

Muskegon River Watershed Assembly

Board Minutes – March 17, 2014

Conference Call

Present: Chair Greg Mund, Vice-Chair Cindy Fitzwilliams-Heck, Treasurer Ken Johnson, Secretary Doug Trembath, Nancy Burmeister, Ron Kadelsik, Don Henning, Kurt Ray, Executive Director Gary Noble, Program Director Terry Stilson and Project Manager Dixie Ward. **Absent:** Jean LaLonde, and Wayne Groesbeck.

Chair Mund convened the meeting at 5:32 p.m.

Agenda – no changes.

Consent Agenda –

Trembath motioned to approve the consent agenda with Fitzwilliams-Heck supporting the motion. Motion passed.

Executive Director's Report – distributed earlier.

- Trembath asked about the size of barrels needed for rain barrels. The City of Ewart may have some 30 gallon barrels. Stilson said they could talk about this at the next Education Committee meeting. Trembath replied that they have no lids so they may be more trouble than it's worth and if he hears anything before the Education Committee meeting, he will contact Jean LaLonde.

GLRI project – Ward explained that an extension to the project is necessary in order to have project partners meet their obligations. The MRWA currently is able to extend the project for up to 12 months but six months is the most the MRWA needs to allow partners to finish their projects and not make a huge effect on the MRWA 2014 budget.

Burmeister motioned to allow the six months extension for the GLRI project with Kadelsik supporting the motion. Motion passed.

Rain Garden Fund – Stilson explained that she has closed the MOCC Rain Garden project and has leftover Wege match funds along with some remaining Mecosta County Match Day funds. There is also a balance in the Ferris Rain Garden Wege match fund. She would like to take the balance of these accounts and consolidate them in one general account to use when rain gardens need repair or to work on a new rain garden project. The total amount of the leftover funds is \$11,573.30.

- Mund spoke of the need to have landowners provide some of the funding.
- Fitzwilliams-Heck asked whether we could give this money out in grants for other people to make rain gardens.
 - Stilson replied that landowners normally do provide some of the work and funding. She would like to see these funds remain in the MRWA so it could cover employee hours and expenses while working with these rain gardens.
- Kadelsik added that the request was only for the consolidation of these funds and is an accounting issue.

Kadelsik motioned to approve the consolidation of these funds into one account with Burmeister supporting the motion. Motion passed.

- **More discussion about the use of these funds will be made at the Education Committee meeting.**

2013 Mecosta Co. Match Day funds – Stilson asked whether the approximately \$1900 provided through Match Day could be used for a rain barrel workshop fund. Currently the March 27 rain barrel workshop in Big Rapids is full with 30 participants and then another 34 participants have inquired about attending a workshop and are on a waiting list. Funding for the March 27 workshop is from the Audubon Club donation and participant fees. Also, if the Match Day funding is used for the workshops then some employee wages

and organization expenses could be paid through this amount. (Match Day funds need to be spent in Mecosta County).

Fitzwilliams-Heck motioned to use the 2013 Match Day funds for the rain barrel program with Trembath supporting the motion. Motion passed.

Old Business

Strategic Plan Revision – Noble reported:

- Objective of the revision is to align the Strategic Plan with the Sustainability Plan.
- Two documents were formed:
 - First Strategic Plan document is a broad-based plan intended for public display.
 - Second document is converted more to a detailed Four Year Strategic Work Plan for internal use.
- Committee has been working to revise these documents and Noble will send them to the Board after getting the whole Committee's approval on the latest revisions.

Financial Sustainability Planning

- **Fundraising Contact List** – Noble asked Board members to provide him with additional names (than was on the mailing list distributed last month).
- **“Keep It Cool” envelopes** – Noble reported having the envelopes in his office and they are ready for distribution. Board members should let him know how many envelopes they want.
 - Johnson asked whether they could be distributed with the next newsletter.
 - Noble replied that he would have to think about it since there is already a form in the newsletter for people to fill out.
- **2014 Board membership and donations** – Mund reminded Board members about their membership fees along with a consideration to provide donations.
 - Stilson added that almost all the Board members have paid their 2014 membership fee.
 - **Stilson was asked to send emails to those members who have not paid their membership fee.**
- **CFFMC representative to explain endowment fund**
 - **The consensus of the Board members was to have a CFFMC representative meet with them during their April Board meeting.**

New Business

Engaging Board in Fundraising – national survey results were sent earlier via email. Noble reiterated the results stating Board participation in fundraising “increases chances of the organization meeting its fundraising goals”.

100% Giving Policy for Board Members

- Noble stated that he would like the Board to consider having a policy making it mandatory for all board members to provide meaningful donations to the MRWA.
- Johnson replied that he agreed everyone should be giving but it should be what they feel they can give and leave it to them without having a policy. Board members should give at a level they're comfortable with.
- Burmeister replied that if there was no amount in the policy then maybe no one would be offended.

Noble will draft a formal giving policy and present it to the Board at next month's meeting.

Education Committee – Stilson reported that she sent last month's minutes to everyone and asked for questions. The Education Committee will meet again on March 19.

Finance/Human Resources Committee – next meeting TBD.

Resource Committee – Noble stated the next meeting will probably be held in April.

Development Committee – Noble stated the next meeting will be held on March 24.

Transition Team – Trembath reported the team met on March 13 with many of their goals being 75 to 100% accomplished. The next meeting will be held in August or September.

Action Committee – Henning reported:

- Next meeting will be held on March 26.
 - Will finalize the organization structure document.
 - Will discuss the strategy of making the bylaw changes.

Communications

Stan Woodard Letter – distributed via email.

- Mund stated that Stan would like to see us get off center with Maple Island and the ramifications of opening the Little Maple River.
- Noble stated that a University of Michigan grad student is working on a model to provide different scenarios about opening the river that was plugged up during the logging era. Stan doesn't realize there are major expenses if this river is opened. Originally, the model was supposed to be wrapped up this spring but the grad student has had diversions and it probably won't happen until 2015. Noble said he could draft a response to Stan and tell him what we are doing. Once the modeling results are done, we will convene a meeting and let people know. The researchers are providing this free of charge and that is why it is taking so long. He furthered that Stan talked about other things including pheasants and grayling. Should he address these in his response?
- Mund replied that we need to address all his issues. The (Little Maple River) culverts are from past the lumber era – probably in the 1940s. It is worth getting Rich O'Neal's (DNR) comments about the fishery response.
- Kadelsik responded that he doubts grayling would survive in the Little Maple River since they are not currently present in the Muskegon or Maple Rivers.
- Johnson added that he feels people are frustrated with the length of time it is taking.
- Mund asked if the Road Commissions were present at the first meeting and Noble stated Newaygo's was. Mund replied that Muskegon County Road Commission should be involved also. He also asked Noble to contact Matt Occhipinti from the DEQ. He would be involved if a permit is needed and he may be able to make a hydrologic review. Also, Mund asked if Noble could also ask about the effect this would have on Maple River wild rice.
- Kadelsik added to tread lightly on the hydrology in his response to Stan. The people in the area feel that flooding is linked (to the unopened Little Maple River).

Noble will contact O'Neal and Occhipinti and get information from them and then send a response letter to Stan Woodard and run it past Mund and Kadelsik before sending it.

Next Meeting – the next meeting will be held on Monday, April 21 at 5:30 pm at Brooks Township Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 6:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Terry Stilson,
Program Director