

**Board of Directors Meeting  
West Tennessee River Basin Authority  
October 6, 2023**

The Board of Directors Meeting for the West Tennessee River Basin Authority was held at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, October 6, 2023, at Lone Oaks Farm in Hardeman County. Board members in attendance included Mayor Mark Ward, Mayor Robbie McCready, Mayor Todd Pulse, Mayor Joseph Butler, Mayor Gary Reasons, Mayor Barry Hutcherson, Mayor Mike Creasy, Senator Ed Jackson, and Representative Chris Todd. Advisory Board members and other guests in attendance were Brad Hurley, Winfred Allen, Kyle Etheridge, Ed Jackson III (Kustoff), Jeff Parrish (Blackburn), Rudy Collins, Joe McKinnon, Mayor Sherry Ingram, Patrick Parker (OGC) and Congressman David Kustoff. Mayor Joseph Butler gave the invocation, and Chairman Gary Reasons called the meeting to order.

The following agenda items were discussed:

Public Notice Policy Adoption/Public Comment

Senior Counsel Member Patrick Parker provided a brief introduction and description of the state's Public Chapter 300. Mr. Parker stated this act requires all governing bodies acting at public meetings to reserve a period for public comment to permit the public the opportunity to comment on matters pertaining to agenda items. Mr. Parker presented a draft policy to the board and asked each member to review the presented documentation and to vote on adopting the policy if no changes needed to be made. A motion was made by Mayor Mike Creasy to adopt the policy and seconded by Mayor Barry Hutcherson. With no further discussion all voted in favor and the motion passed.

July 2023 BOD Meeting Minutes

Director Blackwood presented the July 2023 WTRBA Board of Director meeting minutes. With no questions, Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve the July 2023 Board of Directors meeting minutes. A motion was made by Mayor Joseph Butler and seconded by Senator Ed Jackson. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

WTRBA Financials

Director David Blackwood reviewed the final financial reports and graphs for the FY 22/23 fiscal year, as of June 2023. Blackwood stated Expenses were **\$3,039,762** of the **\$6,882,100** annual budget for **Operating Funds (327.26)**. The **Maintenance Account (327.24)** began the year with **\$26,615,500** and actual expenses through June 2023, were **\$1,761,436**. Year-to-date county funds for **FY22/23** are **\$536,740**. Copies of the financial reports were attached to the minutes. A motion to accept the financial reports was made by Representative Chris Todd and seconded by Representative Senator Ed Jackson. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Fiscal Performance Update / FY25 Budget Request Update

- Service Capacity Increase

Director Blackwood informed the Board of Directors of the Service Capacity Increase request, stated this request will be for an additional crew, one amphibious trackhoe, and one tractor. Blackwood added he believed these additions would help cover more river maintenance needs and

support the Orphaned Lakes program. Director Blackwood informed the board this crew would consist of two Equipment Operators, one Equipment Operator Supervisor, and one Environmental Consultant.

- Operational Equity Increase

Director Blackwood informed the Board of Directors that after looking back at the past three years performance it was estimated that an increase of 37% on the Operational budget. Blackwood noted that a 10% increase have been made to County Funds and a request has been asked for the State to match the increase with the State allocations which would average \$160,000.

- Regional Watershed Authority

Director Blackwood stated there has been neighboring pressure to include counties into the WTRBA program. Blackwood informed the board that in order to define who WTRBA is, the organization needs to assist with setting up three regional watershed authorities across Tennessee. Blackwood added that the role WTRBA will take in this expansion, will only be guiding and providing a model on which to build off of. Blackwood also stated that OGC is requesting an additional lawyer be added to this to aid in legality while setting up the additional regional watershed authorities. Director Blackwood concluded the discussion by informing the board that the first ask per region will include funding for three personnel and equipment needed for startup.

- WET Center Staffing

Director Blackwood stated to the board the WET Center Staffing request will be for a Director of the facility. Blackwood stated he felt it key this individual be a part of the process from the beginning so they know the full ins and outs of the operation and will be best informed when making decisions for how to move forward with implementation of curriculum and programming of the facility.

## WET Center Update

- Video

To initiate the discussion pertaining to the WET Center, Blackwood presented for a second time since production, the promotional video defining what the WET Center is and how it will impact not just the region but the state as an entirety.

- Designer Selection

Director Blackwood informed the board of the designer selection process that took place for the WET Center, stating the selection committee met and reviewed all designer prospects and narrowed it down to the top three designers they felt best suited for the project. Blackwood added that through the process Kimley-Horn was selected to be lead designer and David Dowell will be the lead architect. Blackwood stated that Dowell has helped with multiple designs on the Lone Oaks campus and he his knowledge of the property and its aesthetic will be an added value to the design process. Blackwood also informed the committee that TLM will be conduction the construction of the WET Center. Blackwood concluded the update by stating the contract should be available in 60 days and initial design work on the facility will begin during the winter months.

- County Highway Meeting

Director Blackwood stated that he and Ms. Keith will be reaching out to all County Mayors and

County Highway Superintendents to schedule meetings with each to discuss the WET Center and what curriculum items they would like to see implemented once the facility is up and running.

#### Middle Fork Bottoms

- New SP Manager  
Director Blackwood took a moment to inform the board of the hiring of the new State Park Manager, Michael Champagne, at Middle Fork Bottoms. Blackwood stated that Mr. Champagne has been an outstanding addition to the park and is looking forward to all of the programs Michael is working on implementing this upcoming Spring and Summer.
- Designer Selection  
Director Blackwood informed the board that designer selection for Middle Fork Bottoms is still underway and that a decision should be made in the upcoming weeks.
- Governor's Visit  
Director Blackwood stated that on September 15, Governor Lee made a stop at the park on his Conservation tour. Blackwood stated that while there the group enjoyed a golf cart guided tour around the area and wonderful discussions took place regarding the excitement surrounding the development of turning it into a State Park.

#### Running Reelfoot Bayou Feasibility Study

Director Blackwood stated that after much discussion and deliberation the Running Reelfoot feasibility study it was concluded that WTRBA will be terminating its agreement with the USACE regarding the project and will pursue the project on its own. Blackwood added the Memphis District is supportive of the outcome and in complete agreement moving forward.

#### Engineer Updates

- NRCS  
Kris Gordon presented images of the work that has taken place at the NFFD #7 site, stating this major repair project has been a partnership with Gibson County in which the county has supplied the funds and WTRBA has supplied the labor and equipment.
- Sugar Creek  
Gordon updated the board on the status of the Sugar Creek project at the Medina City Park. Gordon stated the purpose of this project was to help with flooding of the park and in order to make that possible WTRBA had to re-meander the creek as well as remove trees along the original creek path. Gordon concluded by stating the project should be coming to a close in the next few weeks.
- Cub Creek at Lone Oaks  
Kris Gordon stated this project has been ongoing for the past two years and that it should be coming to a close by the end of the year. Gordon informed the board this project consisted of five miles of stream restoration.

### Cotton Creek Bridge Replacement

Due to new developments with this issue Chairman Reasons asked that this discussion be tabled until the January Board of Directors meeting. With no further discussion Mayor Mark Ward made a motion to table with Mayor Mike Creasy seconding. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

### Regional Outreach

- Tennessee Conservation Summit  
Director Blackwood informed the board of his attendance at the statewide Tennessee Conservation Summit, on September 23, 2023. Blackwood stated the Governor sent invitations to the conservation community to attend the one-day workshop event at Ellington Agricultural Center in Nashville. Blackwood also informed the board that the summit highlighted the conservation strategies of Tennessee and celebrated recent investments in state parks, brownfield cleanup, and advancement of nuclear energy.
- One Water Summit – Tucson  
Director Blackwood asked the board of directors to allocate **\$2500** for his attendance at the 2023 One Water Summit. Blackwood stated that the West Tennessee H2O delegation group, which he is a part of, has been asked to attend the event in Tucson Arizona. Blackwood informed the board that the One Water Summit is national conference for regions to share information on how others value and manage water to foster economic prosperity, community well-being, and environmental sustainability. A motion was made by Representative Chris Todd and seconded by Mayor Mike Creasy. With no further discussion all voted in favor and the motion passed.
- MVFCA 88<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting – New Orleans  
Director Blackwood stated the MVFCA will be holding its annual meeting annual meeting in New Orleans from December 7-9, 2023 and asked for approve to attend. Blackwood stated the total cost would be **\$2500**. A motion to approve travel was made by Representative Chris Todd and seconded by Mayor Mike Creasy. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

### Other Business /Adjourn

With no further business, Chairman Reasons called for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Mayor Todd Pulse and seconded by Senator Ed Jackson.

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Mayor Gary Reason, Chairman

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Mr. Hugh Adams, Secretary

### Upcoming meetings:

Executive Committee on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 @ 9:30am

Executive Committee on Tuesday, June 20, 2023 @ 9:30am

Board of Directors on Friday, July 7, 2023 @ 11:30 a.m.