

**ST. JOSEPH RIVER BASIN COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
December 4, 2025**

The final quarterly meeting of the St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC) in 2025 was held on December 4<sup>th</sup>, at the Schrock Pavilion in Goshen. The meeting was also livestreamed on YouTube and made available here: <https://www.youtube.com/live/XguNqYo7zqM>

Jim Hess, SJRBC Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Matt Meersman, River Basin Director, introduced himself and Ashley Matthews from the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG). He briefly reviewed instructions for participation 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:

**VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:**

*Chair:* Jim Hess, Elkhart County  
*Vice Chair:* Jewel Wise, Kosciusko County  
*Secretary:* Ray Hoover, LaGrange County  
Phil Barker, Elkhart County  
Adam Bowden, St. Joseph County  
Daragh Deegan, City of Elkhart  
Martin Franke, LaGrange County  
Bill Hartsuff, Elkhart County  
Clint Knauer, Steuben County  
Dan Lash, Noble County  
John Law, St. Joseph County

Sue McGee, City of Kendallville  
Janel Meyer, Steuben County  
Jim Moyer, Kosciusko County  
Jarrod Nisley, LaGrange County  
Charlie Pettibone, Steuben County  
Jon Roberts, Kosciusko County  
Randy Sexton, Noble County  
Cory Stewart, LaGrange County  
Kris Thomas, City of Angola  
Alicia Walsh, Steuben County

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Ethen Bailey-Shepherd, City of Goshen  
Todd Clark, Elkhart Co. SWCD  
Trevor Hampshire, City of Kendallville  
Jason Kauffman, City of Goshen  
Kylie Lees, City of Goshen  
Conrad Liechty, City of Goshen  
Jon Marshall, DJ Case & Assoc.  
Eli Martin, City of Goshen

Ryan Miller, City of Goshen  
Brea Persing, Elkhart Co. SWCD  
Sherry Plank, Elkhart Co. Parks  
Nathaniel Wise, City of Goshen  
Brandie Ecker, Thorne Grodnik  
Ashley Matthews, MACOG  
Matt Meersman, MACOG

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Jim Hess, SJRBC Chair, introduced the consent agenda and reminded members that they can request to have any item removed if they believe it warrants its own separate vote.

**Minutes – September 4, 2025**

Jim asked Commission members if there were any comments or questions about the minutes from September 4. Hearing none, Jim asked Matt to review the next item on the consent agenda.

**Financial Report**

Matt presented the financial report for the first quarter of FY 2026 (07/01/25 – 09/30/25). Financial statements were provided to the members for review in advance of the meeting.

Matt discussed the Statement of Financial Activities. He reported that there was minimal activity in the first quarter, noting that local government appropriations typically do not arrive until the second or third quarter.

The Statement of Net Assets was then presented. Accounts Payable are for services provided by MACOG from July through September. The total Fund Balance was \$504,190.87.

Matt reviewed the Statement of Cash Flows and reminded everyone that the statement is prepared on a cash basis ending on 09/30/25. Matt noted that this statement includes expenses from last fiscal year and local government appropriation requests will be sent after the new year.

Matt asked if there were any questions on the financial report. Hearing no questions, he moved on to the next item on the consent agenda.

#### **Claims – December 4, 2025**

A list of the quarterly claims and associated invoices totaling \$36,031.89 was distributed to the SJRBC members for review prior to the meeting. Claims included accounts payable invoices for MACOG services, as well as the strategic planning project, water monitoring, the watershed leadership academy, Michiana Irrigation Association workshop registration, and legal counsel.

Matt asked if there were any questions about the claims, or other items from the consent agenda. Hearing no questions or comments, Jim called for a motion to approve the consent agenda.

RANDY SEXTON MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.  
ALICIA WALSH SECONDED. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

##### **Water Monitoring Program**

Matt provided an update on SJRBC Water Monitoring. He reminded the Commission that the cost of MBI services increased this year because MBI conducted the fieldwork in addition to macroinvertebrate processing. He estimated the cost to be around \$21,000 and expects to receive the invoice in the spring. Matt said the 2025 data from MBI should also be ready in the spring.

Matt discussed attending an Indiana Water Data Hub event sponsored by the Indiana Geological and Water Survey at Indiana University, which focused on a new executive order requiring Indiana to create a central hub for water data. He said that one of the challenges the Commission faces with the web map is standardizing data from local sources, which are often stored as PDFs or spreadsheets. Matt noted the potential reluctance of data collectors to share raw data. He and Jim also discussed the necessity of data analysis and narrative to make raw data meaningful, as well as concerns about how others might interpret or use the data if it were available to everyone.

Matt then provided an overview of water quantity monitoring through USGS gauges and eight SJRBC sponsored sensors throughout the basin. Tritium has been taking field measurements at each of the SJRBC sites in order to develop stage-discharge curves, which allows the estimate of the volume/discharge at each site. Matt stated that maintaining the current sites costs about \$20,000 annually, with the largest expense being the required field measurements to convert water level to discharge. Establishing a new site is estimated to cost \$8,000 to \$9,000, followed by about \$3,000 annually for maintenance.

Matt met with the City of Goshen to discuss their interest in partnering with the Commission to install sensors at new sites. Jason Kauffman, City of Goshen Stormwater Coordinator, introduced himself and explained that Goshen would like to know how much floodwater is coming toward them before it reaches the city, allowing for better adjustments and emergency preparedness.

### **Watershed Study**

Matt discussed the development of a technical strategy and workplan to investigate potential modeling efforts, additional monitoring sites, water demand/availability analysis, and early warning systems. He originally envisioned the study as a model to evaluate green infrastructure. This type of model could be updated regularly to account for changes over time, incorporate actual weather and stream discharge data, and possibly “learn” how water moves in the basin. Although the study will explore such a model, it will do so in comparison with other efforts the Commission could pursue. Matt noted that the water demand/availability analysis component will no longer be part of the study because the State started one last month for our area.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Election of 2026 Officers**

Matt explained the traditional process the Commission has used to create a Slate of Officers for election. Historically, the Vice Chair has been nominated for Chair, the Secretary for Vice Chair, and the Treasurer for Secretary, leaving the Treasurer position to be filled each year. Jewel Wise agreed to serve as Chair, and Sarah Longenecker told Matt she would move up to Secretary. However, Ray Hoover, the current Secretary, preferred not to move up to Vice Chair due to other commitments. Randy Sexton, Noble County Surveyor, said he would be willing to serve as Vice Chair. Jim Moyer, Kosciusko County Surveyor, expressed his willingness to serve as Treasurer. Jim Hess asked if there were any other nominations from the floor. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the slate of officers as presented with Jewel Wise as Chair, Randy Sexton as Vice Chair, Sarah Longenecker as Secretary, and Jim Moyer as Treasurer.

DAN LASH MOVED TO APPROVE THE SLATE OF OFFICERS AS PRESENTED WITH THE ADDITION OF RANDY SEXTON AS VICE CHAIR AND JIM MOYER AS THE TREASURER. MARTIN FRANKE SECONDED. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIED.

### **Communication, Connection and Data Collection**

Matt introduced Jon Marshall from DJ Case and Associates to discuss communication, connection, and data collection efforts. Matt emphasized the need to connect with private landowners, communicate the message about land’s impact on water, and collect data on land and water management practices. Jon explained that his firm specializes in conservation issues nationally and focuses on engaging people, land owners, and policymakers with data. Jon described their core work as figuring out how to take data and information and convert it into action on the ground, specifically focusing on storytelling with data. He presented the idea of a tool to communicate how an individual landowner’s property impacts water quality and quantity, including how their actions affect downstream users. The tool would allow property owners to claim their land, view publicly available data, supplement it with information on actions they are taking, and be presented with information about incentive programs. Matt noted that the Commission’s typical audience is a smaller group of public water infrastructure managers, but recognized the public’s desire for the Commission to engage in education and outreach.

Jim Hess explained the work of Soil & Water Conservation Districts and the need to reach private landowners. He conducted a demonstration to illustrate the impact of land management practices on runoff and water quality. Discussion followed concerning communication, the tool described by DJ Case, and how the Commission can foster conservation efforts.

### **26<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium**

Matt initiated discussion on the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium and his desire to partner with the Friends of the St. Joe River again. He asked for topic, speaker, and venue suggestions. Matt proposed scheduling the Symposium on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **Other Business/Updates**

There were no announcements from Commission members.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Matt reported on several administrative tasks over the last quarter. He also discussed legislative activity initiated by Representative Lindauer that could result in a bill consolidating the statutes of each Indiana River Basin Commission (RBC) into one chapter of Indiana Code. It would establish an overarching framework for all RBCs. Matt has been working with the Legislative Services Agency to ensure no RBC loses any members or powers as a result of the change.

Matt mentioned a successful roundtable event hosted last quarter to discuss drainage financing. He announced that Corey Stewart, LaGrange County Deputy Surveyor, and Conrad Liechty, AmeriCorps member for the City of Goshen, will receive financial support from the SJRBC to attend the Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy (IWLA) in 2026. The Friends of the St. Joe River Association will provide support for Dan Burton and Chandra Kinney to attend the IWLA. Matt also noted that he and Jim Hess participated in a panel with Dr. Jen Tank from Notre Dame and Eric Horvath from the City of South Bend at the National Sustainability Conference.

Matt announced the next SJRBC meeting will be held on March 5, 2026. He will send calendar invites to Commission members after the first of the year and update the website with meeting dates for stakeholders and the public.

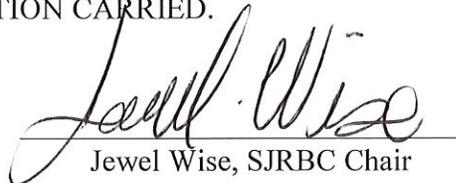
### **ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR**

Jim asked if there were any items from the floor. Hearing none, he moved to the next item.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Jim Hess called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

DAN LASH MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. ADAM BOWDEN  
SECONDED. ALL IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.



Jewel Wise, SJRBC Chair

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