

**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**West Tennessee River Basin Authority**  
**July 7, 2023**

The Board of Directors Meeting of the West Tennessee River Basin Authority was held at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, July 7, 2023, in the West Tennessee River Basin Authority conference room. Board members in attendance included Mayor Mark Ward, Mayor Joseph Butler, Mayor Barry Hutcherson, Mayor Gary Reasons, Mayor Kevin Davis, Mayor Robbie McCready, Mayor John P. Ridgeway, Mayor Larry Smith, Dr. Jim Byford, Kyle Etheridge, Senator John Stevens, Representative Chris Todd, and Commissioner Salyers (via call-in). Advisory Board members and other guests in attendance were Bill Parrish, Brad Hurley, Winfred Allen, Richie Chilcutt, Jai Templeton, Stepfan Maupin, Ranson Goodman, Rudy Collins, Jim Johnson, Dr. Eric Pelren, Jake Rogers, and Matt Fennel. A quorum was verified, Mayor Barry Hutcherson gave the invocation, and Chairman Gary Reasons called the meeting to order.

The following agenda items were discussed:

April 2023 BOD Meeting Minutes

Director Blackwood presented the April 2023 WTRBA Board of Director meeting minutes. With no questions, Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve the April 2023 Board of Directors meeting minutes. A motion was made by Mayor Joseph Butler and seconded by Mayor John P. Ridgeway. 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 \$2,755,332 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 \$1,537,665. 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 Mayor Kevin Davis and seconded by Representative Chris Todd. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Directors Statement

Executive Director Blackwood provided a brief annual statement. During this statement Director Blackwood extending immense kudos to the WTRBA staff and highlighted each departments strengths adding that without their talents and dedication the agency would not be at the point of success that it is currently, and that he looks forward to the future with this team. Director Blackwood also touched on FY23 fiscal year, stating that it was one of the best yet because of partnerships, revenues, and expanding positive impact. Blackwood concluded his statement with words celebrating the founding of a new State Park (Middle Fork Bottoms) and the development of a brand-new educational institution (The W.E.T Center).

Fiscal Updates

- Grants and Contracts

Director Blackwood informed the board that the TEMA-BRIC grant for the Camden Flood Study on Cane Creek has been approved and the contract was signed at the beginning of the month. Blackwood also informed the board that during recent findings, WTRBA is eligible to submit for the TDEC ARP Competitive Grants. Director Blackwood stated that TDEC has allocated \$200Million for the program and will focus on three main areas: regionalization, water reuse, and resource protection. Blackwood said that through learning about the grant program, he would like to pursue this avenue in hopes that it can be used for several community projects and asked the board for approval to proceed with this plan, as applications are due on August 8, 2023, adding that the full program would be presented to the Executive Committee during its next meeting. Blackwood added that the grants range from \$1Million to \$5Million and that WTRBA will be pursuing \$7Million for five different projects through partnerships with WTRBA members. With no further discussion Chairman Reasons asked for a motion to approve. Representative Chris Todd made a motion with Mayor Larry Smith seconding. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Before moving on to the next agenda item, Director Blackwood added that all contracts in the next 12 months are for stream construction and with a year remaining and redevelopment of the contracts has already begun. Lastly, Blackwood informed the board that lake mowing and amphibious trackhoe are all up for rebid in the Fall and redevelopment of those will be taking place in the upcoming months.

- New SBC Projects
  - W.E.T Center

Director Blackwood stated that on June 21, 2023, a bid for designer selection went out with intent of the selection being made by August of 2023 with designing beginning in March of 2024 and construction of the facility beginning in March of 2025.
  - Middle Fork Bottoms

Blackwood provided a brief update regarding the Middle Fork Bottoms, stating the project will officially become a State Park with the designer selection taking place in August, adding this is one of four new parks in the state. Director Blackwood concluded by stating that the search for a Park Manager has already begun and a slow transition from WTRBA to State Parks having jurisdiction over the area will also begin to take place in the upcoming months.

### WTRBA Staffing Update

- Summer Internship-Introductions

Ms. Kayla Key took a moment to talk about the Summer Internship Program at WTRBA stating this is the first year for the program and she is pleased with the work and efforts of the interns thus far and looks forward to continuing her work with them throughout the entirety of the summer. Once Ms. Key concluded her thoughts each of the four interns took a few moments to introduce themselves to the board, providing their backgrounds and what they have learned as well as what they have been working on this summer.
- New Position Establishment

Director Blackwood informed the board the new position establishment has been delayed, due to it being associated with the W.E.T Center and its program, and staff positions for this will not be available until 2025.

- Vacancy Updates

Blackwood stated that the State Administration has put an emphasis on staff long-term vacancies, adding that WTRBA as two vacancies that are being converted, due to old classifications that are being terminated.

### WTRBA Board of Directors

- Board Member Recognition

Director Blackwood took a moment to recognize out going board member and executive committee member Mr. Hugh Adams. Mr. Adams was presented with a plaque and the prestigious brass beaver pin for him may years of dedication to the mission and efforts of WTRBA.

- Incoming Board Member

Director Blackwood introduced Mr. Joe McKinnon with Farm Bureau as WTRBA's newest board member. Blackwood thanks Mr. McKinnon for his willingness to join the board and looks forward to working with him moving forward.

### Engineer Updates

- Ongoing Construction Status / Technical Assistance Requests

Kris Gordon provided an update regarding NRCS projects, stating equipment has been rented and staff were able to begin on a couple of the ongoing projects. Gordon mentioned they are a month into construction season and feels good about where the team is at, regarding this considering at this point last year, they were only one job into the season. Gordon also added that construction will begin on two projects in the next few weeks, he is hopeful one will be an internal project and a stream construction contract will need to be initiated for the other. Gordon continued his update by stating that repairs have been made on a watershed lake on the North Fork Forked #7 and a riser repair on Rowe Creek. Regarding external contracts Gordon stated the Hicksville project will begin in the next week and that the Sugar Creek project is also under way with removal of trees, adding once the task is complete re-mitigation will take place to address the flooding issue at Median City Park. Gordon concluded by stating the Cub Creek project at Lone Oaks Farm will be complete by the end of the construction season.

### Maintenance Update

- Summer Plans

Director Blackwood stated maintenance summer places currently include having a team in Decatur County working on call-ins, the amphibious team is working along the Middle Fork Forked Deer clearing debris between Humboldt and Eden, and that a run through Running Reelfoot Bayou is logged for the later part of the summer.

### Special Projects/Programs

- Orphan Lakes Task Force

Director Blackwood spoke of a first series of meetings taking place with Beech River Watershed, Mud Creek Watershed, Weakley County Soil and Conservation District, TDA, and NRCS to work on developing a plan of action and setting a long-term stewardship in place regarding the orphaned lakes in the WTRBA region. Blackwood stated that this project is just in the gathering of information phase and no cost analysis has been composed yet but wanted to provide an update by way of information.

- TN Riverbank Stabilization

Blackwood updated the board on the Tennessee Riverbank Stabilization Project that WTRBA is working on in partnership with TVA, stating information and data is being collected on significant sections along the river where riverbanks are failing between Pickwick and Clifton, adding these areas have roughly five to fifteen feet of riverbank falling off into a 3000ft stretch carrying sediment and nutrients that must be dredged or are being carried out to the Gulf of Mexico. Blackwood stated this project is significant because if the problem is not addressed then erosion will always continue to be major concern for this area of West Tennessee and its farmable landscapes.

- USACE Partnerships

Director Blackwood talked of the Cypress Creek, Piney Creek, Running Reelfoot Bayou partnership between WTRBA and USACE. Blackwood informed the board all projects are underway and moving forward, and a new agreement must be signed next month for Piney Creek to start counting the cost match.

- ILF Program

Blackwood updated the board on the In-Lieu Fee Program, stating this program is regarding stream mitigation and WTRBAs ability to be a source in the future for development if challenges occur along the way, or if agencies need mitigation credits are needed but can't be obtained.

## Regional Outreach

- Lone Oaks Farm STEM /4-H Ribbon Cutting

Director Blackwood mentioned his and Ms. Keith's attendance at the Lone Oaks 4-H Ribbon Cutting on May 22, 2023. Blackwood stated he is excited to see 4-H back in West Tennessee and looks forward to seeing the growth of this magnificent piece of property as well as the 4-H program.

- USACE Change of Command Nashville District Ceremony

Blackwood informed the board that he attended the USACE Change of Command in Nashville on June 16, 2023. Director Blackwood stated the new Colonel for the Nashville District is former Lt. Colonel from the Memphis District and feels that moving forward this will bode well inworking with the Nashville District since the relationship is a good standing familiar working relationship.

- HUD NDRC Field Trip

Director Blackwood spoke of HUD visiting the Middle Fork Bottoms on June 15, 2023, adding the visit was successful and they were very impressed with the practicing being implemented at site. Blackwood also stated that because of the successful visit, he has been asked to speak at the National HUD Convention in Nashville during the month of August.

- Waverly Flood Task Force

Blackwood stated that continued support of this task force is still ongoing and mentioned his attendance at the June 27, 2023, meeting. Director Blackwood also stated that the City of Waverly has an opportunity to obtain funding to aid in flood recovery and resilience.

- Leadership ACEC Graduation

Director Blackwood spoke briefly of this graduation from the ACEC PE Leadership program June 21, 2023, he stated that he honored to have been a part of the program and looks forward to building relationships and partnerships that may arise due to his attendance.

Other Business /Adjourn

Director Blackwood brought to the boards attention the possibility of hosting the October board meeting offsite at Lone Oaks Farm. He stated Ms. Keith had been in conversations with the event coordinator for the property and the day of October 13,2023 is booked due to the farms cattle sell, Blackwood then asked the board for approval to host the meeting on Friday, October 6, 2023, instead, as this is the only available Friday for that month. After some discussion it was decided to take this item before the Executive Committees at the August meeting.

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.