

Winter River – Tracadie Bay Watershed Association (WRTBWA)

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors of the WRTBWA
Held on February 17, 2021, 7:00 pm by Zoom

Present: Clare Martin, John Hughes, Sarah Wheatley, Jean-Paul Arseneault, Jeff Bysterveldt, Dwayne McNeill, Jay Carr, Patrick Lévêque, Lowell Vessey, Matt Steeves, Roger Townshend, George Coade

Absent: Scott Stevens

1. Minutes of the January 20, 2021 meeting

Minutes were reviewed with one addition under item 7. "It was decided to cancel the snowshoe hike."

Moved by Patrick, seconded by Lowell that the minutes be adopted as written. All in favour. Motion carried.

- There were no questions arising from the minutes.

2. Chairperson's Report – Clare Martin

- Received approval for a \$32,000 grant from the City of Charlottetown for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. No indication of future commitment.
- The City created the position of Water Coordinator. Sarah has been in contact with Alistair Ozon.
- Steven Myers is the new Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Action.
- Chair contacted Bryson Guptill of Island Trails regarding request for assistance with garbage collection and removal from the Winter River trailhead. WRTBWA will provide a letter of support.

3. Treasurer's Report – Lowell Vessey

	<i>Chequing account</i>	<i>Savings Account</i>
Opening Balance: Jan. 1, 2021	\$53,347.21	\$ 41,085.99
Less o/s cheques cashed	\$9,231.04	
Plus deposits	\$1,109.45	\$3.49
Plus o/s cheques	\$3,395.86	
Less expenses	<u>\$11,112.28</u>	
Closing balance: Jan. 31, 2020	\$37,509.20	\$41,089.48

Moved by Lowell, seconded by George that the Treasurer's report be adopted as presented. All in favour. Motion carried.

4. Field Committee Report

- Sarah presented the report as the Committee does not have a Chair. The Committee will meet prior to the next Board meeting.

5. Outreach Committee

- Report sent in advance by Patrick. It was noted that there are extra funds before fiscal year end for educational activities.
- The following ideas were put forth: a longer informational video to publicize what we do, perhaps using Holland College students; shorter videos suitable for posting to social media, perhaps weekly, showing crew working; activity stations along the Winter River Trail; approach CBC (John Robertson) for a longer report; use cellphones and/or drones.
- Patrick will review suggestions and provide an update at the next Board meeting.

6. Data Management Committee

- The Committee's report was sent in advance and Board members reviewed the proposed data collection plan.
- Questions were raised about frequency and level of effort required for individual activities. It was suggested that we should look into the possibility of collecting data during the winter for water depth and bottom sampling. Sarah was asked to check with the larger and more progressive watershed groups to compare data collection activities.
- Committee therefore dissolved.

Moved by Jean-Paul, seconded by Patrick that the data management plan be approved as presented and incorporated into 2021 field operations. All in favour. Motion carried.

7. Coordinator’s Report (sent in advance)

- Sarah reported that Brittany will leave her position to return to university. A job description has been prepared and the position will be advertised soon.
- Sarah will prepare the letter to the City requesting funding for the 2021-2022 fiscal year.
- It was suggested that a portion of the City funding be transferred to the reserve fund, but no decision was made on the amount.
- There was a suggestion that we consider buying a boat, but no decision was made.

8. Review of the Scorecard

- Sarah mentioned that water extraction data received recently from the City will be used to update the scorecard.
- The Field Committee will review the scorecard and report any changes to the next Board meeting.

9. Revised Funding Formula for the Watershed Management Fund

- Sarah had sent an email to Board members outlining the work of the committee tasked with reviewing the funding formula (of which she was a member). The proposed finding formula would benefit the WRTBWA because of our strong performance compared to other watershed groups. The provincial government has indicated it will increase its contribution to the WMF by \$250,000 per year over the next two years. If the additional funding is added, and the new formula is implemented, then our share would increase from \$49,000 to approximately \$70,000 for fiscal 2021-2022. The Watershed Alliance is asking all watershed groups to either approve or reject the proposed funding formula.
- All Board members were in favour of the proposed funding formula and the Coordinator will advise the Watershed Alliance of our decision.

10. Wells and Irrigation

- Lowell opened the discussion by asking whether we, as a Board, wish to take a position on the issue of high-capacity wells.
- Members brought forward the following points:
 - It’s important that we take a position because of the impact of City water extraction on our watershed.
 - We have to be thinking about longer-term impacts related to climate change.
 - Only 7% of water recharge Island-wide is being consumed at present rates: 2% used by agriculture and 2% by other large users.
 - Potential for expansion of high-capacity wells for agriculture depends on many factors in each particular watershed, not just the availability of water.
 - Crop management practices have a huge impact on water utilization and crop yields.
 - Most Board members are prepared to “go with the science” but general agreement that the real problem is the poor image of the potato industry.
- Consensus that we don’t need to take a position beyond what we’ve already expressed in presentations to government on the *Water Act*.

11. Proposed Fishing Derby

- Clare reported that we have been approached by Luke Peters. He and Logan McNab, plan to hold a fishing derby on the Winter River on April 17 and is looking for support from the WRTBWA. It would be an opportunity for us to record data on fish caught and provide a small amount of funding.
- Jay suggested that we should not offer our support unless the derby is catch-and-release. There was strong support for this position. The Chair will ask the organizers some additional questions, and then a decision will be made.

12. Next Meeting

- The next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 17, at 7:00 pm

Meeting adjourned at 9:03

Signature – Clare Martin, Chair of WRTBWA

Date

ORIGINAL SIGNED

Signature – Jean-Paul Arsenault, Secretary of WRTBWA

Date