

Board of Directors Meeting
West Tennessee River Basin Authority
April 14, 2023

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 Kevin Davis, Mayor Mark Ward, Mayor Barry Hutcherson, Mayor Nelson Cunningham, Mayor Maurice Gaines, Mayor AJ Massey, Patrick Lemons, Hugh Adams, Sen. Ed Jackson, Rep. Chris Todd, and Commissioner David Salyers (via call-in). Advisory Board members and other guests in attendance were Alex Forsbach, Richie Chilcutt, Ranson Goodman, Jai Templeton, Rudy Collins, Matt Fennel, Jake Rodgers, Rep. Chris Hurt, Rep. John Rose, Leigh Ann Harmon, Larry McCoy, and Jake Mallard. A quorum was verified, Mayor Nelson Cunningham gave the invocation, and Chairman Gary Reasons called the meeting to order.

The following agenda items were discussed:

January 2023 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Director Blackwood presented the January 2023 WTRBA Board of Director meeting minutes. With no questions, Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve the January 2023 Board of Directors meeting minutes. A motion was made by Senator Ed Jackson and seconded by Rep. Chris Todd. 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 2023, expenses were \$1,955,974 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 February 2023, were \$1,365,691. Year-to-date county funds for FY22/23 are \$470,240. Copies of the financial reports were attached to the minutes. A motion to accept the financial reports was made by Mayor Maurice Gaines and seconded by Mayor Mark Ward. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Fiscal Updates

- FY24 Budget Status

Director Blackwood informed the board that there have been no updates to the FY24 budget regarding Middle Fork Bottoms or The W.E.T Center. Blackwood stated that until session has closed there will be no official update.

WTRBA Staffing Update

- ASA2 – Administrative Services Assistant

Director Blackwood informed the board that the ASA2 position has officially closed, adding this position will assist with grants, reporting, and other admin duties. Blackwood stated that he will be reviewing the applications within the next upcoming days and the position will be filled within

the next 30 days.

- Summer Intern Program

Director Blackwood spoke on the summer intern program, stating that WTRBA will be selecting five individuals to hire for the summer program. Blackwood added that two teams will be working to help with USACE projects, and one team will be assisting in different areas to aid in shepherding projects along. Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve the hiring of five interns for the summer. With no further discussion a motion to approve was made by Mayor Maurice Gaines and seconded by Senator Ed Jackson. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

- Board Membership

Director Blackwood updated the board on two vacancies that he and Ms. Keith are working on resolving and added that Mr. Hugh Adams has decided to retire from the board, stating Mr. Adams will be missed, but is looking forward to working with his replacement in the near future.

Technical Assistance

- UTIA Agreement

Director Blackwood mentioned the partnership with UTIA regarding Cub Creek and another similar project partnership with UTIA at the UT Ag Research Center on Airways Boulevard in Madison County, along the South Fork Forked Deer River. Blackwood stated that UTIA would like to partner with WTRBA again for a similar project on that property of land and help keep development moving forward. Blackwood asked the board for approval to move forward with aiding in the design of the project. With no further discussion Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve. A motion to approve was made by Representative Chris Todd and seconded by Senator Ed Jackson. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

- Orphaned Lakes

Director Blackwood provided a brief background regarding orphaned lakes. Blackwood explained to the board that these lakes were constructed in the 1950's and 1960's by NRCS and USDA Watershed Programs and have unfortunately aged out of the program and now there is a need to determine who or what entity should be managing these watershed districts. Blackwood continued by discussing the Cane Creek Watershed District, in Lauderdale County. Blackwood stated that a few lakes in the district are experiencing this issue currently and that if something isn't done, it could mean some flooding will become a major issue in Ripley. Director Blackwood stated that there are nine lakes in Lauderdale County and three in Weakley County that WTRBA has been asked to help with and added that a total of 50 lakes in WTRBA's district need tending to. Mayor Gaines added that if one specific lake in Ripley were to flood and fail, it would do significant damage to a nursing home and two low-income subdivisions. Mayor Gaines added that four of the nine lakes are considered "high hazard" and critical to Ripley with the other five effecting roads and farmland. Mayor Gaines added he would like to see WTRBA take over the lakes and maintain them as needed. Blackwood proposed that WTRBA maintain the Cane Creek lakes for a year to determine what needs to be done and how to work with officials moving forward. Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve. A motion was made by Mayor Maurice Gaines and seconded by Representative Chris Todd. Another motion was made to approve the development of a task force to develop a proposal on cost analysis. Mayor Gaines made a motion to approve with Senator Ed Jackson seconding. All voted in favor and the motions passed.

- Middle Cypress Creek

Director Blackwood stated that a group in Middle Tennessee are working on a crossing and fish passage and would like to work with WTRBA on the fish passage. Blackwood added that the group consists of a local watershed group, SARP, and TDOT's environmental division. Blackwood asked the board for approval to provide technical advice on the project. Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve. A motion to approve was made by Representative Chris Todd and seconded by Mr. Hugh Adams. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Project Updates

- TN Riverbank Stabilization

Director Blackwood updated the board on the TN riverbank stabilization project, stating that Kimley-Horne is working on compiling a list of property owners list for the project and TVA will be going through a NEPA permitting process. Blackwood stated the plan is to get everything taken care of upfront with one proposal and one approval and as funds become available, improvements may be made without having to repeat the permitting process every time with each landowner.

- Running Reelfoot Bayou

Director Blackwood provided an update on the Running Reelfoot Bayou program stating that WTRBA held an in-office meeting with the USACE. Blackwood stated that after the meeting all groups decided to continue to proceed with the project.

- Piney and Cypress Creek

Director Blackwood stated that a new partnership agreement will be signed in the upcoming days for Piney Creek cutting out a step for the Federal process, adding that the funds will be put towards the project and all work done will count as a match.

Engineer Updates

- Cub Creek Phase I

Director Blackwood informed the board that construction will recommence either late April or early May and will be completed by July 2023.

- Hicksville NDRC Project

Director Blackwood stated that several flood control projects in Jackson, TN were completed with the NDRC grant and an additional project was bid out last year but was over budget. Blackwood added rebids have gone out and the project is now in budget. Blackwood added that Delta Contracting will be working on this project and will begin work within the next 30 days.

- NRCS Wetland Restoration

Director Blackwood informed the board that 150 acres of trees have been planted, that were a part of the NRCS Wetland Restoration.

- Major Maintenance Items

Director Blackwood stated that the maintenance team is working on dam repairs along Rowe Creek, Grady Hollow, and NFFD #7. Blackwood added the team is also working on replacing seven bonnets.

Outreach and Regional Leadership

- SEDHYD 2023 Conference
Director Blackwood stated that he co-authored a paper with Dr. Andrew Simon on West Tennessee and Regional Erosion. Blackwood added he has been asked to present the findings of the paper at the SEDHYD 2023 Conference in St. Louis on the Week of May 8, 2023. Blackwood stated the Executive Committee approved his attendance but would like the full board to approve his attendance, adding the cost to attend would be \$1500. Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve. Senator Ed Jackson made a motion to approve the travel with Representative Chris Todd seconding. All voted in favor and the motion passed.
- MVFCA 88th Annual Meeting – D.C.
Blackwood updated the board on his attendance at the 88th Annual MVFCA Meeting in Washington D.C., stating he was able to meet with the USACE Colonel and Memphis staff, as well as area Representatives and Senators.
- 2023 WTWR Symposium
Blackwood thanked the board for their support of the 2023 WTWR Symposium. Blackwood stated it was the most well attended symposium WTRBA has hosted to date, adding that there were a total nine sponsors which enabled WTRBA to come in under budget by \$500.
- Blue Oval Open House
Director Blackwood informed the board of his attendance at the Blue Oval Open House. Blackwood stated he is impressed with the progress of the work that has been done at the site in the last 10 months.
- ACEC-Leadership PE
Director Blackwood informed the board of his involvement with the ACEC-Leadership PE program adding the group will be hosting part of its May meeting in Jackson and will visit Middle Fork Bottoms as well as with Healthy Community to talk about the revitalization plan for downtown Jackson.
- Middle Fork Bottoms ACEC Award
Blackwood spoke of the Middle Fork Bottoms receiving the National ACEC Award and asked the board for their approval to attend the award ceremony in Washington D.C in June. With no further discussion Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve Director Blackwood's travel. Mayor Kevin Davis made a motion with Representative Chris Todd seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Other Business

- Eagle Scouts MFB Project
At the beginning of the meeting, the Board of Directors were introduced to three Eagle Scouts that are interested in constructing six benches, two per scout, for the Middle Fork Bottoms Recreational Area. The Eagle Scouts presented on this project describing the steps they will be taking to construct and install the benches. After the presentation, Director Blackwood asked the board for their approval for the Eagle Scouts to proceed with their project. Chairman Reasons

asked for a motion to approve. Mayor Maurice Gaines made a motion to approve with Senator Ed Jackson seconding the motion. 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 Representative Chris Todd.

Mayor Gary Reason, Chairman

Doctor James Byford, 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.