

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

The Board of Directors Meeting of the West Tennessee River Basin Authority was held at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, July 12, 2024, in the West Tennessee River Basin Authority conference room. Board members in attendance included Mayor Mark Ward, Mayor Joseph Butler, Mayor David Quick, Mayor Nelson Cunningham, Mayor Kevin Davis, Mayor Robbie McCready, Mayor Danny Cook, Mayor AJ Massey, Mayor Larry Smith, Dr. Jim Byford, Mr. Joe McKinnon, Rep. Chris Todd. Advisory Board members and other guests in attendance were Brady Hurley, Jimmy Moody, Winfred Allen, Richie Chilcutt, Jai Templeton, Rudy Collins, Malcolm Burchfiel, Ed Jackson III (Kustoff), Matt Fennel, Tyler Lock, and Patrick Parker (OGC). Both Peter Roth (TDEC) and Teresa Bourbon (Clarksville Recycle Center) joined via TEAMS. A quorum was verified, Mayor Joseph Butler gave the invocation, and Chairman AJ Massey called the meeting to order.

The following agenda items were discussed:

Public Comment

Chairman Massey 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.

April 2024 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Director Blackwood presented the April 2024 WTRBA Board of Director meeting minutes. With no questions, Chairman Massey asked for a motion to approve the April 2024 Board of Directors meeting minutes. A motion was made by Mayor Kevin Davis and seconded by Mayor Robbie McCready. 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 May 2024, expenses were **\$4,659,920** 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 **\$1,089,924**. Year-to-date county funds for **FY23/24** are **\$547,315**. 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 Nelson Cunningham. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Fiscal Updates

- Grants and Contracts

Director Blackwood updated the board on the ARP Grants stating Trace Creek, Central Creek, and Hatchie contracts are in place and proposal calls with consultants are beginning this month. Blackwood also stated Phase II of Middle Fork Bottoms is upcoming with the restrooms being installed, adding this will be a big win for the park. Blackwood concluded by informing the board that no new contracts have been submitted during this quarter.

Engineer Update

Kris Gordon presented the engineer's update highlighting the active construction projects and progress by WTRBA technical staff. He commented on Cub Creek Phase IB stating this project is located at Lone Oaks Farm in Hardeman County and the objective for this project is to install a pipe through the dam to split the lake so that it connects to Phase I which was completed earlier this year. Gordon added Phase II is still underway with another 20,000ft of stream restoration left to complete. Gordon informed the board of the tech teams' involvement with WTREC (West Tennessee Research and Education Center), a University of Tennessee property, in which the team is partnering with a team at UT on the design of 10,000ft of stream restoration. Mr. Gordon also stated the tech team is compiling a stream network in hopes of developing a more holistic approach on developing projects, adding the team is continuing the Native Species Initiative with muscle dives, stating the purpose is to are studies to muscles with partners of the initiative to determine how to bring the species back to West Tennessee and its streams. Mr. Gordon gave a brief construction update, stating the team in partnership with NRCS has recently completed a grade control structure in Hardeman County. Gordon stated that many of the lakes will need maintenance this year, such as NFFD #29, adding the lake needed piping along the outlet structure. Mr. Gordon informed the board of upcoming maintenance needs on the lakes stating riser repair will be taking place on Luray, Claybrooke, and Web Chapel, adding due to livestock watershed damage the maintenance team will be working to repair NFFD #2 and Hico. Mr. Gordon informed the board that Kayla Key has been developing a WTRBA dashboard to share with partners, providing them information on WTRBA stream restorations, native acres that have been restored, along with other projects the WTRBA team has or are working on. Gordon spoke of the teams visit to Dalton, GA to visit the Native Tree Nursey, stating the purpose was to develop a partnership to aid in the development of WTRBA own native tree nursery.

Maintenance Update

In Dustin Bennett's absence Kris Gordon provided a brief maintenance update stating that work has been slightly delayed due to the amphibious trackhoe out of commission for minor issues, but that parts were orders and team has worked on getting the machine up and running. Mr. Gordon added the amphibious crew has been on the Rutherford Fork working from Lavinia to Milan and the Middle Fork from Christmasville to Three Way, partnered with TDOT and WMA on Beech River in Darden to assist a farmer, assisted another farmer along Cypress Creek in McNairy Co. Gordon added the team has also been working Stokes, North Fork, and has most recently completed the upper basin along Reelfoot where they worked on tornado damage. Gordon informed the board that one team will be moving to Big Sandy in Benton Co, the other is moving to Trimble working on the Obion River, and the contract crew will continue its efforts on the Middle Fork.

Summer Internship Program

Kris Gordon introduced Mickey Rodriguez to present on her summer internship with WTRBA. Ms Rodriguez informed the board that she is a nontraditional student at University of Tennessee at Martin studying Wildlife Biology. Mickey stated that she learned of WTRBA when visiting Middle Fork Bottoms and seeing the projects the agency has on the property and was excited to learn of the internship program. Mickey spoke of her time at WTRBA over the past couple of months, stating that during her time with the organization she has been able to assist with culvert studies, habitat assessments at Moize, bat box installations at Middle Fork Bottoms and Lone Oaks, a muscle dive with TWRA Biodiversity on the Duck River, inspecting fish structures on Piney, and assisted Dr. Blanchard, from UT Martin, with a biodiversity assessment of the fish in Barnes Creek. Mickey stated that because of her time spent at TDOT she was thrilled to learn she would be assisting with culvert studies, adding that during her time at TDOT she was charged with inspecting bridges and examining the structural integrity of the culverts.

Special Projects/ Programs

- Middle Fork Bottoms
Director Blackwood stated that a dedication will be taking place on the morning of August 12 at Middle Fork Bottoms and all board members have been invited to attend. Blackwood added a breakfast will be served to those in attendance as well as individuals will be able to tour the park via kayak, golf carts, or hiking. Director Blackwood concluded by stating employment at the park has grown with the addition of a new ranger and a summer ranger, and that summer interpretive programs have kicked off and have been quite the success thus far.
- WET Center
Director Blackwood introduced the board to Alison Franklin, the WET Center's inaugural Executive Director. Blackwood spoke of her affiliation with Lone Oaks and her past work with Corteva. Ms. Franklin stated she is excited to be onboard and working with the WTRBA team in getting the WET Center up and running and making sure individuals are being educated appropriately on the program.
- Beech River WMA
Director Blackwood spoke of the Beech River WMA, stating this area is much like White Oak in that the land surrounding the canal is lower than the canal with a high sand load, and frequently floods with backwater from the river, adding there is enough land with state ownership and like minded people that want to see a solution, and WTRBA has been asked by TDOT and TWRA to look at it as a whole to explore it at a feasibility level. Director Blackwood requested approval, from the board, to move forward with this project.

Outreach and Regional Leadership

- Native Tree Nursery
Director Blackwood passed on this topic due to Kris Gordons updated on it earlier in the meeting.
- TENSOS
Director Blackwood shared he had been requested to join a panel discussion with TVA and other organizations, at the Tennessee Environmental Show of the South, to discuss resilient design of streams and wetlands in West Tennessee.
- SWFT Facility Visit – New York
Director Blackwood informed the Board that he and designers of the WET Center visited the SWFT Facility in Oriskany, New York that specializes in flood and emergency training. Blackwood stated the facility has been in operation for five years and was informational for design of the WET Center and the components the facility will have once completed.
- Conservation Roundtable
Director Blackwood spoke of attending the conservation roundtable hosted by TNC and Farm Bureau and Ag producers and interested parties. Blackwood felt it was a preliminary gathering to discuss challenges coming up revolving around water and solar.
- Equipment Simulator/CAT Facility Tour – Peoria, IL
Director Blackwood informed the board of an upcoming visit to Peoria, IL to tour the CAT

Facility with staff from Lone Oaks, UTIA, and Alison Franklin. Blackwood stated this tour is related to the WET Center and will be beneficial in learning how the equipment will be integrated into the programs at the center, as well as building relationships with the team at CAT. Director Blackwood asked the board approval to attend the meeting. With no further discussion Chairman Massey asked for a motion to be made. A motion was made by Representative Todd and seconded by Mayor Joseph Butler. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

- TN USACE Partnership Meeting - Nashville

Director Blackwood the USACE will be holding a two day statewide partnering meeting to gather stakeholders and plan programs and partnerships, in Nashville. Blackwood added it is a coordination meeting that touches policy, regulations, and future projects and is planned for later in the month. Director Blackwood asked the board approval to attend the meeting. With no further discussion Chairman Massey asked for a motion to be made. A motion was made by Representative Todd and seconded by Mayor Joseph Butler. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

- MVFCA Fall Meeting – Washington D.C.

Director Blackwood spoke of the upcoming MVFCA fall meeting taking place in Washington D.C. in August. Blackwood stated he would like the boards approval to attend this meeting, as he feels this year's discussion will largely be directed towards infrastructure and navigation along low waters in Mississippi River. With no further discussion Chairman Massey asked for a motion to be made. A motion was made by Representative Todd and seconded by Mayor Joseph Butler. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Other Business/Adjourn

- Director Blackwood informed the board of the Wetland Bill went to Summer Study and due to this a Wetland Summit will be taking place on August 5, 2024. Blackwood stated he has been invited to attend and would like to have the boards approval to do so. Director Blackwood also spoke of the Governors Conservation Summit taking place on August 6, 2024, in which he was also invited to attend. With no further discussion Chairman Massey asked for a motion to be made. A motion was made by Representative Chris Todd and seconded by Mayor David Quick. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

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

Mayor AJ Massey, Chairman

Mr. Joe McKinnon, Secretary

Upcoming meetings:
Executive Committee on Tuesday, August 20, 2024 @ 9:30am

Executive Committee on Tuesday, September 17, 2024 @ 9:30am
Board of Directors on Friday, October 11, 2024 @ 11:30 a.m.