

Friends of the St. Joseph River Association Board Meeting  
Minutes from October 22, 2020  
Virtual Meeting held via Zoom

Call to order 1:02 pm

**Board Members Present:** Matt Meersman, Jeff Reece, Carolyn Grace, Eric Kerney, Carol Higgins, Grant Poole, and Kim Sinclair

**Community Members present:** Becky Shank, Jordan Shedd, Matt Diana, Nancy Brown, Lisa Harris, Jan McGowen, Jennifer Kanine, Melissa DeSimone, Tara Lee, Kristi Todd, Matt Hanauer, Don Stohler, Kyle Boone, and Doug McLaughlin

**Minutes from September:** Jeff Reece made the motion to accept the September board minutes, Kim Sinclair supported, motion carried.

**Treasurer Report:** Kim Sinclair provided an explanation of our financials. A balance of \$4,011.72 was reported for checking, \$8040.11 in our money market account and \$55,000 in our CD.

**Old Business:**

1. **Board Action via Email:** none taken
2. **FY20 Financial Report:** Kim Sinclair provided a written report and summary of our financial position at the end of our fiscal year on March 31, 2020. She reported that we had a \$216.79 net loss for the year, total expenses of \$4,900.81 and total income of \$4,684.02. As of March 31, 2020 we had \$66,418.73 of total assets for the year. Motion to accept the FY20 financial report was made by Jeff Reece, and Carol Higgins supported. Motion carried
3. **FY21 Budget:** Kim Sinclair provided a proposed budget for FY21. It included funding for items like leadership development and annual events. Jeff Reece made a motion to accept the FY21 budget as presented, and Carolyn Grace provided a second. Higgins asked for some additional explanation, which was provided by Sinclair. Motion carried.

**New Business**

1. **Website & Membership Management:** Wild Apricot is used to manage our website and all membership and event processing. Membership income more than covers the entire cost of \$540. Higgins moved to renew the Wild Apricot subscription, Reece seconded the motion. Motion carried
2. **Film Screening:** Kim Sinclair would like to hold a virtual screening of a documentary called "Kiss the Ground", which features Gabe Brown who recently presented at a VBCD event. Meersman would like to invite all 15 SWCD's in the watershed to participate. Besides promotion, Sinclair would like to have support for a discussion after the viewing. Meersman said the message of the film could help connect our partners in the watershed. Higgins spoke about Brown's book "Dirt to Soil" and the fact that it is more in depth than the documentary. Eric Kerney made a motion to support a virtual screening of "Kiss the Ground", and Carol Higgins supported the motion. Motion carried.

3. **Next meeting:** Meersman explained that usual 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month meeting schedule caused conflicts with the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. He suggested holding just one meeting for the next two months on December 10<sup>th</sup>. Kim Sinclair made a motion to hold a virtual meeting on Thursday December 10<sup>th</sup>, which was seconded by Higgins. Motion carried

**Items from the Floor:**

1. Becky Shank was very excited to share information on PBS's new documentary on the St. Joseph River. The documentary about the river is expected to be completed in 2021. Meersman and Shank were featured in the trailer of the movie. Greg Giczi, from WNIT in South Bend IN, will be organizing events to get cities and towns along the river involved with the release of the documentary.
2. Don Stohler, a member of a Rotary club in Indiana, spoke about utilizing local Rotary clubs to get more people involved in the St. Joseph Watershed. Rotary International hopes to get local clubs involved in improving watersheds. Don is involved through the Christiana Creek Coalition, but he said Rotary hopes to expand their connection to these kinds of projects.
3. Jordan Shedd, wanted to let others know that the Interactive Sandbox will still be available for others to use. She is willing to help connect and move the sandbox around to your event. A new Administrator, Heather VanLoiu has been hired to replace Jordan.
4. Matt Hanauer, from EGLE was looking for suggestions for water monitoring locations within the watershed because the Paw Paw and lower St. Joe are their focus this year. He mentioned that places where BMPs had been successfully implemented would be ideal. EGLE has an existing plan for monitoring locations, but they are looking for places where new or interesting projects would benefit from data collection. Kim Sinclair offered to provide a summary of their 3 year project monitoring the effectiveness of BMPs. If you know of any places where additional monitoring could be helpful, give Matt a call.
5. Doug McLaughlin spoke about the GLRI grant surveying of the St. Joseph River for terrestrial and aquatic invasive species. So far 40 miles have been covered. Next month he hopes to provide a video of our progress.
6. Becky Shank reiterated her excitement about the St. Joseph River documentary. It will include all 15 counties within the watershed, the cities and villages. Aug 28, 2021, will be the opening day of this movie. PBS is hopeful that other presentations and festivals will be held throughout the summer. Let's Get involved!!
7. Jennifer Kanine explained that the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi's EGLE permit for their re-meandering project of the Dowagiac River has been approved.

Motion to adjourn at 2:21 pm made by Kim Sinclair and second by Jeff Reece. Motion carried

Next meeting Thursday December 10, 2020 via Zoom

Minutes respectfully submitted by Carolyn Grace