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# Whitewater Joint Powers Board Minutes

## October 19, 2023

### Whitewater State Park Visitor's Center

1. **Call to Order:** Vice Chair Lynn Zabel called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

Board Members Present: Lynn Zabel, Bob Walkes, James Rentz and Mark Thein

Board Members Absent: Josh Elsing and Ross Greden

Others Present: Sheila Harmes, Coordinator Whitewater Watershed; Dave Copeland, BWSR

2. **Public Comments**

No comments

3. **Approve Minutes of August 15, 2023, Meeting**

A motion was made by Mark Thein and seconded by Bob Walkes to approve the minutes.

Vote: Yes – All.

4. **Approve Agenda**

On motion by Bob Walkes and seconded by Mark Thein, the WWJPB voted to approve the agenda.

Vote: Yes – All.

5. **Approve Consent Items**

Sheila Harmes explained the bills payable totaling \$23,585.09. A motion was made by Bob Walkes and seconded by Mark Thein to approve the consent items. Vote: Yes – All.

6. **Board Reports**

Mark Thein – During the Olmsted County budget process, questions arose about the work objectives of WWJPB in comparison to the WinLaC.

Sheila Harmes shared some history. The WWJPB was set up in 1989. In 1987, the US Fish and Wildlife Service funded a pilot project in the Middle Branch for doing outreach to reduce sediment entering the Whitewater River and eventually the Mississippi. Some federal funds became available for constructing conservation practices, but these funds could only be administered by a watershed-based entity. None of the three counties in the watershed had watershed boundaries. The Whitewater Joint Powers Board was established with a watershed boundary to become eligible for the additional funding. The Whitewater Joint Powers Board was formed with representation from a SWCD Supervisor and a Commissioner from each county. There used to be more than one Whitewater Watershed employee, and a Whitewater Watershed Plan was developed, creating more opportunities for other grants for conservation practices.

The Whitewater is the largest sub-watershed of the WinLaC. The WWJPB discussed that the projects through WWJPB are more local and may or may not be able to be completed through the WinLaC. The WWJPB discussed different water related organizations and their relevancy and work objectives.

56 James Rentz – Discussed the impact of the Whitewater Joint Powers Board and changes that may  
57 occur if they were no longer. The Olmsted County SWCD audit is complete, a buffer  
58 grant established and a drinking water sub-agreement in place. Additionally, the  
59 Geotek wetland replacement expansion has been approved. Kevin Connelly replaced  
60 a SWCD Supervisor that passed away.

62 Bob Walkes – A new Wabasha County Recorder will start Monday October 23<sup>rd</sup>, switching from an  
63 elected to an appointed position. Preliminary levy is set at 5.5%.

65 Lynn Zabel – He shared about an informational field day focused on carbon markets, kernza and  
66 water quality.

## 69 7. Board Discussion and Action Items

### 71 a. Financial Update – *Sheila Harmes*

72 Sheila Harmes gave an update on the checking and money market accounts.

#### 74 2023 Audit Proposal

75 Sheila Harmes shared an audit proposal from Peterson. The cost would be \$3200, \$300 more  
76 than the previous year. If approved by WWJPB, a contract will be brought to the next WWJPB  
77 meeting. The WWJPB discussed the necessity of an annual audit; Sheila Harmes will investigate  
78 it.

80 On motion by Mark Thein and seconded by Bob Walkes, the WWJPB voted to table the 2023  
81 Audit Proposal. Vote: Yes – All.

### 83 b. Whitewater Well Sealing Grant

#### 84 1) Well Sealing Contract - Millard

85 On motion by Mark Thein and seconded by Bob Walkes, the WWJPB voted to approve  
86 the well sealing payment for Millard. Vote: Yes – All.

### 88 c. Whitewater Drinking Protection Grant Projects

#### 89 1) Septic System Upgrade Payment – Kieffer

90 On motion by Bob Walkes and seconded by Mark Thein, the WWJPB voted to approve  
91 the Kieffer septic system upgrade payment. Vote: Yes – All.

#### 93 2) Cover Crop Contract Update

94 Sheila Harmes shared a list of cover crop contracts under the Whitewater Drinking  
95 Protection Grant. The information included plant by dates. Her hope was that all will be  
96 planted and verified so payouts can occur at the December meeting. Dave Copeland  
97 added that the next soil health grants will not require a 3-year contract and be more  
98 flexible. The WWJPB discussed the cover crop rates.

## 101 8. Agency Reports

102 Dave Copeland (BWSR) – Shaina Keseley has taken a new position with MPCA; Adam Bielke is  
103 temporarily filling her vacated position with BWSR. Some re-organization  
104 within BWSR, led to Dave Copeland serving as Clean Water Specialist for  
105 some of Adam's SE Minnesota Counties. Dave has been with BWSR for 7  
106 years and prior he was with USDA for 30 years. He plans to attend as many  
107 of the WWJBP meetings as possible.

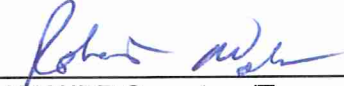
109 Sheila Harmes – Emily Zanon, MPCA, is working on the watershed restoration protections strategies  
110 report for the WinLaC. While working on the strategies, she received input from the  
111 Policy Committee and others, on how to use available funds to fill data gaps in the

112 watershed. Emily Zanon came up with 4 potential projects that she's submitting to  
113 MPCA for assistance: 1) well inventory, 2) BMP mapping, 3) nitrogen tile  
114 monitoring, and 4) chloride monitoring.  
115

116 **9. Adjourn; Next meeting December 21, 2023**

117 On motion by Mark Thein and seconded by James Rentz, the WWJPB voted to adjourn at 9:40 a.m.  
118 Vote: Yes – All.  
119

120 Respectfully submitted by:  
121 Anne Schwertel, PL&ES Administrative Specialist  
122

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124  
125 Signed:   
126 WWJPB Secretary/Treasurer

