

ST. JOSEPH RIVER BASIN COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
September 3, 2020

The third quarterly meeting of the St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC) in 2020 was held on September 3, 2020, in the Schrock Pavilion at Shanklin Park in Goshen, Indiana. Numerous members participated electronically utilizing the Google virtual meeting platform. The meeting was also livestreamed on YouTube and made available here: <https://youtu.be/UCM-toUITVs>

Kieran Fahey, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Matt Meersman, River Basin Director, introduced himself, reviewed instructions for participation in the hybrid meeting and discussed the purpose and makeup of the SJRBC. Roll call was taken and it was noted a quorum was present with the following members in attendance:

MEMBERS PRESENT:

<i>Chair:</i> Kieran Fahey, City of South Bend	John Law, St. Joseph County
<i>Secretary:</i> Kris Thomas, City of Angola	Tara Lee, Steuben County
<i>Treasurer:</i> Alicia van Ee, Steuben County	Sarah Longenecker, St. Joseph County
Philip Barker, Elkhart County	Sue McGee, City of Kendallville
Adam Bowden, City of Mishawaka	Lydia Mertz, Elkhart County
Diane Cameron, Town of LaGrange	Janel Meyer, Steuben County
Rod Edgell, Indiana DNR	Roger Nawrot, St. Joseph County
Mark Espich, St. Joseph County	Jon Roberts, Kosciusko County
Martin Franke, LaGrange County	Randy Sexton, Noble County
Jim Hess, Elkhart County	Jewel Wise, Kosciusko County
Dan Lash, Noble County	

OTHERS PRESENT:

Bill Hartsuff, Elkhart County HD	Matt Meersman, MACOG
Brandie Ecker, Thorne Grodnik	Zach Dripps, MACOG

MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 4, 2020

Kieran Fahey, SJRBC Chair, asked the Commission members to consider the minutes of the June 4, 2020, meeting. There being no additions or corrections, the following action was taken:

MARTIN FRANKE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE
JUNE 2020 REGULAR MEETING. DAN LASH SECONDED. ALL IN
FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

FINANCIALS

Financial Report

Matt Meersman, SJRBC Director, provided the financial report for the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 (04/01/20 – 06/30/20) and FY 2020 Year End. Financial reports and bank statements were provided to the members of the Commission for review in advance of the meeting.

Matt discussed the Statement of Financial Activities. He noted some of the costs associated with the North Branch of the Elkhart River project are delayed until Fiscal Year 2021. Matt explained

the budget projected a loss of \$30,000 for the year, but due to delayed and reduced expenses, \$62,000 will be available to utilize in FY 2021.

The Statement of Net Assets (Balance Sheet) was then presented. Matt shared that the Total Fund Balance at the end of the Fiscal Year was \$247,233.11. A bank reconciliation report was provided to the Commission.

Matt reviewed the FY 2020 Statement of Cash Flows and mentioned that the statement is prepared on a cash basis and reflects all cash receipts and disbursements for the reporting period. He pointed out the cash receipts received during the fourth quarter and shared that this is the first time the SJRBC has received funding from all of its member communities. Matt thanked the members for their work and support.

Matt asked if there were any questions or comments regarding any of the financial statements. Dan Lash wanted to know if the \$4,000 paid to USGS – Waldron Lakes was an annual expense. Matt responded it is an annual expense that pays for the stage gage. Noble County does not contribute to the cost but the expense is shared with USGS. Dan commented that the gage provides helpful information to the residents on the West Lakes.

Hearing no additional questions, Kieran called for a motion to approve the financial report for Fiscal Year 2020 Year End as presented.

MARTIN FRANKE MOVED TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020 YEAR END. ADAM BOWDEN SECONDED. ALL IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

Approval of Claims

A list of the quarterly claims and associated invoices was distributed to the SJRBC members for review prior to the meeting. Claims included invoices from MACOG for April, May, and June expenses, quarterly legal services, Christopher Burke Engineering and the Conservation Law Center for the North Branch of the Elkhart River planning project, Water Words that Work for on-line trainings, and INAFSM for conference registration.

Hearing no questions or comments, Kieran called for a motion to approve the claims as presented.

ALICIA VAN EE MOVED TO APPROVE THE CLAIMS AND PAYMENT OF THE EXPENSES AS PRESENTED. ROGER NAWROT SECONDED. ALL IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

OLD BUSINESS

Special Projects:

Additional Staffing

Matt explained the potential for the Commission to be able to benefit from the addition of an internship position. He received a proposal to gather all of the existing water monitoring data available throughout the basin and make it more accessible through an application on the SJRBC website. Matt will follow up on this opportunity.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Urban Tree Project

Matt reported on the GLRI grant-funded project with ReLeaf Michigan, the Michigan DNR, Indiana DNR, and Davey Resource Group. He explained the project is going well but has been slowed due to coronavirus concerns.

A virtual presentation was made for the City of Buchanan. They will proceed with tree planting this fall. The Town of Middlebury and the City of Coldwater also hope to plant in the fall. The cities of Angola and Sturgis, and the Town of Syracuse look to do tree plantings in the spring.

Matt noted additional assessments sponsored by SJRBC were completed and include three (3) tree canopy health analysis for the City of Angola, Town of Syracuse, and the City of Buchanan, as well as a catchment basin analysis for the City of Coldwater. Matt reported the total cost for all of the custom analyses was \$3,700.

Communication Training

Matt shared the next on-line training that will be offered by Water Words that Work is “Social Skills for Social Media”.

Drainage Project

Matt discussed the drainage assessment project in LaGrange County and the efforts to equitably distribute drainage costs among the property owners based on acreage as well as land cover and soil type. He noted a new GIS tool has been developed that makes the assessment process easier.

Flood Risk Management Plan

A draft of the final report is complete for the North Branch of the Elkhart River Planning project. Matt explained the report concluded that the watershed is healthy, resilient and functioning as it should be. Recommendations and additional information will be shared in the day’s presentation.

NEW BUSINESS

Grant Opportunities

CWI Grant

Martin Franke indicated the LaGrange County SWCD is seeking funds through the Clean Water Indiana Grant Program to provide cost-share funds targeting the Amish population with technical assistance on sediment reduction projects.

319 Grant

Additionally, Matt shared the Elkhart River Restoration Association (as the lead organization) is applying for a 319 Grant to update the Elkhart River Watershed Management Plan and implement a cost-share program. Matt noted SJRBC provided a letter of support, offered to be part of the steering committee and provide an in-kind match commitment.

National Science Foundation CIVIC Grant

Matt explained the potential grant to assist SJRBC by developing a tool to improve understanding and communication regarding the cost and value of hydrologic alteration. The grant would be a collaboration between the SJRBC, the Conservation Law Center and the Environmental Resilience Institute at Indiana University.

Biennium Change Request

Matt explained the funds received from the State of Indiana for FY 2021 were reduced by 15% due to the negative impact on the State's revenues caused by the coronavirus. Going forward to the next State budget period, FY 2022 – FY 2023, the State Budget Agency informed the SJRBC that the FY 2021 decrease of 15% (\$16,000) would continue through the next biennium budget period, with the potential for an additional 15% decrease; essentially resulting in a \$32,000 loss to the Commission's operating budget.

In addition to preparing the Biennium Budget Request (at the reduced amount), Matt indicated he worked to prepare a Change Package Request. He explained that the Change Package Request is what the SJRBC did a couple of years ago to get the funds from the State increased from \$50,000 to \$105,000. The request makes the case for the SJRBC to maintain the funding level at \$105,000. Matt stated he was fortunate to be able to build a case appealing to items from Governor Holcomb's 2020 Next Level Agenda such as infrastructure and water quality.

Moreover, the State Budget Agency likes to see that an agency is able to leverage funds. In the request, Matt shared how the funds are leveraged for grants and local government appropriations.

Future Meeting Planning

Matt indicated without the Governor extending the executive order allowing for remote meetings, the Commission would not have been able to meet without having a quorum of 11 members present in the room. Matt stated going forward he anticipates virtual meeting participation will continue to be a part of quarterly meetings, however the Commission needs a meeting location large enough to accommodate 11 people in person and allow for physical distancing. Matt proposed SJRBC continue to meet at the Schrock Pavilion in Goshen rather than the Elkhart County Public Services Building and asked members to offer their feedback. Several attendees offered comments, discussion, and support to hold meetings in Schrock Pavilion.

Matt proposed the Commission consider assisting the City of Goshen with acoustic improvements inside the Pavilion. He suggested funds from the Partner Support line item in the budget be used. Matt requested up to \$2,500 to share the cost of improvements with the City of Goshen upon the agreement the SJRBC be allowed to utilize the space for meetings at no cost.

Kieran Fahey proposed the cost-sharing request be tabled to the next quarterly meeting

Martin Franke suggested at least holding the next meeting in the Schrock Pavilion.

Jewel Wise agreed with Kieran and commented she does not feel the Commission should spend funds on facility improvements at this time. She also concurred with Martin on having the December meeting at the Pavilion.

Alicia van Ee was in agreement with Jewel and noted it would be interesting to investigate the new space, however she does not think the need for social distancing will end anytime soon. Alicia advised funds not be spent on facility improvements until the Commission members can all attend in person to make the decision.

Considering the discussion, Kieran recommended the Commission utilize the Schrock Pavilion for the December meeting and use the same virtual platform. In addition, Kieran suggested that further discussion concerning the requested facility improvement funds be postponed until

December. Matt Meersman agreed and commented that the City of Goshen has been very generous to SJRBC over a number of years.

Additional Funding Request

Matt Meersman briefly discussed the diligent work done by the consultants on the North Branch of the Elkhart River Planning Project and stated that they have gone above and beyond in their efforts to conduct stakeholder meetings. He informed the Commission that the consultants have exceeded the amount in the original project budget for meetings.

Matt explained that at least two more meetings are needed to secure stakeholder feedback. He asked for authorization to spend up to \$2,500 from the Partner Support budget line item for hosting these meetings related to the North Branch of the Elkhart River Planning Project.

The Chair asked for any questions regarding this funding request. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve the additional partner support expense.

JOHN LAW MOVED TO APPROVE THE ADDITIONAL FUNDING REQUEST AS PRESENTED. ADAM BOWDEN SECONDED. ALL IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

Other Business/Updates

There were no announcements or updates from the Commission members.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Matt Meersman indicated that due to the length of the meeting he would forego the Director's Report. He let the members know he would provide his written report to them by email.

PRESENTATION

North Branch Elkhart River Flood Risk Management Plan Update

Robert Barr and Siavash Beik provided a presentation on the interim findings for the North Branch Elkhart River Flood Risk Management Plan. A recording of the presentation is available one hour and 36 minutes (1:36:30) into the recording at: <https://youtu.be/UCM-toU1TVs>

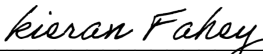
ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR

There were no comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Keiran Fahey called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

ADAM BOWDEN MOVED TO ADJOURN THE SJRBC MEETING.
JOHN LAW SECONDED. ALL IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.



Kieran Fahey, SJRBC Chair