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2 **Whitewater Joint Powers Board Minutes**  
3 **February 16, 2023**  
4 **Whitewater State Park Visitor's Center**  
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8 **1. Call to Order:** Vice Chair Lynn Zabel called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

9 Board Members Present: James Rentz, Mark Thein, Bob Walkes, Marcia Ward, and Lynn Zabel.

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11 Board Members Absent: Josh Elsing

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13 Others Present: Sheila Harmes, Coordinator Whitewater Watershed

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15 **2. Public Comments**

16 None

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18 **3. Approve Minutes of December 15, 2022, Meeting**

19 A motion was made by Bob Walkes and seconded by James Rentz to approve the minutes.

20 Vote: Yes – All (4).  
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22 **4. Approve Agenda**

23 On motion by James Rentz and seconded by Bob Walkes, the WWJPB voted to approve the agenda.

24 Vote: Yes – All (4).

25 *Mark Thein joined the Whitewater Joint Powers Board meeting.*  
26

27 **5. Approve Consent Items**

28 Sheila Harmes explained the bills payable, as included in the agenda packet. The allocation for  
29 Sheila Harmes' time in 2022 was 30%; for 2023 it is reduced to 25% due to amount of time she  
30 committed to WinLaC.

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32 A motion was made by Bob Walkes and seconded by Mark Thein to approve the consent items.

33 Vote: Yes – All (5).  
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35 **6. Board Reports**

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37 **James Rentz** – In January, the SWCD opened up a couple new grants and established policies for  
38 grant levels. The SWCD dropped their cover crop option of 30 acres for \$30 per acre  
39 for 3 years as more appealing options were available to landowners.  
40

41 **Marcia Ward** – Elections for the new Commissioner may be as soon as May or as late as August  
42 2023. Currently, Winona County has 4 Commissioners on the County Board. At the  
43 County Board meeting, a new fish kill bill at the State Legislator was mentioned. An  
44 Administrator has not been named for Winona County yet, but the County Board is  
45 considering Maureen Holte for the position.  
46

47 **Bob Walkes** – Township Officers meeting took place, and the County is watching the happenings  
48 with the Legislature, which appears to be mostly urban controlled.  
49

50 **Lynn Zabel** – Wabasha County Forestry Day is scheduled tomorrow (February 17, 2023).  
51

52 **Mark Thein** – Introduced himself and gave brief synopsis of projects/committees he has been  
53 involved with. Olmsted County has started the soil health initiative with ARPA funds  
54 and they have opened up the website for the small grains and alternative crop  
55 program for farmers to apply.

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## 7. Board Discussion and Action Items

### a. Election of Officers

#### i. Chair

Nominations for WWJPB Chair were called. Bob Walkes nominated Josh Elsing for Chair; seconded by Mark Thein. Hearing no further nominations, the WWJPB voted on Josh Elsing as Chair. Vote: Yes – All (5).

#### ii. Vice Chair

Nominations for WWJPB Vice Chair were called. Bob Walkes nominated Lynn Zabel for Vice Chair; seconded by James Rentz. Hearing no further nominations, the WWJPB voted on Lynn Zabel as Vice Chair. Vote: Yes – All (5).

#### iii. Secretary/Treasurer

Nominations for WWJPB Secretary/Treasurer were called. Marcia Ward nominated Bob Walkes for Secretary/Treasurer; seconded by Mark Thein. Hearing no further nominations, the WWJPB voted on Bob Walkes as Secretary/Treasurer. Vote: Yes – All (5).

### b. Financial Update – *Sheila Harmes*

Sheila Harmes gave an update on the Whitewater Joint Powers Board checking and money market accounts. Additionally, an auditor engagement letter from Peterson Company LTD. was shared with the board, which indicated the audit this year will include an in-person visit.

### c. Whitewater Well Sealing Grant – Approval of Grant

Sheila Harmes gave details about the Whitewater Well Sealing Grant, awarded in the amount for \$30,000 from the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources through the Clean Water Fund Competitive Grants Program. On motion by Mark Thein and seconded by Bob Walkes, the WWJPB voted to approve the grant. Vote: Yes – All (5).

### d. Local Advisory Team Grant update

In December 2022, local advisory team meetings took place in Altura, Utica and Elgin. Each person in attendance received a binder that explained the Ground Water Rule along with best management practices and alternative practices information. An Altura follow-up meeting will be March 9th 10am-Noon in the city building. The Elgin follow-up meeting will be March 14<sup>th</sup> 10am-Noon at the Fire Hall. No Utica meeting has been set. The purpose of the meetings is to discuss the best management practices and alternative practices. The MN Department of Agriculture would like to know which practices have been used and how that went – success or failure. Also, which practices have not been tried but farmers would want to try. The MN Department of Agriculture is interested in what practices are feasible and which ones are not.

### e. WinLaC Watershed Planning Update

Sheila Harmes shared executive summaries from the WinLaC plan that was available at the January 26<sup>th</sup> public hearing. Additionally, she shared the sections of the plans that apply to the Whitewater Watershed, including priorities and actions. In February, all partners are adopting the WinLaC plan during their meetings. Then the signed plan will go to Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), who will be reaching out to all state agencies that made comment. At the end of March, Sheila Harmes will be going to the southern BWSR meeting to present the plan.

At the planning work group level, the workplan needs to be developed and then approved at the April policy committee meeting, so as to meet a May 1, 2023, deadline.

## 8. Agency Reports

None

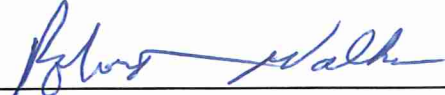
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**9. Adjourn; Next meeting April 20, 2023**

On motion by Marcia Ward and seconded by Bob Walkes, the WWJPB voted to adjourn at 9:30 a.m.  
Vote: Yes – All.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Anne Schwertel, PL&ES Administrative Specialist

Signed:



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WWJPB Secretary/Treasurer

