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2 **Whitewater Joint Powers Board Minutes**
3 **August 15, 2024**
4 **Whitewater State Park Visitor's Center**
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7 **1. Call to Order:** Chair Josh Elsing called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

8 Board Members Present: Josh Elsing, Andy Kronebusch (alternate), Brian Mueller, James Rentz, Bob
9 Walkes, Lynn Zabel

10 Board Members Absent: None

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

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15 **2. Public Comments**

16 No comments.

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18 **3. Approve Minutes of June 20, 2024, Meeting**

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

20 Vote: Yes – All.

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22 **4. Approve Agenda**

23 On motion by Lynn Zabel and seconded by Brian Mueller, the WWJPB voted to approve the amended
24 agenda, to include a septic system payment. Vote: Yes – All.

25
26 **5. Approve Consent Items**

27 Sheila Harmes explained the amended bills payable, to include four additional checks for approval (field
28 day expenses and water grant septic payment). Sheila Harmes also wanted to note that the issues with
29 the Winona County billing for her time with Whitewater has not been resolved yet, as discussed in
30 previous meetings.

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32 A motion was made by Bob Walkes and seconded by Brian Mueller to approve the consent items. Vote:
33 Yes – All.

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35 **6. Board Reports**

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37 Brian Mueller –Olmsted County's Administrator of Physical Development retired. Also the County
38 Administrator took a different job. The County is going through a hiring process.

39
40 James Rentz – Two Olmsted County District Supervisor positions will be up for election: District 4 (Kevin
41 Connelly) and District 5 (Andy Hart).

42
43 Lynn Zabel – A Nutrient Management and Soil Health Manager was hired and will start after Labor Day.
44 They're in the process of moving to a larger office and they're below budget with the move.

45
46 Bob Walkes – Will be a challenging budget year. Wabasha County sent out RFP for health insurance and
47 received 4 of the 7 requests back, ranging between 29% - 40% increase.

48
49 Andy Kronebusch – Explained the process of SWCD hires and job transitions over the last few years.

50
51 Josh Elsing – The cannabis regulation and budget discussions are starting with the Winona County
52 Board. Dog breeding and licensure are a hot topic with some in Winona County. Quotes
53 and discussions for a new Law Enforcement Center continue. New Finance and Planning
54 Directors have been hired.
55
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58 **7. Board Discussion and Action Items**

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60 **a. Financial Update – Sheila Harmes**
61 **2023 Draft Audit**

62 Sheila Harmes gave an update on the checking and money market accounts. The WWJPB discussed
63 the audit company and the 2023 draft audit.

64
65 On motion by Bob Walkes and seconded by Brian Mueller, the WWJPB voted to accept the audit.
66 Vote: Yes – All.

67
68 **b. Whitewater Drinking Protection Grant Projects**

69
70 **1) Field Day (Creating a Soil Health Legacy)**

71 Sheila Harmes and WWJPB members, who attended the successful field day at the Greden
72 Farm, shared pictures and stories. Future field day opportunities were discussed.

73
74 **2) Grant Status**

75 Sheila Harmes gave an update on the grant projects, including financials. The WWJPB
76 discussed the farming industry and regulations.

77
78 **3) Klees Septic System Payment**

79 On motion from Brian Mueller and seconded by Bob Walkes, the WWJPB voted to approve
80 the Klees septic system payment. Vote: Yes – All.

81
82 **c. Local Advisory Team Updated**

83 Sheila Harmes gave an update on the local advisory meeting at Elgin. The Altura meeting was
84 delayed until Fall. Modeling work needs to be completed.

85
86 **d. Clean Water Fund Competitive Grant Resolution**

87 Sheila Harmes presented a resolution for submittal, which sparked discussion about grant writing and
88 WWJPB projects. Sheila Harmes encouraged committee members to reach out to her with ideas.

89
90 **8. Agency Reports**

91 Dave Copeland – The Clean Water Competitive Grant RFP is open until Thurs August 22nd. He explained
92 the grant phase-out process and work plans. Recently there were 2 vacant board conservationist
93 positions posted for hire in the southern 3rd of the state. The Mankato position was successfully filled but
94 the Rochester position will be reposted. Dave Copeland will continue to cover until that position is filled.
95 The WWJPB discussed grant reallocation.

96
97 **9. Adjourn; Next meeting October 17, 2024**

98 Josh Elsing said he is unable to attend the October 17th WWJPB meeting and will let Alternate
99 Commissioner Marcia Ward know of this absence, in case she is able to attend. On motion by Brian
100 Mueller and seconded by Bob Walkes, the WWJPB voted to adjourn at 10:10 a.m. Vote: Yes – All.

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103 Respectfully submitted by:

104 Anne Schwertel, PL&ES Administrative Specialist

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107 Signed: 

108 WWJPB Secretary/Treasurer