

Muskegon River Watershed Assembly

Board Minutes – May 19, 2014

Conference Call

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

Chair Mund convened the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

Consent Agenda –

Burmeister motioned to accept the consent agenda with Fitzwilliams-Heck supporting the motion. Motion passed.

- **Clarification** – Discussion about whose monetary donations would be disclosed and whose would be undisclosed. **Consensus was that only individual Board members' monetary donations would not be disclosed, but the Board's total amount could be disclosed.**

Executive Director's Report – distributed earlier.

- Noble noted that he has heard from Haworth Corporation and they have awarded the MRWA with a \$7,500 Keep it Cool donation (\$2,500 each year for three years).
- Johnson asked if all MRW organizations are being asked to support the campaign.
- Noble responded that those on a list developed by the Development Committee are being asked. **Noble will send the Board the list and they can add to it.**

Old Business

MRWA Endowment Fund (continued from last month)

- Mund stated that he feels the endowment's available funding should be kept for emergencies. He furthered that he doesn't feel we are in a condition that merits removing any of the available funds.
- Trembath said he feels the same way. We should let it sit and accumulate. Then, when special projects or an emergency arises, we could tap into it.
- Johnson stated that he doesn't mind the idea of withdrawing some of the funds each year.
- Noble responded that he thought it made sense to wait until we get closer to the end of 2014, then revisit the subject. Operational funds are the hardest to come by and he feels any endowment funds that are withdrawn should be for operation funds.
- Kadelsik responded that he felt taking out an annual amount, beginning in 2014, would be good for the MRWA. We don't have to spend it even though it is taken out. He furthered that he thinks we should start in July to take an annual amount out and then set it up to take an annual amount out every January 15.
- Noble stated that when big contributors are asked for donations, they may ask us why we are not doing something with the endowment fund.
- Mund responded that we are doing something with it – it is earning around 12% interest. We've never been asked that question yet by big contributors.
- Groesbeck added that he doesn't think \$40,000 in a reserve is unreasonable and he doesn't think big contributors would find it unreasonable either.

More discussion will be made on this subject at the June Board meeting.

Financial Sustainability Planning

- **Fundraising Contact List – send additional names to Noble.**
- **“Keep It Cool” campaign materials – Noble has them available and will bring some to the June meeting. If anyone needs them earlier than that, let him know.**

The next Meeting-at-Large will be held on September 9 in Muskegon County or Newaygo County.

- **Possible Meeting-at-Large presentation topics/speaker ideas**
 - Fundraising campaign and distribution of materials (Noble)
 - Bear Creek/Lake 319 Implementation 2 project or Newaygo Rain Garden project (Stilson)
 - Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) project update (Ward) – maybe coordinated with tour of nearby forestation and/or streambank enhancement sites

Membership vs. Directorship –

- Mund said he thought there was some confusion about changing from a membership organization to a directorship. He thought members still would have a role in electing Board officers but they don't. Members will not be able to have any vote in a directorship. He said this was not clear when the Board voted to change to directorship and we may want to revisit this subject.
- Noble stated the Action Committee has been discussing ways to keep the membership involved. He furthered that membership still has a right to “call” a meeting so they still have access in determining how often we meet. He furthered that a directorship is a more efficient move and he is not trying to deny the membership of anything.

The consensus was to continue to move toward a Directorship.

New Business

Education Committee – LaLonde discussed the survey that will be sent in June with the “save the date” notice for the Meeting-at-Large.

- A few minor changes were noted.

Groesbeck motioned to send the revised survey out to the entire mailing list as part of the June notice. Trembath supported the motion. Motion passed.

Finance/Human Resources Committee – next meeting TBD.

Resource Committee – Kadelsik reported on the April 22 meeting:

- Well attended
- Noble has set a subsequent meeting with Kathy Evans about further projects
- Concern was mentioned about the flooding in the Maple Island area

Development Committee – Mund stated that they are in a recruiting mode (for some Muskegon and Big Rapids replacements).

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

Action Committee – met on April 30; next meeting on May 29.

- **Henning asked that the Structure document be tabled until the June meeting.**
- Henning wrote an article for the July newsletter explaining the transition from membership to directorship.
 - Trembath asked who elects officers in a Directorship organization.
 - Noble replied that the Board does.
 - Henning stated that if Board members are still not clear on this subject, we may need to revisit it until everyone is clear.
 - Noble responded he thought we were still moving forward to the Directorship.
 - Mund responded that in the last ten years, few people have made nominations or voted so it will probably not make much difference.
 - Ray responded that that comment should be made at the September (at Large) meeting.

Burmeister motioned to include the article in the July River View newsletter as written. Groesbeck supported the motion. Motion passed.

Potash Mining – a letter was earlier distributed about mining proposed in the Haymarsh area of Osceola County. Mund had distributed more information. Questions ensued.

Noble will research the process and the role of the DEQ and report back at the June meeting.

Adjournment - Kadelsik motioned to adjourn the meeting with Burmeister's support. The meeting adjourned at 7:01 pm.

Next Meeting – the next meeting will be held on June 16 at 5:30 pm at Brooks Township Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Terry Stilson,
Program Director