

Executive Committee Meeting
West Tennessee River Basin Authority
June 17, 2025

The Executive Committee Meeting of the West Tennessee River Basin Authority was held at 9:30a.m. on Tuesday, June 17, 2025, via in-person at the WTRBA office. Executive Committee members in attendance were, Mayor AJ Massey, Dr. Jim Byford, and Joe McKinnon. Others attending in person were Executive Director David Blackwood, Alison Franklin, Kris Gordon, Dustin Bennett, Kristina Earley, Jake Rodgers (Kustoff), and Patrick Parker. Chairman Massey verified a quorum and called the meeting to order.

The following agenda items were discussed:

April Flood Recovery

Director Blackwood reported that two flood-damaged sites have been repaired and are 90% complete, with final rock placement planned for later this year when conditions dry out. Emergency maintenance contracts are underway, with crews and amphibious equipment deployed across key areas, including the North Fork, Obion River, Middle Fork Forked Deer, Loosahatchie, Hatchie, Big Sandy, and Black Bayou in Lake County. Director Blackwood also stated that amphibious equipment is addressing small creeks, while contractors focus on larger rivers, with clear boundaries set to maintain efficiency. Continued heavy rains have slowed progress, but work will resume as weather permits. Ongoing flooding concerns, particularly in areas like Huntingdon, highlight the need for future culvert upgrades due to undersized infrastructure.

FY '26 Funding Requests

- **Four County Bill**

Director Blackwood shared that the Four County Bill, which would add four new counties to the district, has passed but doesn't have funding yet. There are talks about including money for it in the FY26 state budget, and TDEC is working on their request to the governor this September. Blackwood noted that the bill outlines that only two employees would be added to help these new counties by offering technical support and working on special projects, like reviewing local issues and helping find grant funding. Waverly would likely be one of the first areas helped. These two employees would also be based out of the current office and could help in other areas as needed when time allows. To keep the process moving, Director Blackwood asked the board to consider a resolution to show support for funding the bill. A motion was made by Mr. Joe McKinnon and seconded by Dr. Jim Byford. All approved to take that resolution to the full board in July.

- **WET Center Program**

Director Blackwood and Executive Director Alison Franklin provided an update on the WET Center program, which is progressing toward construction and operational readiness in Hardeman County. Budget staff are preparing for separate financial tracking, and two full-time positions have already been funded, with a three-year operating budget in place. Public outreach has begun with the launch of official Facebook and LinkedIn pages, and a website is in development. The first phase will focus on program awareness and collaboration; later, it will support class scheduling. A subject matter expert team has been formed for swift water training, including representatives from TBR, UT's Institute for Public Service, Memphis Fire, and others. An in-person meeting is scheduled for August. The next priority is the rivers and roads (culvert) curriculum. TBR and the Institute for Public Service are expected to be the first formal training partners, supporting curriculum and

certification tools. The groundbreaking is tentatively scheduled for October 10, with construction documents submitted and strong contractor interest following a pre-bid meeting. Franklin noted that social media outreach is ongoing, with an emphasis on accessible, engaging content.

LMR Comprehensive Planning Study

Director Blackwood reported that the Lower Mississippi River Comprehensive Planning Study with the U.S. Army Corps did not receive funding and is effectively paused—likely for the next four years—meaning current operations will continue under existing plans.

Engineering Update

Kris Gordon provided engineering updates, noting that the Running Reelfoot Bayou maintenance contract is currently under review by central procurement and attorneys to ensure it is structured and bid properly. A recent meeting in Lake County regarding the project had strong attendance and productive discussion, with continued local support. For Lewis Creek, a work order is in development to begin a watershed plan. Additionally, Crooked Creek in Huntington experienced more flooding this week, prompting discussions with Mayor Butler and local landowners about initiating a planning effort to address chronic road closures on Highway 22 and downstream drainage issues.

Other Business / Adjourn

With no further business, Chairman Massey asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Byford made a motion with Mr. McKinnon seconding

Mayor AJ Massey, Chairman

Joe McKinnon, Secretary

Upcoming Meeting:

Board of Directors – July 11, 2025 @ 11:30am

Executive Committee – August 19, 2025 @ 9:30am

Executive Committee – September 16, 2025 @ 9:30am