will do some checking and see what we might have missed.

Great Lakes Protection Fund – Matt also mentioned he had become aware of some possible funding through the Great Lakes Protection Fund. They are looking for large projects, millions of dollars. If we broaden the scope of our project, it might be something to look into.

Website help – Matt has been our “webmaster” and is in need of help. Jeremy Reiman and Grant Poole said they are willing to take over the day to day updating of our website. Thank you Jeremy and Grant.

SJRBC Symposium – Jeremy Reiman announced the SJRBC Symposium will be on Friday, May 20, 2016, 8:00 AM to 1:15 PM at the Fernwood Botanical Gardens in Niles, MI. He will send a link to register.

Have we spent any money on projects? – Renaldo Hernandez asked if we had spent any money on river/conservation projects and why we are hoarding our money. Matt, Jeff Reece, and Rudde Kappe explained that our sustainable/fluid cash flow limits us as to what we are able to fund from year to year. A lot of our assistance is done by in-kind work and education.

Bill Courliss moved to adjourn at 2:45 PM, seconded by John Law. Motion carried

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, May 26, 2016 at 1:00 PM at Three Rivers Public Library.