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2 **Whitewater Joint Powers Board Minutes**
3 **April 20, 2023**
4 **Whitewater State Park Visitor's Center**
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8 **1. Call to Order:** Chair Josh Elsing called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

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

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11 Board Members Absent: Marcia Ward

12
13 Others Present: Sheila Harmes, Coordinator Whitewater Watershed; Tom Anderson, Riverland
14 Community College

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16 **2. Public Comments**

17 None

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19 **3. Approve Minutes of February 16, 2023, Meeting**

20 A motion was made by Mark Thein and seconded by James Rentz to approve the minutes.

21 Vote: Yes – All.

22
23 **4. Approve Agenda**

24 On motion by Mark Thein and seconded by Lynn Zabel, the WWJPB voted to approve the agenda.

25 Vote: Yes – All.

26
27 **5. Approve Consent Items**

28 Sheila Harmes explained the bills payable, as included in the agenda packet. A motion was made by
29 Mark Thein and seconded by Lynn Zabel to approve the consent items. Vote: Yes – All.

30
31 **6. Board Reports**

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33 James Rentz – The Envirothon is coming up, looking for a lot of participation from schools.

34
35 Josh Elsing – Winona County SWCD now has an Administrative Assistant, Denice Corbin; it is a
36 shared position with Fillmore SWCD. Maureen Holte is the new Administrator for
37 Winona County. Also discussed the proposed digester project.

38
39 Bob Walkes – Wabasha County is experiencing some flooding issues.

40
41 Lynn Zabel – The annual 5th Grade Conservation Day is scheduled on May 9th.

42
43 Mark Thein – In Olmsted County the Environmental Commission was designed to study issues and
44 make recommendations to the County Board. It has been in operation for 30 years
45 and the Board recently considered whether to dissolve the Commission. For now, it
46 will continue.

47
48 **7. Board Discussion and Action Items**

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50 **a. Financial Update – Sheila Harmes**
51 **2024 Proposed Budget**

52 Sheila Harmes gave an update on the Whitewater Joint Powers Board checking and money
53 market accounts. Per suggestion of Marcia Ward at the last meeting, Sheila Harmes shifted some
54 funds from the checking account to the money market account, as there is a higher interest rate.
55

56 Sheila Harmes shared an updated 2024 budget with a corrected anticipated cost for next year's
57 audit. The WWJPB discussed the proposed budget and asked questions. On motion by Bob
58 Walkes and seconded by Mark Thein, the WWJPB voted to approve the financial update and the
59 2024 proposed budget. Vote: Yes – All.

60
61 **b. Farm Business Management – 319 Nitrogen Reduction Grant Follow-up**
62 ***Tom Anderson and Ryan Steele***

63 Sheila Harmes introduced Tom Anderson from Riverland Community College. Some funds from
64 the 319 Nitrogen Reduction grant were used to assist farmers who enrolled in the Farm Business
65 Management program. Tom Anderson and Ryan Steele were two of the instructors that worked
66 with the Whitewater Watershed farmers participating in the program that individualized instruction
67 plans tailored to their farm needs. Tom Anderson gave a presentation about the program, which
68 included an overview of 2022 in production agriculture and financial summaries.

69
70 **c. Whitewater Drinking Water Protection Grant Update**

71 The grant expires at the end of the year. Sheila Harmes is looking to get a 1-year extension to
72 spend down the funds. Originally the grant gave assistance for cover crops and septic system
73 upgrades but has expanded to well sealings. She should know more about the possibility of an
74 extension at the June meeting.

75
76 **d. Local Advisory Team (LAT) Grant update**

77 This grant assists Altura, Utica and Elgin Local Advisory Teams. For now, meetings with the local
78 LAT for Utica are on pause while a new well is being drilled, since a new well may change the
79 DWSMA boundaries. Altura and Elgin have follow-up meetings at the end of June to discuss with
80 farmers which best management practices have worked well, and which ones have not worked.

81
82 The current LAT grant ends on June 30th and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture is drafting
83 a new grant agreement. This one will extend for two more years. The new grant includes 17
84 meetings with farmers and 5 field days.

85
86 **e. WinLaC Watershed Planning Update**

87 The plan was approved by BWSR on March 22nd. The Policy Committee met on April 10th and
88 approved the budget, as included in the WWJPB agenda packet. Septic systems and well
89 sealings were not included in the work plan due to a shorter spending timeline than the next
90 funding cycle and septic systems are already well funded through other programs. Sheila Harmes
91 explained funding and allocations of the plan with the WWJPB.

92
93 **8. Agency Reports**

94 None

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96 **9. Adjourn; Next meeting June 15, 2023**

97 On motion by Bob Walkes and seconded by Mark Thein, the WWJPB voted to adjourn at 10:50 a.m.
98 Vote: Yes – All.

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

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105 Signed: 
106 WWJPB Secretary/Treasurer