

Friends of the St. Joe River Association  
Board meeting, September 28, 2023  
Hermance Park Pavilion in Bistol, IN

Respectfully submitted by Carolyn Grace

**Meeting Started** by Matt Meersman at 1:03 pm

**Board Present:** Matt Meersman, Carolyn Grace, Ron Niezgodski, Daragh Deegan, Grant Poole, Shaun Grace, Doug McLaughlin, and Annie Klehfoth.

**Minutes:** Niezgodski motioned to accept the August board minutes, second by Klehfoth, Motion passed.

**Visitors:** Tyler LaFlash, Hannah Simnick, Kristen Ploeger

**Treasurer Report:** Kim Sinclair was absent, and no report was given. McLaughlin motioned to table until next month, Deegan second. Motion passed.

#### **Old Business**

- **VOTE VIA EMAIL:** There was one board action taken via email since the last meeting, which was the approval of awarding up to 2 scholarships for the Watershed Leadership Academy in the winter and spring. Unanimous yes votes were given, and 2 scholarships will be awarded if deserving candidates apply. C. Grace and Niezgodski will serve on a committee to review applications and bring to board.
- Insurance for river cleanup events and Directors and Officers insurance. Tabled until Chris Temple can provide update.

#### **New Business**

- **Shavehead Lake:** Kyle Boone from Ecosystem Connections contacted C. Grace about a support letter for a grant to study Shavehead Lake. However, no further information or details were provided to include in the letter. No action taken by the board.
- **Future Board Meetings: Next meeting in-person October 26, 2023, at Covered Bridge Farm Park in Three Rivers.** Then further discussion about remaining meetings being virtual.

#### **Other Items for Discussion**

- **C. Grace** asked for a future letter of support for a restoration project along the St. Joseph River. Deegan motioned to provide a letter of support for upcoming CWMA GLRI grant letter, McLaughlin second. Motion passed.

#### **Announcements:**

- **Meersman** explained that there was a press release from MDNR about finding Silver Carp eDNA in the St. Joseph River, but a second survey found none. Additional surveys and data collection will occur in 2024.
- **Poole** gave an update on the re-meandering of the Dowagiac River. McLaughlin is conducting a survey there, and he may also be doing one on the Kankakee River.

- **Deegan** introduced two new employees with the City of Elkhart and they explained what they accomplished over the past summer with their aquatic biological monitoring program.
- **Klehfoth** announced that the cities of Elkhart, South Bend and Goshen all recently received large grants to increase their urban tree canopy.

**Motion to adjourn at 2:22pm by Poole, McLaughlin second, Motion passed.**

**Next Friends meeting will be held in person at Covered Bridge Farm Park in Three Rivers on October 26, 2023 from 1-3 pm**