

Muskegon River Watershed Assembly

Board Minutes – April 21, 2014

Brooks Township Hall

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

Chair Mund convened the meeting at 5:28 p.m.

Agenda – Mund added 6b. “MLWP Leadership Meeting”.

Consent Agenda –

Groesbeck motioned to approve the consent agenda as amended with Fitzwilliams-Heck supporting the motion. Motion passed.

MRWA Endowment Fund – Chapla presented:

- CFFMC was created in 1961 to help nonprofits provide a higher profile in the community and help them begin endowments.
 - Currently has over 1200 funds.
- MRWA’s fund was created in 1999 with \$10,000.
 - Currently has approximately \$108,000.
 - Created “to protect, enhance and properly develop the natural resources of the Muskegon River and surrounding Muskegon River Watershed.”
 - CFFMC’s purpose is to manage and grow it.
 - Last year’s growth was around 12.35%.
 - Contains approximately \$60,000 in gifts that cannot be touched by the MRWA.
 - Financial Accounting Standard Board (FASB) states that any monies the MRWA contributes to the fund is available to the MRWA along with any accrued interest.
 - Currently the FASB amount is \$39,093.
 - An organization normally takes around 4% to 5% out of the fund annually, based on 16 quarters, but the MRWA has not taken any of the funds to date.

Q – What if the MRWA disbanded?

A – Assets would be used toward the same mission. Probably the fund would be transferred over to a field of interest fund.

Q – What would 4-5% on an annual basis be?

A – Around \$3400 this year.

Q – If the MRWA wanted to withdraw \$10,000 this year, what would we need to do?

A – A board action would be needed.

Q – Can it be set up to automatically get the average amount of monies withdrawn on a certain date each year?

A – Yes – a board action would be needed to do this.

Chapla furthered that there are now opportunities to get legacies (from bequests).

Q – Can our money ever be requested from another group?

A – no.

Executive Director's Report – distributed earlier.

- Noble was asked to check with Brenda Moore (Muskegon Co. Drain Commissioner) about the Cedar Creek project.

Old Business

Strategic Plan and Strategic Work Plan –

Fitzwilliams-Heck motioned to approve both plans as presented with Trembath's approval. Motion approved.

Financial Sustainability Planning

- Fundraising Contact List – Noble asked Board members to provide him with additional names via email, mail or telephone. Trembath has sent his list already.
- "Keep It Cool" envelopes –

Groesbeck motioned to approve the bill (\$685) for the (color printed) envelopes with LaLonde supporting the motion. Motion passed.

- Case Statement and Addendums –

Fitzwilliams-Heck motioned to approve 1,000 color copies of the case statement and addendums with Trembath's support. Motion passed.

- 100% Giving Policy for Board Members – distributed earlier.
 - Stilson spoke of her appreciation to all the board members and other volunteers for the hours, travel and other expenses they provide to the MRWA.
 - LaLonde asked if the statement in the Board Member Agreement was enough without a policy.
 - Noble stated that we need to say we have a giving policy to funders.

Johnson motioned to adopt the policy as written, and not provide the dollar amounts (of individual donations) to anyone (including the board). LaLonde supported the motion. The motion passed but was not unanimous.

Stan Woodard Letter – Noble reported:

- Discussed the letter with DNR.
- DNR said not to answer any question about flooding because there are too many questions as to whether opening the Maple River would help the flooding problem. The MRWA should wait until the study is done. The DNR suggested letting Stan know that the study is taking place.
- Mund said to include the time frame in the answer and refer him to the DNR about the fish statements in the letter.

Noble will draft the response letter to Woodard and send it to Mund and Kadelsik (for edits) before he sends it.

New Business

Education Committee – LaLonde stated that the rain barrel workshop went well. Barrels are being sought to conduct another workshop as there are almost 60 people on the waiting list.

Finance/Human Resources Committee – next meeting TBD.

Resource Committee – next meeting will be held on April 22.

Development Committee – met on March 24. Mund reported:

- Recruiting new members.
- Tweaking documents.
- Suggested having some of staff and board members sit down with the MLWP to bring them up to speed on the campaign and other projects.

Noble will talk with Kathy Evans about possible meeting dates.

Transition Team – next meeting targeted for late August/early September.

Action Committee – met on March 26 with the next meeting on April 30.

Other

Land Trust Alliance Conference – Groesbeck stated that he attended the conference (representing the MRWA) and participated in a joint session with April Scholtz from the Land Conservancy of West Michigan (LCWM) on our working partnership with LCWM.

River Volunteer Groups Meeting – Groesbeck and Johnson attended on April 17. Johnson reported:

- Learned much about the different watersheds and different river organizations represented.
- Many organizations focus on fish habitat improvements.
- Amy Beyer from CRA provided an interesting presentation on the Boardman River dams that are being removed.
- Would be nice to have our annual meeting on the Hersey River and discuss dam removal (re: Nartron Dam).

Endowment Account – Johnson asked if the endowment account could be on next month's agenda to discuss what the board would like to do with it.

Adjournment - Johnson motioned to adjourn the meeting with Fitzwilliams-Heck's support. The meeting adjourned at 7:08 pm.

Next Meeting – the next meeting will be held on Monday, May 19 at 5:30 pm and will be a conference call.

Respectfully submitted,
Terry Stilson,
Program Director