

Friends of the St. Joseph River
Board Minutes April 28, 2022
Respectfully submitted by Carolyn Grace

Call to order by Matt Meersman 1:02 pm via zoom.

Introduction: Board Members Present:

Matt Meersman, Jordan Shedd, Grant Poole, Jeff Reece, Chris Temple, Danielle Meersman

Others in attendance: Becky Shank, Pat Wiltshire, Doug McLaughlin, Jared Harmon, Jill Swartz, Lisa Harris, Bill Teft, and Nancy Brown

Minutes: Reece motioned to accept the board minutes from February, Jordan Shedd second. Motion passed.

Treasurer Report: None. However, Danielle went to the PO Box and a few checks were deposited for renewal. Donation for \$1000 from Evergreen Foundation. Chris Temple will send a thank you note.

Sinclair sent report via email during meeting and it is for the entire year. Matt shared the report on the screen including the following: 1) a balance of \$57,433.58 , and 2) net profit for the year -11,269.14. Modified Motion from Reece, to accept the treasurer report sent via email at 1pm, Chris Temple second, motion passed.

Old Business:

No board action taken via email

Annual Celebration: Travis Childs did a great job as the featured speaker talking about local history and the river. The presentation of the Watershed Stewardship Award to Andy Jackson from the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi was very well received. Andy leads a water walk every year and educates people about the importance of clean water. Thanks to Grant Poole and Abbie Kusch a virtual surprise was still achieved!! Matt said we are now looking for the next candidate for the award, so let him know if you know someone who is deserving. A new class of Directors was also approved at the meeting including a new member, Chris Temple. This class will serve through 2025.

New Business:

Election of Officers - Motion made by Jordan Shedd to elect a slate of officers including Matt Meersman as President, Jeff Reece as Vice President, Kim Sinclair as Treasurer and Carolyn Grace as secretary. Grant Poole second. Motion passed. The officers will continue until March of 2023.

Meersman discussed that the next few months he will need new meeting dates in order to participate.

He proposed Wednesday May 25th instead of the 26th for May, and June 16th instead of the 23rd for the June meeting. Motion by Jeff Reece to move the meeting for May to Wednesday May 25th from 1-3pm and the June meeting to be held Thursday June 16th at the same time. Discussion about whether to hold a July meeting will take place at the next meeting.

Email opportunities:

Allen Backler, would like to develop a 3/4th grade educational watershed program to accompany the documentary released last summer. He would like assistance with developing activities for the program.

Amy Drake, a St. Joseph County Council candidate would like to organize a clean-up at Clay Park.

Reach out to Matt if you can help with either of these opportunities and he will connect you.

WNIT reached out to us about sponsoring a documentary about Silver Beach. We usually don't buy advertising, but if interested speak up. Motion from Grant Poole to support the documentary at \$500.00. Jeff Reece second, and motion passed.

Dan Robinson is interested in representing the Friends at the Three Rivers water festival. Carolyn Grace will reach out to him to help him get set up. Still looking for information to be shared on the table. Grace will get T-shirts to him and sign-up sheets. Also, Becky Shank will offer to share space with him at the Sue Silliman House Museum.

Ten DVD's of the documentary were given to us to be distributed. They were delivered to the PO Box in South Bend. Connect with Matt to obtain a copy.

Other Business:

Matt shared some press coverage from ABC News 57 about the river inventory project completed by the St. Joseph County Conservation District. It has generated about 1,000 views. Tom Coomes really did a nice job on this coverage, THANK YOU Jordan Shedd for getting us involved.

Announcements

Chris Temple, volunteer cleanup on Juday Creek.

Remeandering Dowagiac project has started, Grant Poole.

Becky informed the Friends, that Kim LaSata has secured some funding for the restoration of the Covered Bridge across the St. Joseph River.

Doug McLaughlin stated where to find and remove a shopping cart near Bristol's Division street bridge, and he thinks it could be fun to identify a road tour route along the river.

Meersman is working on a grant with Notre Dame to develop a decision support tool and process for facilitating increased water storage upstream.

Collecting fish samples and sending fish to be diagnosed for Mercury, and PCVs.

Jeff Reece interested in hearing about the water walk from Jill.

Adjourned 2:19pm with a motion from Reece and support from Shedd. Motion passed and next meeting Wednesday May 25th via zoom.