

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

The Board of Directors Meeting of the West Tennessee River Basin Authority was held at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, April 14, 2023, 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 Nelson Cunningham, Mayor Kevin Davis, Mayor AJ Massey, Mayor Larry Smith, Dr. Jim Byford, Mr. Joe McKinnon, Patrick Lemons, Sen. Ed Jackson, Rep. Chris Todd, and both Mayor Mike Creasy and Mayor Rhea Taylor via call-in. Advisory Board members and other guests in attendance were Brad Hurley, Jimmy Moody, Rason Goodman, Rudy Collins, Malcolm Burchfiel, Matt Fennel, Ed Jackson III (Kustoff), Jake Rodgers (Kustoff), Hugh Adams, 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

No action was taken during the public comment period.

January 2023 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Director Blackwood presented the October 2023 WTRBA Board of Director meeting minutes. With no questions, Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve the October 2023 Board of Directors meeting minutes. A motion was made by Representative Todd and seconded by Mayor Barry Hutcherson. 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 November 2023, expenses were **\$2,718,041** 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 November 2023 were **\$669,884**. Year-to-date county funds for **FY23/24** are **\$490,719**. Copies of the financial reports were attached to the minutes. A motion to accept the financial reports was made by Mayor Joseph Butler and seconded by Mayor Kevin Davis. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Risk Assessment

Director Blackwood briefly reviewed WTRBAs Risk Assessment stating the 14-page document must be completed annually for the Department of Internal Audit. Blackwood also presented a letter from TDEC approving the assessment. To close out the discussion Director Blackwood informed members of the board that if anyone present would like a copy that someone from the WTRBA staff will print one out or email the document to them for further review.

2024 Meeting Schedule

Director Blackwood reviewed the proposed Board of Directors and Executive Committee meeting schedules for the 2024 calendar year. With no objections to the proposed dates Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve. Mayor AJ Massy made a motion to approve with Mayor Joseph Butler seconding. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Fiscal Updates

- Grants and Contracts

Director Blackwood proved an update regarding the ARP Grant funds that have been awarded to WTRBA for three different projects in West Tennessee. Blackwood stated that the combined total funds awarded is **\$6Million** and contracts are scheduled to begin this month. Blackwood touched on the three projects and each ones purpose. The first being the Hatchie River reconnect in Hardeman County, the second project mentioned was the Trace Creek low head dam removal in Waverly, TN, and the third being Central Creek in downtown Jackson, TN.

Director Blackwood mentioned one potential project with USACE and NRCS in Obion County along Hoosier Creek. Blackwood stated USACE will be conducting a floodplain management study on this watershed, which will be accessible to other parties involved to assist in finding solutions for the flooding. Blackwood added the county is having significant issues due to flooding and because of this 10,000+ acres of crop damage has occurred. Blackwood concluded by asking the board for approval to support the project adding it is 100% federal and there will be no cost to WTRBA. With no further discussion Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve with Mayor Nelson Cunningham making a motion to approve and Senator Ed Jackson seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

WTRBA Staffing Update

Director Blackwood presented the 2022/23 WTRBA Annual Report adding the document provides information on all projects, maintenance, partners, and financials for the fiscal year. Blackwood this copy is a limited copy due to state delays in printed and the current document had to be printed locally to meet the need of distribution to the board at the first of the year. Blackwood added that two pages in the back of the booklet are dedicated to the faces of WTRBA, noting that since the completion of the current document a couple of new members have been added to the WTRBA staff. Blackwood then to a moment to introduce Kristina Earley to the board stating she will be serving as the offices new ASA4 helping to manage front of house needs with Paige Keith and Crystal McCaslin. Blackwood also noted that because of this addition, Crystal McCaslin has taken on the new title of Admin. Services Manager.

WTRBA Board

- Election of Executive Committee Officers

Director Blackwood informed the board that at the February Executive Committee meeting the Nominating Committee will need to set a side time to discuss nominations for the officers for the 2024 calendar year.

- Board Attendance

Director Blackwood stated that a letter regarding the board attendance policy will be mailed out to all members of the board this is to aid in board attendance and to reiterate the importance of attendance not only for quorum purposes but for the upcoming Sunset Audit and the need to meet

certain requirements for that, adding the audit mandates a 50% attendance for all board members. Blackwood stated if a board member knows they will be absent then an advisory member by sit in for them, but if the board member is unable to attend a majority of the meetings a more permanent action of replacing the member will need to be make.

Engineer Update

In Mr. Kris Gordon's absence Director Blackwood presented a brief engineer update stating that the "wet season" is beginning, and the big construction of Cub Creek Phase I at Lone Oaks in Hardeman County has been completed and was under budget adding Phase II and a lake restoration will begin in the upcoming months that will keep credits available as a resource for new developments coming into the area.

Maintenance Update

Director Blackwood stated that all machines under the maintenance program are in and have been serviced and are up to par for the new season. Blackwood took a moment to brag on the maintenance team and their ability to do most of the updates and services in house.

Special Projects/ Programs

- WET Center
Director Blackwood updated all in attendance on the progress of the WET Center, stating a kick-off meeting was held on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at Lone Oaks adding Kimley-Horne is the lead on the project with a projection date to break ground during the current Governor and Commissioner's administration.
- Middle Fork Bottoms
Director Blackwood informed the board a design contract has been established with TLM for the Visitors Center, additional trails, and bridges. Blackwood also spoke of introducing the new park manager, Micheal Champagne, at the previous board meeting adding the state is now in the process of hiring an additional Ranger and maintenance staff to aid in the transition to a State Park.
- Running Reelfoot Bayou
Director Blackwood stated as previously discussed after looking over the feasibility study it was determined the Federal interested wasn't there, but they agreed it is a worth project and with the availability of State funds WTRBA will move forward with the project. Blackwood added the consultant contract as been finalized and meetings with landowners have taken place and the project is scheduled to begin in the upcoming months.

Outreach and Regional Leadership

- University of Memphis Sustainable Design Guest Lecture
Director Blackwood stated he guest lectured to a group at the University of Memphis on sustainable design regarding infield development, flood zones, and developing in those areas.

- National Sedimentation Lab Tour
Blackwood informed the board of his visit to the National Sedimentation Lab in Oxford, adding TDEC has an agreement with a group from the Czech Republic adding each group did a sedimentation study for the other and presented their findings to a group at the sedimentation lab.
- Western KY PAS Meeting
Blackwood stated he met with a group there to discuss WTRBA and its mission and discussed things the group might implement to help with similar issues.
- Hatchie River Blueway's Meeting
Director Blackwood informed the board he and Ms. Keith meet with a group led by TDTD in Bolivar to discuss forming a Hatchie River Blueway and what it actions need to take place for it to be a successful venture. Blackwood stated this is a ongoing discussion and he will be happy to keep the board informed if any progress is made with the project.
- One Water Summit
Director Blackwood talked of his travels to the One Water Summer in Tucson Arizona with the West Tennessee H2O Delegation group. Blackwood the meetings were informative, and he always looks forward to learning from and engaging with other professionals in the water and conservation realm.
- 88th Annual MVFCA Meeting – NOLA
Blackwood spoke of his attendance at the Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association meeting in New Orleans, stating attendance to this is always received and conversation with the USACE is always engaging and helpful in maintaining a strong partnership between WTRBA and USACE.
- TN Outdoor Partnership Meeting
Director Blackwood talked of his attendance at the Outdoor Partnership meeting held at Lone Oaks, stating the major theme of the meeting was Blueway's and getting outdoors in the environment and getting reconnected.
- Nashville Groundwater Conference
Director Blackwood asked the board for approval to attend the Nashville Groundwater Conference on January 23-25, 2024 with a travel budget of \$1500. Blackwood stated the purpose of the conference is to bring awareness to irrigation districts and groundwater districts and how resources are being utilized. With no further discussion Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve. A motion was made by Mayor Butler and seconded by Mayor Davis.

County HWY Officials Statewide Meeting

Blackwood stated he has been asked to speak on the WET Center at the County Highway Officials Statewide meeting on February 19, 2024. Blackwood added he feels it important to present at this meeting to help build relationships with the County Highway Officials to aid in making the WET Center the success it going to be and asked the board for approval to attend. With no further discussion Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve. A motion was made by Mayor Butler and seconded by Mayor Davis.

7th Annual WTWR Symposium

Director Blackwood asked the board for approval of planning and budgeting for the upcoming West Tennessee Water Resources Symposium. Blackwood stated last years ask was \$10,000 and is asking the board to grant the same approval for this years event. With no further discussion Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve. A motion was made by Mayor Butler and seconded by Mayor Davis.

- MVFCA Spring Meeting – D.C.

Director Blackwood spoke of the upcoming MVFCA Spring meeting in Washington D.C. during the month of March. Blackwood reiterated the importance of attendance at these events and asked the board for approval to attend with an expense cost of \$2750. With no further discussion Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve. A motion was made by Mayor Butler and seconded by Mayor Davis.

Other Business

- Cotton Creek

Director Blackwood spoke of the Cotton Creek bridge replacement project on residential property adding the item had been tabled at the last board meeting due to new developments with the situation. Blackwood stated that after further investigation into the matter it was determined that WTRBA should not be involved with the project. Blackwood asked the board for approval to redact the approval given to aid in the project. With no further discussion Chairman Reasons asked for approval to take the matter of the table. Representative Todd made a motion with Mayor Massey seconding. Another motion was made by Chairman Reasons to approve that all board members are in agreeance to not proceed with the project. Mayor Butler made a motion with Mayor Cunningham seconding.

Adjourn

With no further business, Chairman Reasons called for a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made by Mayor AJ Massey and seconded by Mayor Joseph Butler.

Mayor Gary Reason, Chairman

Doctor James Byford, Secretary

Upcoming meetings:

Executive Committee on Tuesday, February 13, 2024 @ 9:30am

Executive Committee on Tuesday, March 19, 2024 @ 9:30am

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