

**Fox River Study Group Draft Minutes
Board of Directors Meeting via Conference Call
8:00 AM August 24, 2023**

In Attendance:

Board Members: Alyse Olson, Art Malm, Brian Witkowski, Cindy Skrukrud, Eric Johnson, Karen Clementi, Rob Linke, Tim Wilson

Others in attendance:

Andrea Pracht, HR Green
Anna Kootstra, Village of Wauconda
Beth Vogt, FRWRD
Bob Morris
Christine Davis, Illinois EPA
Cyrus McMains, YBSD
Emily Conti, EEI
Erika M. Frable, Village of Hawthorn Woods
Gabriel Powers, McHenry County
Conservation District
Holly Hudson, CMAP
Jan Mangers, VOF Sierra Club
John Stein, Village of Cary
Karolina Cho, Gewalt Hamilton Associates
representing: Antioch Township, Avon

Township, Fremont Township, Ela Township,
Village of Fox Lake, Grant Township, Village
of Lake Barrington
Kevin Fecske, Village of Barrington
Kyla Donato, Aileron Communications
Leonard Dane, Fehr Graham
Lindsay Muth, Trotter and Associates
Logan Gilbertsen, HR Green
Mary Beth Falsey, DuPage County Stormwater
Mike Ott, Strand
Naren Patel, Fehr Graham
Sam Youssef, FRWRD
Scott Kuykendall, McHenry County
Thomas Hall, Algonquin WWTP

The meeting began at 8:00 am with self-introductions.

Minutes - Motion by Karen, second by Brian to approve minutes of the July 27, 2023 Board Meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Karen provided the Treasurer's report. As of 7/31/23 our balances are as follows:

Old Second Bank \$447,947.85
BMO Harris checking \$23,314.80
BMO Harris savings \$39,402.15

Bills remaining to be paid this month include:
Reimbursement to FRWRD for USGS monitoring, \$6,625.

Karen thanked Aurora for their annual contributions and indicated within the month all communities will be paid up with their dues for 2023.

Karen requested Board authorization to pay FRWRD \$6,625 for the USGS monitoring. Brian moved to pay the bill. Tim seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Karen also indicated our current financial assets total approximately \$600,000.

Chair's Report – Rob introduced Cindy's comments highlighted in today's agenda including the September 5 release of the USACE Tentatively Selected Plan for public comment. A draft of TSP was just received by the FRSG and discussed with the Corps yesterday. The USACE is holding a meeting at 10 am today, August 24th with the FRSG, IDNR and local communities to brief them on report status and upcoming events and milestones. FRSG has a preview copy of the TSP and will be commenting to the Corp. Public comments will be open until November 5th.

A public meeting was announced for 9/20 in Aurora. Additional meetings will be hosted in St. Charles and Elgin. Meetings with dam host communities were being scheduled with the Corps prior to the public meetings.

Finance Committee – Karen indicated she is working on the audit and all was going well.

Modelling and Monitoring – Rob indicated discussions were going on with the committee about the BMP tracking tool. There appears a need to speak with local communities and IEPA to assure the tool would be useful and widely accepted. Rob is reaching out to IEPA to discuss.

Holly shared the Indian Creek watershed based plan was submitted to IEPA last week. The existence of this plan makes those items included in the plan eligible for consideration for Section 319 grants and Federal funding to IEPA..

Planning, policy and programming recommendations were made, towards managing invasives, fish passage, sediment management and watershed stewards. Over 100 BMPs were identified in the plan.

Holly described different models she chose to use to create a variety of scenarios. Recommendations for plans moving forward included petitioning IEPA to include Indian Creek in its habitat studies moving forward and recreating the Sierra Club Sentinels in some way to restore water monitoring. Lots going on in that study. CMAP is available for public engagement.

Karen read Cyndy's comment she is requesting the Corps immediately release the TSP appendices. In kind contributions statements are still needed for the audit. Thanks to Anna from Wauconda for her intern service.

Rob reiterated we are working to set a time for FRSG board members to gather comments about the draft TSP to send back to the Corps for their consideration prior to the September 5th release. The FRSG can be expected to post additional questions and comments to the Corp through November 5th.

Karen worked with Cindy and Atticus on the water quality database update that was accomplished as well as bringing the monthly FRDSG water quality report up to date.

Communications Committee – Brian reported his committee was looking for speakers such as Holly for future presentations.

Dam Removal Communications Subcommittee –

Art reported the Carpentersville dam removal plans have yet to be submitted to IDNR. They have been stalled at the IEPA pending what is believed to be a sediment question. All issues in IEPA are now believed to be cleared. Rob reported a conversation with Jennifer Rooks-Lopez who had heard there

were no further issues with the permit. Kane County is expecting to see the plans momentarily for quick approval.

Art thanked Andrea Pracht, Rishab Mahajan, Dennis Dreher, Gary Swick, Cindy, Beth and Ken Bruderle for all the work they have put in this past month. Art reviewed the subcommittee actions of the past month as listed in today's Agenda.

Art moved to contract with Aileron Communications for programming assistance in its public information, education and advocacy campaign in support of dam removals in the central Fox River Valley. This initial request will be for an amount not to exceed \$30,000 over a time frame of approximately three months. Karen seconded.

Tim asked if there would be an opportunity to review public statements before they were released. Art replied at this time he and others would be welcome to work as a committee member on the messaging. The speed with which the committee must act given the Corps' timetable will generally preclude prior board approval.

In response to other questions Art reiterated the reasons as outlined in our FRIP why our advocacy was warranted. He also reiterated the committee's policy to withhold commentary on local matters unless they impacted, positively or negatively, on water quality or the success of this program.

Rob stated the intention of this program was not to reiterate the Corps findings, but to act on a parallel track that allows us to get our message out. That requires acting along the Corps' timeline. Art reiterated the need to coordinate our message within the FRSG as well as with supporting agencies and organizations and that was an essential point of this effort.

Rob discussed some of the sensitive issues to be addressed going forward and the resulting interest and suggested emailing all board members of pending public messages so as not to be blindsided. Art stated the committee will certainly do so whenever possible. Rob further stated our efforts are directed to make authoritative statements and information readily available to the public.

Beth (committee member) stated that we should not lose sight of the fact that the FRIP calls for dam removal for water quality purposes but we should also assure other important factual information is out there that helps make dam removal 'not scary. She sees no desire on the part of anyone to enter local controversies.

Art indicated a subsequent public information/education campaign will be needed following this initial three month period. The specific structure and needs of that effort won't be known until following the end of the public comment period. The committee expects to return to the board for more resources at that time.

Gary Swick (committee member) offered he saw the committee effort to produce a positive message and that most people he speaks with support dam removal but want more information to make well educated opinions. Gary also added that the committee expects to direct its efforts to support public officials and their full awareness of the issues.

Rob called the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Art indicated a contract with Aileron will be executed as soon as possible.

NPDES Special Conditions Committee – Nothing has been heard back from the IEPA on the Draft Language Effort. The agency seems completely non responsive. Cristine Davis with IEPA agreed to help look into the situation. There are a number of active permits now in renewal.

Other Matters: There were no other matters brought before the Board.

- Upcoming events/other updates?
 - FREP Membership Meeting & Program on Wednesday, September 13, 2pm at the Algonquin Public Works Facility (110 Mitchard Way, Algonquin, IL). Sarah Voska from Bluestem Ecological Services will be presenting on Engaging Young People in Ecosystem Restoration. For more information, please visit: <https://foxriverecosystem.org/fox/meetings-news>
 - FRWRD is no longer looking for a chemistry lab technician. They are currently looking for a Senior Project Engineer and wastewater operator.
 - Saturday September 16th is ‘it’s Our Fox River Day’ If member communities and others haven’t adopted the third Saturday in September of every year to celebrate this event the Friends of the Fox River can help. It’s a great opportunity to turn out and appreciate what we have. Rob is planning to do a shoreline yoga event next year.

- Links to videos/slides of past events:
 - [FREP Feb. Noon Network Video](#) Mussel species in the Fox River Watershed in WI and IL." Alison Stodola, Aquatic Biologist, INHS
 - “Total Maximum Daily Loads for Total Phosphorus and Total Suspended Solids in the Fox Illinois River Basin” (FOXIL TMDL). Project website: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/TMDLs/FOXIL>
 - Fox River Summit 2023 presentations on [YouTube](#). Past presentations are at drop-down menu at <https://www.southeastfoxriver.org/foxriversummit>
 - McHenry County BMP Talks & Tours upcoming programs and videos of most past events at <https://tinyurl.com/FridayBMPTours> Next program is Now is the Time to use SmartSalt Practice Sept. 22 1-3 pm
 - McHenry County is holding its 6th annual water forum September 13th from 5:30 to 8:00 at MCC Leucht Auditorium. Food for mind and midriff will be served. “Smarter and Fuller” is the tagline. This year’s theme is water conservation. <https://mcdef.org/event/2023-mchenry-county-water-forum/>

Next regular meeting: Thurs. September 28 9:30 am

2023 meeting schedule: 4th Thurs in the months Jan-Sept,
3rd Thurs in the months Oct-Dec,
Annual Meeting: Nov. 9, 2023

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Malm, Secretary, FRSG