

**Ottawa River Coalition Meeting Minutes**  
**March 16, 2023, 8:00 A.M. – Regular Meeting**  
**Hybrid Meeting**

*In attendance:*

Joe Gearing, AC Engineer's Office

Tyler Black, JAMPD

Cory Gonya, Nutrien

Kevin Cox, Perry Township Trustees, Online

Leslie Riley, Tri-Moraine Audubon Society

Russ Decker, Nutrien

Adam Haunhorst – Regional Planning

Albert Suniga – Soil & Water

Brad Niemeyer – Allen Co Sanitary Engineer's Office

Jessica Begonia, City of Lima

Jim Morrissey, City of Lima

John Hoffman, Alloway

Jarod Gessler, EMA

Lydia Archambo – Soil & Water

Amber Emmons -Extension Office

Casey Heilman – Soil & Water

Beth Seibert – Allen Co. Commissioners Office

At times the Audio/video unintelligible – others were in attendance whose names were not audible.

Chairman, Joe Gearing called the meeting to order at 8:20 am.

Joe welcomed the group to the meeting. In-person and online members introduced themselves. Was very excited to have so many members back in person.

Joe discussed with the changes that have recently occurred and that we should possibly table the 2023 approval of memberships until there has been more time to review. The binder with the membership applications is currently at the Soil & Water office. There has been no approval of the 2023 memberships as of this meeting

Motion: To table the 2023 memberships until May meeting – 1<sup>st</sup> Beth, 2<sup>nd</sup> Russ and carried.

Beth explained that Anne Decker prepared the minutes from January's meeting.

Motion: To approve the November & January meeting minutes – 1<sup>st</sup> Adam, 2<sup>nd</sup> Tyler – and carried

**Treasurer's Report**

Jim Morrissey stated that had just gotten the financial binder on Friday and had not had much time to review. Beth Seibert explained she would like to review as well and would be happy to help where she could. All the materials from previous year seems to be intact and in order but she wants to make sure we start 2023 off clean. Over all the 2022 year ended well and during the January meeting the 2022 financials were approved.

Motion: to table the Treasurer's Report until next meeting – 1<sup>st</sup> Leslie, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cory and carried.

## Committee Reports

### Executive Committee – Joe

- The committee came together in February and March with lots of discussion around the Annual Fish Fry, the decision was made to cancel the event for this year. There have been minimal volunteers to help work and since Covid the attendance as defiantly changed. The overall cost of the fish and other supplies has increased a lot in the past year. This was a very tough decision to make. Joe did talk about possibly a bit of restructuring and asking the MS4's to give small amount of money to help support the organization since they all use us for their needs as well.

- **Annual Charitable Organization Reports to IRS and OAG – Beth Seibert**

The ORC is not required to pay taxes however, a 990 form must be submitted. It does appear that Haley did file on-line for 20220 and 2021. The financials have not changed much over the last few years. Beth will work on this year's reports and then work with Soil & Water staff person to continue the process. In 1995 the agreement with the Coalition states that Allen Co. Soil & Water is the facilitator of the Coalition and they are to arrange for the Executive Director of the Coalition. During the May meeting Beth will report that the date the 990 was filed so we have on record in the meeting minutes, along with the standing statement: Anyone wanting to review the records need to make an appointment at Soil & Water to review. There is no printed copy of what has been submitted, there really needs to be a hard copy of all submitted, Beth will try and do that.

- **Fund Raising**

Since we did not have the fish fry this year, we really need to think outside of the box for an event that will generate funds. Should we still hold the fish fry event but do it in another month possibly July or should we wait a year and try again? Discussion was held about possible other options to explore to find a new fit that could be of benefit.

- Silent Auctions
- Huge Educational Event – Fish Habitats
- Food Trucks – many different kinds of food options
- Kayaking/Canoeing Event with cook-out and fishing
- Earth day (River Day) event bring in orchestra

All great ideas to explore for possible Spring or Summer of 2024. However, what are we going to do about 2023 the ORC does have a financial obligation to Soil & Water in the amount of \$12,220...how can we accomplish that we need more help and more involvement? Russ Decker did ask about a possible break this year from Soil & Water – Casey Heilman did say they could discuss.

- **Community Relations – Lydia**

Annual MSH Stormwater to OEPA Report is due by April 1<sup>st</sup>

Educational numbers are up way up from 2021

City – 1079/3902

Adult – 104/412

Working with Bonnie Brooks from Putnam County Soil & Water on a possible Teachers Conference that would also include Van Wert, Defiance, Hancock and Paulding Counties. This would help educate teachers on what can Soil & Water do for them. Dates include July 25<sup>th</sup> thru 27<sup>th</sup>

- Project Wet Land
- Project Wet & Wild Learning

Bath Middle School held their annual Science Fair

- Group Testing – What color of Skittles changed faster in boiling water

- Which type of soil works better in a Bio Sphere
- Students making their own Eco System and what and how it works

Stormwater Super Star Award Winner – Michael Schoenhofer from the Lima Municipal Court – Keeping Trash out of our Water Ways.

Ottawa River Clean Up is April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9-12 this is also Earth Day this will be a drive thru event like 2022 and will be hosted by the City of Lima

Lydia was able to attend a Noon Optimist club and is excited to get more invites for those.

- 2023 EnviroThon – Morrow County – 04/26/2023
- 2024 EnviroThon – Allen Co-hosting...Lydia is contacting Rhodes State and OSU about using their locations
- Holding Interviews for Summer interns

- **Legislative Update - Cory**

Not a whole lot right now. There is the lawsuit in the Supreme Court with the EPA and what is defined as a Water Feature and what is not. This varies by District they are waiting on a very clear direction on how this is to work. States can clarify what they want and what will work best for them but for now we are waiting.

- **Lima Stormwater - Jim**

We have had a very mild winter which has been a blessing both financially and environmentally. The Storm Water crew has been out checking basins and have gotten an early start on repairs. Continuing work on the city project at the Amphitheater. Crews are working in about 7 or 8 street areas. Over all they have wrapped up 2022 well and things are continuing to flow well.

- **County Stormwater – Lydia - Joe**

Going to be doing some post construction inspections with the help from Jarrod from Soil & Water. Right now, the annual report that is due in May and this is her main priority.

Wetlands Project is out for bid lots of contractors are reaching out to property owners...we are hoping for some good bids as this is a huge project. Trucking of course will be the biggest cost. This project is there out on Bluelick/West Street/65. Plans for watershed – specific Stream Stabilization. Over all the outlook is good on funding for the 2024 year.

- **WaterShed – Brad Niemeyer**

Attended an event in Bowling Green OEPA TMDL Hearing and those that spoke, the majority were against the livestock operations. People were having some flooding issues near the Delphos area and Joe contacted them and had other departments set to have a meeting and no one attended. No one is asking the land owners to give away the land but we are willing to purchase at a fair market value which right now is at a higher rate. Those that are using the programs thing seem to be working well for them. Not sure of the exact water quality itself we would need to do more pre and post water sampling. ODOT is doing some additional research on reducing when and how often they mow to see if that my help. Franklin Co Soil & Water says there are some very old ponds in the area and there is a lot of bad phosphorus running off them so that is something additional to look into.

- **Scholarships – Russ Decker – (at times very difficult to hear)**

This scholarship committee is targeting current college students and we hope to distribute dollars to the winners in August for the fall semester of college. Currently there is just over \$5,000 in the account. Anonymous donors are matching dollar for dollar to help build up the fund. We will meet June 9<sup>th</sup> and then again in July to review the applications and then vote on

the winners.

- **Old Business-**

No old business was reported to be discussed.

- **New Business**

**Adam Haunhorst** - There is a new Executive Director at Regional Planning, Tara Reynolds she is out and about introducing herself to community partners and getting familiar with how things work we are very excited to have her.

**Tyler Black – Farm Park** Replacement of the flooring in the Amphitheater, creating and repairing shelters within the Park District, Conservation Prairie Burn, Pre-Planting of Trees near Ottawa Metro Park as well as Wetland work.

**Brad Niemeyer** – Finishing the Sewer System in Gomer. Designs are almost 95% complete for the project for 2024 construction. Grant money 1.2 million in grant and 1.2 million in loans.

**John Hoffman** - New Drone.... for rivers, lakes, ponds etc....could use for large ORC event along with a cook-out and raffle as well as teaching the dos and don'ts when using a drone.

**Dr. Leslie Riley** - Getting closer to the end of the school year so they have lots of field trips going on

- April 4<sup>th</sup> – Family Fun
- April 25<sup>th</sup> – Wild Flower Walk
- April 29<sup>th</sup> – Education Weekend
- May 2<sup>nd</sup> – Garter Snake Education

**Awards Presentation from Annual Meeting**

Volunteer of the Year – Clint Schroeder

Outstanding Watershed Partner – Cory Gonya

Watershed Impact – Albert Suniga

Joe again Thanked everyone for coming as well as all their hard work and time.

Video and audio recording ended at this point.

Meeting adjourned at 10:22 AM. The next meeting of the Ottawa River Coalition is Thursday May 25<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 AM at the Regional Planning Office 130 W North Street Lima, Ohio 45801

Minutes transcribed by Sherry Bockey