

**Friends of the St. Joe River Association Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, September 26, 2013—1:00 PM**  
**Three Rivers Public Library—Three Rivers, MI**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

- **Directors:** Matt Meersman, Melanie Stoughton, Daragh Deegan, Rachel Smith, Eldred Adams, Maria Mast
- **Watershed Council:** Marcy Colclough, SWMPC; Dallas Chester, GLAC & Two Rivers Coalition; Jeff Wenzel, St. Joseph Co. Drain Commissioner; Jen Miller, St. Joe County CD,
- **Visitors:** Deborah Haak

President Matt Meersman called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm, welcomed everyone to the meeting and called for introductions.

**Minutes** of the August 2013 board meeting were approved as submitted with a motion by Maria Mast and seconded by Eldred Adams.

**Treasurers Report** was presented by Matt Meersman via email from treasurer Danielle Meersman. Jen Miller asked Matt what funds were put into the Certificate of Deposit (CD), and whether these funds could be used as “seed money” for the Clean Water Campaign. Matt noted that the funds were put in there instead of sitting in a checking account, and are not necessarily earmarked for a specific use, but there are some funds in there raised by certain groups. A motion to accept the treasurer’s report was made by Maria Mast and seconded by Daragh Deegan.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Wetland Partnership Project** Matt Meersman asked Eldred Adams to summarize the wetland partnership project. Matt Meersman reviewed the highlights from the recent partnership event held on Tuesday September, 24<sup>th</sup> at Camp Eberhart. Fifty seven people attended the event.

**Membership Development and Fundraising**— Maria Mast handed out a report on membership, noting that there were two new individual memberships and one new business membership. Matt announced that a meeting with Bill Courliss and the Union City utilities department to discuss the Clean Water Campaign is scheduled for next Tuesday. Matt updated the group on Geoff Cripe’s progress of creating the framework for the Clean Water Campaign. Currently, there are draft documents for agreement language, and a Request for Proposal (RFP). Marcy Colclough and Matt Meersman will begin to review the documents Geoff has drafted. A discussion on who the RFP’s would be reviewed and ranked by ensued. Questions arose regarding whether the board members or the watershed council members would be reviewing the RFP’s, and the idea of creating a Clean Water Fund Sub-Committee (3-5 members) was generated. Daragh Deegan updated the group on his progress in working with the City of Elkhart, and that he will be waiting until the sewer rate issue has been resolved before approaching the city.

Matt noted his progress in working with businesses within the watershed, and raised concerns regarding the earmarking of funds generated in specific areas. There is a strong belief that issues could come from areas that generate a larger amount of funds, and specific groups wanting the funds to stay in their area of the watershed. A portion of the ranking may include questions that would reflect these concerns, but

the overall intent of the RFP will continue to be focused on carrying out goals within the St. Joseph Watershed Management Plan. More work will be done to address these issues as the documents are finalized.

Daragh Deegan asked Matt if he would be willing to approach the City of South Bend to discuss the Clean Water Campaign, and including something in their utilities billing. Matt said he already has a lunch planned with the mayor (a prize won at an auction), and will bring up the topic then.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Fall Newsletter**—Rachel Smith has been working hard at completing the draft fall newsletter. Matt and Marcy will complete the final review. Rachel is waiting on a piece from Geoff Cripe on the Prairie River Watershed as part of the match towards the Prairie River 319. Matt and Marcy agreed that Rachel could complete the piece for the FotSJR as a board member and “off the clock” as Watershed Coordinator and it could count as local match. Matt asked what other match projects were in the newsletter. Christiana Creek has a piece in the newsletter, and the Pigeon River will possibly have a piece in the newsletter as well. Rachel spoke with Brett Riser, coordinator for the Portage River/Little Portage Creek, and he will be submitting a piece for the next newsletter. The next newsletter will also highlight the Annual Meeting, and Matt reminded the group that it is never too early to start thinking of speakers for the event. Board nominations were brought up with the discussion of the Annual Meeting, and the need for new members in the Nominating Committee as Geoff and Daragh are both up for re-election. Rachel Smith volunteered to be on the 2014 Nominating Committee. Jen Miller asked if there could be Watershed Council members on the committee, and Matt allowed her to join the committee based on previous Nominating Committee members. Marcy brought up Jim Patchett from Conservation Design Forum, who will be a speaker at Green Town in October as a potential speaker for the Annual Meeting. Daragh noted that the historic aspects of the watershed have been popular in past Annual Meetings, and that focusing on some historical event could help draw in people for our March meeting.

### **OTHER ITEMS**

None

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Friends of McCoy Creek—Cleanup: Matt will add the event to the events calendar

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 24th at 1:00pm in Three Rivers at the Public Library.

A motion to adjourn was made by Maria Mast and seconded by Rachel Smith. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 2:03 pm.