

Board of Directors Meeting West Tennessee River Basin Authority April 12, 2024

The Board of Directors Meeting of the West Tennessee River Basin Authority was held at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, April 12, 2024, in the West Tennessee River Basin Authority conference room. Board members in attendance included Mayor Gary Reasons, Mayor Mark Ward, Mayor Joseph Butler, Mayor Barry Hutcherson, Mayor David Quick, Mayor Rhea Davis, Mayor Robbie McCready, Mayor Danny Cook, Mayor Maurice Gaines, Mayor AJ Massey, Mayor Larry Smith, Mayor Steve Carr, Dr. Jim Byford, Mr. Joe McKinnon, Patrick Lemons, Sen. Ed Jackson, Rep. Chris Todd, and both Mayor Kevin Davis and Mayor Nelson Cunningham via call-in. Advisory Board members and other guests in attendance were Don Robertson, Ranson Goodman, Jai Templeton, Rudy Collins, Brad Robbins, Stefan Maupin, Malcolm Burchfiel, Jacob Newby, Michael Champagne, Libby Wilson, Jake Mallard, Clark Coleman, Tyler Lock, and Patrick Parker (OGC). A quorum was verified, Mayor Joseph Butler gave the invocation, and Chairman Gary Reasons called the meeting to order.

The following agenda items were discussed:

Public Comment

Chairman Reasons asked if there was anyone to offer public comment. No response from any members of the public. No action was taken during the public comment period.

January 2024 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Director Blackwood presented the January 2024 WTRBA Board of Director meeting minutes. With no questions, Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve the January 2024 Board of Directors meeting minutes. A motion was made by Mayor Maurice Gaines and seconded by Mayor David Quick. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

WTRBA Financials

Director David Blackwood reviewed the financial reports and graphs with the board, stating that as of February 2024, expenses were **\$3,547,242** of the **\$6,842,300** annual budget for **Operating Funds (327.26)**. The **Maintenance Account (327.24)** began the year with **\$1,615,500** and actual expenses through February 2024 were **\$856,091**. Year-to-date county funds for **FY23/24** are **\$544,690**. 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 Mayor AJ Massey. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Fiscal Updates

- Grants and Contracts
 - ARP Grants

Director Blackwood updated the board on the ARP Grants stating contracts are still pending but are due to be issued any day. He confirmed the completion date for the contracts is still September 30, 2026.
 - Jackson Greenway

Blackwood proved an update regarding the Jackson Greenway stating that with most

other aspects of the NRDC grant complete the remaining funds would be focused on the trailheads and a bridge crossing for the greenway.

- County Letters
Director Blackwood informed the board that Ms. Keith has prepared and mailed the County Letters for fiscal year 2024/25, adding that if anyone feels they should have received something in the next week and doesn't they should contact Ms. Keith.
- WTRBA Program Fund
Director Blackwood informed the Board that he has been coordinating with TDEC to request a new fund for WTRBA special programs and projects that would help separate the fiscal requirements of grants and programs from regular appropriations to meet Federal requirements in stream mitigation. He stressed the point that this was not a request for additional State funding and instead is a "bucket" to receive revenue from various non-State sources.

WTRBA Board

- Election of Executive Committee Officers
The Nomination Committee reported that the current nominations for Executive Committee officers were Mayor Massey – Chairman, Dr. Byford – Vice Chair, and Joe McKinnon – Secretary. Chairman Reasons asked if there was any discussion from the Board and noted that he has enjoyed his time as Chairman and looked forward to working with Mayor Massey. With no further discussion Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to be made to approve. A motion was made by Representative Chris Todd and seconded by Mayor Maurice Gaines. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Engineer Update

Kris Gordon presented the engineer's update highlighting the active construction projects and progress by WTRBA technical staff. He commented on tree planting on Cub Creek Phase I, tree planting at Sugar Creek, completion of the Hicksville grade control project on Sandy Creek, and ongoing data collection for monitoring of past projects. Mr. Gordon showed a series of photos showing progress of reforestation on Moize Creek stream restoration project. He then mentioned upcoming efforts of the technical team that included Cub Creek Phase II, a stream network study, and creating WTRBA design standards.

Maintenance Update

Dustin Bennett presented updates on the equipment operations team and progress they made through the winter maintenance season. He highlighted the skilled work of the operators in repairing, painting, and servicing all of the heavy equipment in preparation for the spring and summer work season. This work included re-decking the lowboy trailer, changing amphibious trackhoe tracks, and several welding and mechanical repairs. Mr. Bennett mentioned repairs to the Luray spillway and that work with the amphibious crew was beginning next week.

Beaver Damage Management

Mr. Brad Robbins presented a brief history of the work between the WTRBA and USDA-APHIS in addressing beaver damage in West Tennessee. Mr. Robbins shared the active list of maintenance sites and

highlighted the fact that annual costs of \$220,000 ensures maintenance on over 180 locations. He stated they are anticipating an active year and look forward to continuing to work with the WTRBA.

Special Projects/ Programs

- WET Center
Director Blackwood provided updates on WET Center progress stating the project has entered the Schematic Design phase and is currently on-schedule. He thanked the Board for their support and emphasized his excitement for the new facility.
- Middle Fork Bottoms
Director Blackwood stated the new capital project for the visitor's center and amenities was ongoing and a kickoff meeting is scheduled for next week. He also introduced the newest Park Ranger, Jacob Newby, who was welcomed by the Board with a round of applause.

Outreach and Regional Leadership

Director Blackwood reported on several outreach and leadership events and made the following comments for each.

- Nashville Groundwater Conference -This conference was well attended by a national crowd and was very helpful to find out all the different ways that people measure, protect, and use their water resources. Director Blackwood stated he felt fortunate to live in a place where water was abundant but that we should be planning our resource to protect that from changing.
- County HWY Officials Statewide Meeting -Director Blackwood presented the WET Center in Nashville at the County Officials Statewide meeting. It was well received and an invitation to participate in the programing and curriculum process was shared with those in attendance.
- 7th Annual WTWR Symposium – The symposium was a success and marked the most attended symposium to-date. With an estimated 150 participants from across the topics of natural resources, construction, and restoration, the networking and discussions were productive for the entire region.
- MVFCA Spring Meeting – D.C. – Director Blackwood reported productive visits with congressional staff and members of the Mississippi River Commission. He stated that it is always important to remind people of how critical our rivers and tributaries are to everyday life.
- WTRBA Team Building – The WTRBA held an officewide team building event to help onboard new staff and encourage a team environment. The event was well received by staff and productive for communications.
- ASCE Engineering Competition Judge
Director Blackwood reported that he was a judge in the ASCE Sustainability Competition at the University of Tennessee at Martin, and that the first-place school was the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

- Board Member Meetings

Director Blackwood stated Ms. Keith has begun scheduling for him to hold informational meetings with individual board to share agency information, history for new members, and gain feedback on services and opportunities to improve as an agency. Those meetings will continue through the year.

- Tennessee Partnering Meeting

The USACE will be holding a two day statewide partnering meeting to gather stakeholders and plan programs and partnerships. It is a coordination meeting that touches policy, regulations, and future projects. It is planned for July, but more information is needed.

- TENSOS

Director Blackwood shared he has been requested to join a panel discussion at the Tennessee Environmental Show of the South, TENSOS. He will be presenting on resilient design of streams and wetlands in West Tennessee. The conference is May 15-17 and located in Chattanooga, TN. With no further discussion Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to be made. A motion was made by Mayor Maurice Gaines and seconded by Senator Ed Jackson. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

- WET Center – SWFT Center NY

Director Blackwood informed the Board that designers of the WET Center have reached out to suggest a visit to a facility in Oriskany, New York that specializes in flood and emergency training. The facility uses large pumps to circulate water and create white water conditions. This facility has been in operation for five years and would be very informative for design of the WET Center. Director Blackwood requested approval to travel to Oriskany and review the facility with the design team. With no further discussion Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to be made. A motion was made by Mayor Rhea Taylor and seconded by Mayor David Quick. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Adjourn

With no further business, Chairman Reasons called for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Mayor Maurice Gaines and seconded by Mayor Barry Hutcherson.

Mayor Gary Reason, Chairman

Doctor James Byford, Secretary

Upcoming meetings:

Executive Committee on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 @ 9:30am

Executive Committee on Tuesday, June 18, 2024 @ 9:30am

Board of Directors on Friday, July 12, 2024 @ 11:30 a.m.