

Friends of the St. Joseph River February 24, 2022  
Board Minutes: Submitted by Carolyn Grace

1:02 pm Call to Order by Matt Meersman via Zoom

**Directors Present:**

Matt Meersman, Jeff Reece, Kim Sinclair, Grant Poole, Carol Higgins, Ron Niezgodski, Eric Kerney, Annie Klehofoth, Daragh Deegan, and Jordan Shedd.

**Watershed members and Guests;**

Bob Jones, Aimee Wentworth, Chris Temple, Dan Robinson, Jennifer Kanine, Kate Berrett, Melissa DeSimone, and Doug McLaughlin.

**Board Minutes:**

Jeff Reece motioned to accept the January board minutes, Kim Sinclair second. Motion passed.

**Treasurers Reports:** Sinclair shared the balance sheets. We have \$1,656.12 in checking and \$55,423.77 in savings. Kim stated that there was negative income for the year, but that was expected because we decided to spend additional money supporting projects. Shedd motion to accept the report, Deegan second and motion passed.

**Old Business:**

- **Board action via email:** None
- **Watershed Celebration & Membership Meeting: Tuesday March 15, 2022.** Via Zoom with guest speaker Travis Childs, director of History at St. Joseph Historical Society. He will be speaking about history related to the St. Joseph River. He is very knowledgeable and a good speaker. Matt Meersman will provide an overview of the Friends organization/efforts and present the Stewardship award for 2021. An election of Directors will also take place.
- **Thanks:** To Jeff Reece for working on new item on the web site. Also, Thanks to Melissa DeSimone for giving the Friends the permission to publish on the webpage the article in the Riparian magazine.

**New Business**

- **New Projects: Web site Updates: Doug McLaughlin** One of the largest projects that the Friends supported is the inventory of the St. Joseph River. The presentation from Doug included a number of slides explaining the project. The funding came from the GLRI grant and the extra funding from the Friends for more equipment to enhance the initial project. A 360 camera, and other water quality monitors were purchased to complete the project. The main objective was to collect data to help assess and protect riparian forests and wetland habitats, water quality and biodiversity of the river. All data will be added to MISIN. The Friends, and SJCD, will host on their web pages this wonderful project. Look on the web pages to watch the entire project information.

**Tableau Public** is a free software that allows you to organize a great deal of data. This was an amazing software discovery to help this grant results. We also hope to get volunteers to use our material to get out in the watershed and into the tributaries to begin collection of data. Great questions and comments from the board and attendees. Where, How, when to use all this data and how it relates to other entity data collection. Refer to the zoom recorded meeting for further information.

**The virtual tour is incredibly valuable to look at this data as a baseline documentation.**

**Other Announcements, Items from the Floor:**

- Dan Robinson let others know about the River Fest in Three Rivers MI from June 16-18<sup>th</sup>. He said it would be a great place to promote watershed protection.
- Amie Wentworth had a few items from Steuben Co. SWCD: Their Annual Meeting will be held March 9<sup>th</sup> with a discussion about how changes in weather can affect farming in the future. On April 9<sup>th</sup> they will be hosting a Soil Health workshop, and master naturalist classes will be offered in May. See website for more information.
- Jennifer Kanine reported that the Pokagon Band's remeander project on the Dowagiac River will begin in March or April following the necessary permits and guidelines. The first and second phases of the project have been approved.
- Darragh had a last-minute thought. Rusty crayfish is dominating the St. Joseph River. This is troubling that no native species are there, however, the tributaries have kept the rusty crayfish out or at bay. American crayfish atlas is a great website to check out.

**Watershed Celebration & Annual Membership Meeting: Tuesday March 15 @ 7pm via Zoom.**

**Next Board Meeting: April 28, 2022 via zoom.**