

Fox River Study Group Draft Minutes
Board of Directors Meeting via Conference Call
9:30 AM June 27, 2024

In Attendance:

Board Members: Alyse Olson, FREP; Art Malm, Friends of the Fox River; Brian Witkowski, City of Aurora; Cindy Skrukud, Sierra Club; Eric Johnson, FRWRD; Karen Clementi, Fox Metro WRD; Rob Linke, Kane County; Tim Wilson, City of St Charles

Others:

Alyssa Robinson, Weaver Consultants Group	Karolina Cho, Gewalt Hamilton Associates
Anna Kootstra, Village of Wauconda	Kenneth Kamper, CDM Smith
Bartlett Durand, Northern Moraine WRD	Leonard Dane, Fehr Graham
Caitlin Foster, Fox Metro WR	Lindsay Muth, Trotter and Associates
Cameron Colby, FRWRD	Mark Bowman, Village of Barrington
Dean Farr, IL Div IWLA	Mike Ott, Strand
Deanna Doohaluk, TCF	Mike Warner, Gewalt Hamilton
Emily Conti, EEI	Mohammed Haque, Northern Moraine WRD
Gabriel Powers, McHenry County Conservation District	Naren Patel, Fehr Graham
Holly Hudson, CMAP	Phil Cotter, Village of East Dundee
Jeff Edstrom, Illinois EPA	Rishab Mahajan, Geosyntec
Jessica Mino, The Conservation Foundation	Zac Bonesz, City of Batavia
John Stein, Village of Cary	

The meeting began at 9:33 am with self-introductions.

Minutes – A motion to approve the April 25th and May 23rd Board Meeting minutes as amended was moved by Karen and seconded by Eric. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Karen presented the Treasurer's report. As of 5/31/2024 our balances were as follows:

Old Second National Bank \$448,700.92
BMO Harris checking \$8,710.59
BMO Harris savings \$127,229.38

The money market movements authorized by the Board last month are in process and will be reflected in next month's report. Dues have been received from all members but four. Karen thanked everybody for making that happen.

The Aileron bill for website hosting totaling \$528 covering two years of service is due.

Brian moved, seconded by Tim, the Aileron the bill be paid and Treasurer's report be accepted. The motion was approved unanimously.

Finance Committee

The audit kickoff meeting has been held and all necessary information, including ‘in-kind’ contributions successfully transferred to the auditor. Our audit, due to its simplicity, will be used to help train the firm’s interns this summer. Karen received kudos for her record-breaking accomplishment.

NPDES FRSG Special Conditions Committee–

Rob opened a discussion of the nutrient trading presentation made by Barlett Durand last month. A link to last month’s presentation is in the videos folder. The process with IEPA and the Farm Bureau to initiate the trading program is underway. This program does not include point source/non point source trading which might be available in the future. The first update on the program’s progress may be available in time for our Annual Meeting.

Art asked if anyone had reached out to the IEPA for their response should one or more of our members fail to follow the 2022 FRIP and keep their dams. Karen indicated a new IEPA permit writer has been assigned to FRSG member permits. There will be some effort needed to bring the new permit writer up to speed. A meeting will be set up to get people at IEPA thinking about that question.

Holly asked if PFAS were going to be a part of new NPDES conditions. New PFAS language is being proposed in draft permits but all recognize a great deal more needs to be learned about this subject before rational regulations can be set.

Annual Meeting Discussion

Dates were discussed for our annual meeting either October 31 or November 7th. Rob suggested an in person costume party if the annual meeting is held on 10/31.

Cindy suggested we might consider the Kane County Government Center for our annual meeting. Rob discussed the A/V upgrade at the County and indicated that while their facilities in Geneva would work for Board meetings there would not be enough room for our annual meeting.

Rob will reach out to Deb to find availability of the Centre.

October 17th will be the date for our regular October Board meeting. Our July agenda will include further discussion about annual meeting planning.

Modelling and Monitoring – Rob indicated there is no modelling in progress. Outreach to member communities for their structural BMPs continues. Karen will be gearing up for soliciting the post removal Carpentersville monitoring study. This work is expected to be done in the spring of 2025. Cindy recommended touching base with IEPA, IDNR & INHS re their post removal monitoring plans. We only have specific agreements with the INHS but only general understandings with the rest. Art pointed out the Corps TSP indicated the Corps specified sampling methods [See Appendix H of TSP] and that was part of the construction phase of the project. Rob will follow up with Tristan at IDNR to assure work is being coordinated..

Communications Committee – Cindy indicated there were no Lunch & Learns currently scheduled. Cindy pointed to links to previous presentations were available. She also asked people contribute suggested locations for Dr. Margenot’s historic soil survey and stream bank erosion study sites in NE Illinois. Rob is working to have Jennifer Rooks-Lopez coordinate KCFPD access for suggested County sites. Dean indicated soil and water districts have been previously alerted to this program.

Brian indicated a L&L presentation by IEPA on the new MS4 permit language was still pending.

Rob suggested that we should be looking for ways to actively promote the Carpenter dam removal project such as with an onsite L&L when removal begins.

Dam Communications Subcommittee – Art reported on the June 13th meeting of Board members with the Corps and IDNR.

IDNR will be flying drone missions over Carpentersville before, during and after dam removal to document condition changes. KCFPD has previously stated its intent to also fly drone missions during the project

The Corps has adjusted its project approach to address specific municipal concerns prior to completion of its recommended plan. Known to be included in this work are additional sediment toxicity studies.

These specific municipal concerns typically require engineering review and preliminary design. That preliminary design will be accomplished in the current planning stage. The resulting reports will be available for public review and comment prior to the signing of any binding agreements with dam hosting municipalities.

There were no changes to the overall program schedule of the Corps noted.

The Corp and IDNR emphasized they would make themselves readily available for public presentations or consultation with municipalities and their staffs.

The link the Corps has provided on their web page for public feedback was reported to still be actively monitored by the Corps with very little correspondence coming in.

Chair’s Report –

Rob reported the KCFPD and IDNR completed their second round of bidding for removal of the Carpenters dam. Bids received were all within the engineer’s estimate and under review by IDNR. On IDNR approval the KCFPD Board will approve and execute the removal contract.

The 10 year financial plan will be sent out again for Board review and discussion in the July meeting.

Rob raised the question of whether we should continue with virtual meetings, go back four years to in person meetings, or both.

Deanna Doohaluk was asked about in person meetings of the DuPage River Salt Creek watershed group. Deanna indicated every meeting is now “in person” with a virtual option. Their executive committee meetings are all in person.

Deanna said the DRSC watershed group had different needs, but the FRSG could use a virtual/in person hybrid set up with directors organized as a panel having speaking privileges. Everyone else would be in listen only mode. That would be “the hybrid in person with virtual option”

Several similar organizations have tried various versions of hybrid mixes with general satisfaction. Rob will attempt to arrange a quarterly in person hybrid Board meeting using the county’s newly remodeled AV facilities.

Rob stated the need to meet more often. He proposed a monthly “committee of the whole” meeting for a specified length two weeks before every board meeting. This would be a meeting where issues of current importance are discussed and feedback shared. Rob will set up an initial meeting time and date.

Comments for the Good of the Whole –

Deanna Doohaluk stated the Lower DesPlaines Watershed Group will be fish sampling at eleven sites on the Fox this summer. This is part of an effort to obtain fish data in non-wadable streams for use in their research. FRSG will be getting all data produced and there was general agreement to collaborate with water quality information.

Dean Farr advised soil and water conservation district operational funding was recently cut in half by the IL state legislature. This will impact all districts, some more so than others depending upon external funding sources. A veto session may stand in the way of the cuts.

The next regular meeting will be Thurs. July 25 at 9:30 am.

Cindy moved and Brian seconded the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 11:17 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Malm, Secretary, FRSG