

**ST. JOSEPH RIVER BASIN COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
December 5, 2019**

The fourth quarterly meeting of the St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC) in 2019 was held on December 5, 2019, in the Elkhart County Public Services Building, Goshen, Indiana. Martin Franke, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Matt Meersman, River Basin Director, introduced himself 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:

Martin Franke, LaGrange County	Sarah Longenecker, St. Joseph County
Phil Barker, Elkhart County	Janel Meyer, Steuben County
Adam Bowden, City of Mishawaka	Jim Moyer, Kosciusko County
Daragh Deegan, City of Elkhart	Roger Nawrot, St. Joseph County
Rod Edgell, Indiana DNR	Jarod Nisley, LaGrange County
Mark Espich, St. Joseph County	Jason Pippenger, Noble County
Kieran Fahey, City of South Bend	Jon Roberts, Kosciusko County
Bill Hartsuff, Elkhart County	Kris Thomas, City of Angola
Ray Hoover, Town of LaGrange	Alicia van Ee, Steuben County
Dona Hunter, LaGrange County	Steven Vaughn, LaGrange County
Dan Lash, Noble County	Robert Weaver, Kosciusko County
John Law, St. Joseph County	Jewel Wise, Kosciusko County

OTHERS PRESENT:

David Abbott, State Representative	Diann Scott, West Lakes Assoc.
Jason Kauffman, City of Goshen	Troy Sutton, Shipshewana CLIA
Annie Klehfoth, Elkhart Env. Center	Lauren Varga, Commonwealth Engineers
Jamie Miller, Indiana DNR	Brandie Ecker, Thorne Grodnik
Jeff Moore, Town of LaGrange	Matt Meersman, MACOG
Ron Niezgodski, FotSJR	Leah Thill, MACOG

MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 5, 2019

Martin Franke, SJRBC Chair, asked the Commission members to consider the minutes of the September 5, 2019 meeting. There being no additions or corrections, the following action was taken:

DAN LASH MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 2019 REGULAR MEETING. JON ROBERTS SECONDED. ALL IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

FINANCIALS

Financial Report

Matt Meersman, SJRBC Director, provided the financial report for the first quarter of Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 (07/01/19 – 09/30/19). Financial reports and bank statements were provided to the members of the Commission for review in advance of the meeting.

Matt drew the Commission's attention to the Statement of Financial Activities. He noted the revenue is expected to be \$5,520 less than budgeted because Steuben County did not appropriate the amount requested.

On the expense side, Matt indicated the office rent paid to the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) is still at the lower, previous rate as the office expansion has not yet taken place and an additional SJRBC staff member has not been hired. He also pointed out that service fees for the new checking account were higher than originally anticipated and seemed to be averaging about \$50 per month but the expense is offset by the significantly higher amount of interest earned.

The SJRBC Director requested a FY 2020 Budget Revision. He suggested creating a \$750 line item for "Bank Service Charges" and decreasing the line item for "Office Rent" by \$750.

Hearing no questions or concerns regarding the Budget Revision, Martin Franke called for a motion.

ROGER NAWROT MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY 2020 BUDGET REVISION. RAY HOOVER SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED.

Adam Bowden asked for clarification regarding the \$115.32 in "Misc. Income" on the Statement of Cash Flows. Matt explained that Financials for the SJRBC are done on an accrual basis. The \$115.32 was income from the 2019 Symposium that was not received until this fiscal year. The revenue was accounted for in the Statement of Financial Activities for FY 2019 but shows up on the Statement of Cash Flows in FY 2020.

The Statement of Net Assets (Balance Sheet) was then presented. Matt shared that the Total Fund Balance was \$200,559.05 and indicated the Commission was in a strong financial position.

Matt reviewed the Statement of Cash Flows and pointed out that the statement is prepared on a cash basis and reflects all cash receipts and disbursements for the reporting period.

Martin asked if there were any questions or comments regarding any of the financial statements. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve the financial report for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2020, as presented.

DONA HUNTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE QUARTER ENDING 09/30/2019. KIERAN FAHEY SECONDED. ALL IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

Approval of Claims

A list of the quarterly claims and a description of invoices received was distributed to the SJRBC members for review prior to the meeting. The Basin Director noted that a claim for payment to USGS for the Waldron Lake gauge was added after the packet was distributed by email. Claims also included invoices from MACOG for July, August, and September expenses, as well as an invoice for legal services.

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

RAY HOOVER MOVED TO APPROVE THE CLAIMS AND PAYMENT OF THE EXPENSES AS PRESENTED. DARAGH DEEGAN SECONDED. ALL IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

OLD BUSINESS

Calendar Year 2020 Meeting Schedule

Last quarter, the Commission approved the calendar year 2020 meeting schedule with the September meeting being scheduled on Wednesday, September 2, rather than on the typical first Thursday, September 3, due to a conflict with the annual Indiana Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management (INAFSM) Conference. Since then, the dates for the conference have moved to mid-September. Matt requested the Commission amend the meeting schedule and move the September meeting to Thursday, September 3.

DAN LASH MOVED TO APPROVE AMENDING THE CY 2020 MEETING SCHEDULE AND CHANGING THE SEPTEMBER MEETING DATE TO SEPTEMBER 3, 2020. RAY HOOVER SECONDED. ALL IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

20th Annual Symposium Planning

Matt reported that he secured Fernwood Botanical Gardens in Niles, Michigan, as the location for the Annual Symposium on May 8, 2020. He asked the Commission to let him know if they have any ideas for a speaker or topic.

Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy

Matt noted the Friends of the St. Joe River Association offered to match the SJRBC in providing financial assistance to attend the Academy again in 2020 – allowing a total of four individual applicants to participate at no cost to them. He then asked Selection Committee member Ron Niezgodski to describe the process. Ron shared the Committee had reviewed and discussed twelve highly qualified applicants before deciding on a final four. The four recipients are:

- Melissa DeSimone – Michigan Lakes & Streams Association
- Peter Kelly – Dallas Lake Association & 5-Lakes Conservation Association
- Annie Klehfoth – Elkhart Environmental Center
- Casey Stoffel – UND Environmental Change Initiative

After some discussion, the Commission agreed that going forward, each person who received financial assistance would be asked to give a brief presentation about their experience participating in the Watershed Leadership Academy and share some of what they learned.

Additional Staffing

Matt explained that staff for the SJRBC are provided through MACOG. That being the case, he met with the MACOG Executive Director to discuss the need for additional staff and budgetary issues. After their discussion, Matt drafted a job description for a part-time position, which was shared with Commission members. The position will be posted on the MACOG website. Matt will also distribute notice of the available position by email, as appropriate.

NEW BUSINESS

Election of 2020 Officers

Martin Franke explained the traditional process for creating a Slate of Officers for the Commission is for the Chair to step off the executive committee and each of the other officers to move up one position: Vice Chair to Chair, Secretary to Vice Chair, and Treasurer to Secretary, leaving the Treasurer position open to be filled. He stated that Alicia van Ee, Steuben County, and Jim Hess, Elkhart County, had both indicated their willingness to serve as Treasurer.

Martin opened the floor for nominations for any of the four Executive Committee positions. Adam Bowden nominated Alicia van Ee for Treasurer. Hearing no additional nominations, Martin called for a motion to close the nominations.

DONA HUNTER MOVED TO CLOSE THE NOMINTATIONS. RAY HOOVER SECONDED. ALL IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

The SJRBC proposed Slate of Officers for calendar year 2020 is as follows:

Chair:	Kieran Fahey, City of South Bend
Vice Chair:	Daragh Deegan, City of Elkhart
Secretary:	Kris Thomas, City of Angola
Treasurer:	Alicia van Ee, Steuben County

Martin then called for a motion to adopt the Slate of Officers, as presented, to serve in 2020.

JON ROBERTS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE CY 2020 SLATE OF OFFICERS. RAY HOOVER SECONDED. ALL IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

Martin Franke thanked the Commission for the opportunity to serve as Chair and indicated he looks forward to his continued involvement.

North Branch Elkhart River Project

Matt Meersman sent the members of the Commission a copy of a proposal from Christopher B. Burke Engineering (Burke) to provide professional engineering services for the completion of a flood risk management plan for the mainstem of the North Branch Elkhart River in LaGrange and Noble Counties.

Matt explained that the proposed project is the result of an earlier grant application from the Conservation Law Center to Indiana University (IU). Although that proposal was not funded, IU indicated that they still had \$39,000 in grant funds available if a project could be developed that would specifically address getting ahead of flooding in an ecologically sound way. Burke was asked to prepare a proposal that would meet that criteria and build on their recent planning efforts with the Kankakee and Maumee River Basin Commissions.

The project would include development of a new hydrologic model to assess the feasibility of creating additional flood storage. It also includes the services of Bob Barr, a stream scientist from IUPUI who will walk the stream and develop an assessment of how the river is working, where it is moving, what and where the hazards are, etc. John Law mentioned that a channel assessment has been extremely valuable for addressing flood plain connectivity, channel modifications, and erosion concerns in the Kankakee River Basin.

Burke will also produce flood hazard corridor maps that identify existing infrastructure in harm's way, where new development should be encouraged, and where potential flood hazards can be mitigated. Matt expressed that other communities have found the maps to be a valuable resource. He also noted that the Conservation Law Center (CLC) would be a partner to insure that the grant funds are applied in a manner consistent with the proposal submitted to IU. In addition, the CLC will provide a preliminary evaluation of any legal issues presented by the plan.

Several Commission members discussed their support of utilizing Burke on this project and noted numerous others who spoke highly of their work. Discussion also included concerns about producing a plan that is never implemented and the importance of working diligently through actionable items offered in the report.

The Basin Director presented a request to amend the budget in order to fund the North Branch Elkhart River Project. The amendment proposes:

- Increasing "Special Projects" Revenue by \$39,000 (for grant funds from IU)
- Increasing "Planning/Resource Development" by \$69,000 (for Burke & CLC)

Martin Franke asked for clarification on the \$30,000 difference. Matt explained the overall budget would show a \$30,000 net loss in assets for the year. Matt supported the unbalanced budget amendment by reminding the Commission of the \$200,559 Fund Balance, which would be used to pay the additional \$30,000.

Martin called for a motion to approve the budget amendment as presented by the Matt.

STEVEN VAUGHN MOVED TO APPROVE THE BUDGET AMENDMENT.
JANEL MEYER SECONDED. ALL IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

Matt requested authorization to accept the Burke proposal for the North Branch Elkhart River Corridor Flood Risk Management Plan, estimated fee, standard charges for professional services, and general terms and conditions on behalf of the SJRBC.

ROGER NAWROT MOVED TO APPROVE AUTHORIZATION AS REQUESTED. RAY HOOVER OFFERED A SECOND. ALL IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Urban Tree Project

Matt reported on a partnership project that the SJRBC is involved in with ReLeaf Michigan, the Michigan DNR, Indiana DNR, and Davey Resource Group. The partners will collaborate with six communities in the St. Joseph River Watershed to perform urban tree canopy (UTC) assessments, identify tree planting locations with the greatest potential to mitigate stormwater, train communities to utilize the UTC data, and foster a volunteer-led tree planting program to plant 300 trees in key areas of the watershed.

Matt asked the Commission to send him suggestions for small to medium sized communities that would be good candidates for the project. Criteria such as need, capacity, interest in trees, a motivated City/Town/Village manager, Tree City USA status, a tree ordinance and a strong volunteer base will all be considered.

Other Business / Updates

Adam Bowden shared that the City of Mishawaka is under contract to construct a large diameter sewer tunnel through Crawford Park. The intent of the project is to provide stormwater storage and dramatically reduce CSO activations, which will lead to improved water quality in the river. The project will coincide with other park renovations and improvements intended to transform it into a nature-themed venue. More information is available on the City's website.

Martin Franke noted that Indiana Soil and Water Conservation Districts are required to submit an annual report detailing what they have done the previous year. In an effort to keep the LaGrange County report from being a waste of paper, Dona Hunter began putting the report on a calendar. The tradition has continued and Martin invited everyone to take one of the 2020 report calendars.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Basin Director reported that there is a new accounting staff person at MACOG and he has spent time reviewing the procedures for SJRBC accounting with her. He also reported that he has attended several meetings regarding water monitoring and has been asked to join the Board of Directors of the Indiana Water Monitoring Council. He explained that it could be helpful for creating a water monitoring strategy for SJRBC.

Matt reported that he attended a Stormwater Task Force meeting in September at the State House focused on rural drainage issues. He had the opportunity to speak with legislators about water management funding and drainage issues. He explained that it connected well with the work he

has been doing as part of the GLPF project in the LaGrange County. Matt turned the discussion over to Steve Vaughn, the Deputy Surveyor in LaGrange County. Steve updated the Commission on the work they have been doing together. He pointed out the reluctance of landowners to pay assessments for maintenance and explained that the land cover and soil based apportionment method Matt has been doing for them seems to make it a little easier to accept. He said that he expects they will be utilizing it in other areas of the county in the future. Matt thanked him for the opportunity to work together.

ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR

Representative Abbott stated that he is a member of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus (GLLC). The GLLC brings together legislators from the eight states and two provinces of Canada in the Great Lakes Basin to take coordinated action toward the sustainable use of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. Representative Abbott indicated the GLLC has formed a new Task Force to look at the same issues the SJRBC is trying to address.

The Task Force is working on resolutions that can be adopted throughout the Great Lakes Watershed. Abbott indicated they are trying to tie together all of the initiatives that are going on and come up with some commonalities that can be adopted to address water quality and flooding issues. This effort will involve the rewriting and updating of drainage codes. He expressed to the Commission that the things they are doing on the local level are getting national attention.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the SJRBC, Martin Franke called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

DAN LASH MOVED TO ADJOURN THE SJRBC MEETING. RAY
HOOVER SECONDED. ALL IN FAVOR. THE MOTION CARRIED.

Kieran Fahey, SJRBC Chair