

1
2 **Whitewater Joint Powers Board Minutes**
3 **October 17, 2024**
4 **Whitewater State Park Visitor's Center**
5
6
7

8 **1. Call to Order:** Chair Josh Elsing called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

9 Board Members Present: Josh Elsing, Ross Greden, Brian Mueller, James Rentz, Bob Walkes, Lynn
10 Zabel

11 Board Members Absent: None

12 Others Present: Doug Cieslak, Winona County Planning Director; Dave Copeland, BWSR; Mary Gegen,
13 AmeriCorps; Dale Hadler, Public Observer; and Sheila Harmes, Coordinator Whitewater Watershed

14
15
16
17 **2. Public Comments**

18 No comments.

19
20 **3. Approve Minutes of August 15, 2024, Meeting**

21 A motion was made by Bob Walkes and seconded by Lynn Zabel to approve the minutes.

22 Vote: Yes – All (5).

23
24 Ross Greden joined the meeting.

25
26 **4. Approve Agenda**

27 On motion by Bob Walkes and seconded by Brian Mueller, the WWJPB voted to approve the amended
28 agenda, to receive the Agenda Reports ahead of the end of the meeting. Vote: Yes – All (6).

29
30 **5. Approve Consent Items**

31 Sheila Harmes explained the bills payable, as included in the agenda packet. The WWJPB discussed the
32 audit cost.

33
34 A motion was made by James Rentz and seconded by Brian Mueller to approve the consent items.

35 Vote: Yes – All (6).

36
37 **6. Board Reports**

38
39 Brian Mueller – A new Olmsted County Administrator (Travis Gransee) has been hired.

40
41 James Rentz – Shared that some positions are open with the SWCD and general cost share projects.
42 Olmsted SWCD staff have transitioned to new office location (Olmsted County Public
43 Works Service Center).

44
45 Ross Greden – Winona County Feedlot Officer Carly McGinty, who has taken a job with the MPCA, will
46 be greatly missed by the agricultural community. Mary Gegen spoke at their last meeting
47 about her projects as GreenCorps and Rita Young spoke at the meeting about the EPA
48 Feedlot inspection meeting held in Zumbrota, MN, last month.

49
50 Lynn Zabel – Wabasha County SWCD has moved into their new office.

51
52 Bob Walkes – Wabasha has been working on soil erosion control from culvert replacements.

53
54 Josh Elsing – Winona Co has a resolution on how to pay for the existing jail with a referendum to be
55 considered in November, potentially shifting it from a property tax to a sales tax.
56 Discussions are still occurring about the new Law Enforcement Center. He was sad to see
57 Feedlot Officer Carly McGinty leave and hopes County will soon find a replacement.

58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100
101
102
103
104
105
106
107
108
109
110
111
112
113
114
115
116

7. Board Discussion and Action Items

a. Financial Update – Sheila Harmes

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

b. Whitewater Drinking Water Protection Grant Updates

1) Grant Status Update

Sheila Harmes gave an update on the grant projects and deadlines with financial logistics to finalize the grants.

2) Cover Crop Contract Payments

- Brian Heaser
- Eric Klein
- Kent Crary

The cover crop payments were approved with the bills payable consent items (agenda item #5).

c. Agency Reports

Dave Copeland – Sheila Harmes submitted, on behalf of WWJPB, a clean water fund application under the accelerated implementation pot of money BWSR had this year with Clean Water Funds. That particular pool had less funds and applications than they had funds available, so there is confidence the grant application will be approved. The BWSR board will discuss it at their December meeting; the packet is emailed out a week ahead of time. Additional discussion took place regarding cover crops. BWSR applied for a regional conservation partnership program with USDA and NRCS a year ago. The application was approved for \$25 million dollars in federal funds to be matched by \$25 million in state funds. BWSR has been working on the \$25 million dollar state fund match by putting RFP's out for the hiring of more SWCD staff to assist with soil health. Additionally, BWSR sent out soil health delivery grants to SWCD's and they're still working on an agreement with the federal government to potentially use the federal funds for cover crop contracts with producers. BWSR is still down one Board Conservationist position, which they hope to have filled by end of year. It is possible that Dave Copeland's work area will change depending on who is hired and their work area, so WWJPB may have a different BWSR Conservationist in the future.

Doug Cieslak, – Introduced himself as the new Planning & Environmental Services Director and asked questions regarding cover crops. He reiterated that our Feedlot Officer Carly McGinty will be missed. He encouraged a safety share at the WWJPB meetings, inspired by his previous work history. Comprehensive Plan update process is underway.

d. Clean Water Fund Competitive Grant Submittal

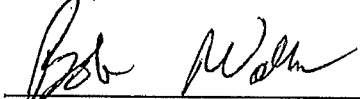
Sheila Harmes shared a grant submittal, as previously introduced by Dave Copeland during the agency reports. The WWJPB and staff discussed applying for grants and grant writing.

8. Adjourn; Next meeting December 19, 2024

After discussion, the WWJPB decided to move their meeting to **Friday December 20, 2024, at 2:00PM.**

On motion by Bob Walkes and seconded by Lynn Zabel, the WWJPB voted to adjourn at 9:35 a.m. Vote: Yes – All (6).

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

Signed: 

WWJPB Secretary/Treasurer