

**ROCK RIVER WATERSHED GROUP
MEETING MINUTES
FOUR RIVERS SANITATION AUTHORITY
DECEMBER 8, 2021**

Greg Cassaro called the Rock River Watershed Group to order at 10:01AM. The meeting was held in the Board Room at the Graceffa Administration Building, 3501 Kishwaukee Street, Rockford, Illinois. Non-voting members attended through GoToMeeting, Board members attended in person.

Attendees responded to roll call.

Board members present: Greg Cassaro, FRSA; Dan Barber, Rockton; Adam Lanning, Rochelle; Anne George, Woodstock; Brent Anderson, Belvidere; Matt Trotter, Rock Falls; Josh McNitt, Dixon; Michael Christensen, FRSA; Sean Von Bergen, Winnebago County.

Also in attendance was Tim Hanson of FRSA, Pat Kelsey of Fehr-Graham, Brian Valleskey of Geosyntec, and Jim Mangum of Marengo.

Cassaro opened the floor for discussion of last month's meeting minutes.

Cassaro asked that a motion be made to approve the minutes.

McNitt made the motion.

Anderson seconded.

Cassaro called for a vote.

All AYE's were declared.

Minutes from last month's meeting are approved.

Cassaro turned the floor over to Barber for the Treasurer's Report. Barber stated that the current account balance remains the same as the previous month's at \$189,563.44. Barber has been looking into the filing of the RRWG taxes for year-end and spoke with a few accounting firms. From what he's gathered, Barber determined that the firm best suited to assist with this task would be Siepert & Co. Public Accountants. Barber found that they have knowledge on working with a 501(c)(3) and as well are available considering most firms are currently overwhelmed working through audits. Siepert expressed that the RRWG might want to consider registering with the Illinois Attorney General's Office. Doing so would allow the Group to accept public donations, should the situation arise. Currently the Group is funded solely through membership contributions. Valleskey asked the Group if they were anticipating receiving charitable donations, to which the Group answered no, however Barber noted that the Group might as well get set up with the AG's Office just in case. For Siepert to complete the RRWG taxes, the estimated cost would be \$1100-1300, which does not include the state returns. They can perform this task as well for an additional cost. Barber will go back to Siepert and get a

finalized price for all fees including anything contributory to the Illinois Attorney General's Office and bring the information back to the next meeting.

Cassaro asked that a motion be made to approve the Treasurer's Report.

Lanning made the motion.

Christensen seconded.

Cassaro called for a vote.

All AYE's were declared.

Treasurer's Report is approved.

Continuing to Old Business, Cassaro informed the Group that following the discussion at last month's meeting, Harvard has since reached out to Cassaro and expressed interest in joining the Group. They acknowledged that they would have to back pay dues from the 2021 fiscal year but would not have access to these funds until May of 2022. Here they would pay in for the 2021 dues, and then in June 2022 would be required to contribute the dues for 2022 based off the revised sampling rate provided by Fehr-Graham. Harvard reported 2750 service connections which would estimate their 2021 dues at \$5,500. Cassaro stated that Harvard is welcome to attend meetings and participate with the Group despite not having paid in yet as they will be considered an ex-facto non-voting member, with this subject to change once the 2021 and 2022 dues are paid in full. Von Bergen asked when the Group will be able to determine the cost of the 2022 dues, to which Cassaro responded once Fehr-Graham provides the cost of the sampling.

The next item in Old Business is the matter of open enrollment invitation letters. Cassaro stated that these letters would not be sent to any entity on the Green River as the subcommittee determined not to extend the watershed to include the Green River. Pat concurred, noting that if the Group went as far as the Green River, there would be several additional communities that would need to be included in the invitation to the watershed. In the discussion to conclude exactly what entities these letters would be sent out to, suggestions included Oregon, Marengo, Dixon Correctional Center, Byron, Stillman Valley, and Davis Junction. Having these organizations included in the Group would help Fehr-Graham to close some data gaps they're finding in the sampling plan.

Moving on to New Business, Cassaro provided an update on his correspondence with Fred Andes of Barnes & Thornburg. Andes has agreed to attend the January meeting. Cassaro told Andes that this is estimated to take place on the second Wednesday in January, which would be January 12th, 2022.

Also in New Business, in attendance at the meeting was Jim Mangum of Marengo, who would like to be considered for membership to the RRWG. Marengo has roughly 2300 sewer accounts. Mangum heard and understood the Group's discussion on dues requirements and believes this can be accomplished from Marengo without too much push-back. An official invitation letter will still be sent to Marengo, but emailed directly to Mangum.

The Group moved on to the Report of Subcommittees, presented by Lanning. Lanning summarized the subcommittee's meeting prior to the regular meeting; there was a long discussion regarding the boundaries to set within the watershed as far as a southern most point. The subcommittee agreed that the state sampling point P46 would be the downstream boundary and would like to submit this information to the IEPA as our cutoff point. Cassaro replied that this in total would cover about 150-200 river miles within the Group's watershed, which may be the largest watershed in Illinois. Kelsey informed the Group that when this information is submitted, there should also be a narrative that outlines why this downstream limit was selected.

Cassaro asked that a motion be made to determine the watershed boundaries from the state line to point P46.

McNitt made the motion.

Christensen seconded.

Cassaro called for a vote.

All AYES were declared.

The RRWG boundaries are set from the Wisconsin/Illinois state line to P46.

Lanning also informed the Group that the subcommittee discussed having ISU assist with the sampling, so it was recommended that a meeting be set up with ISU soon to converse further. Cassaro agreed, noting the Group should try to receive a cost per sample or a cost per draw from ISU. Kelsey suggested a conference call within the next few days before the students and staff leave for winter break, otherwise if that's not feasible, the subcommittee can meet with the ISU representatives on January 12th prior to the regular meeting. Lanning is going to reach out to ISU to set this up.

The last Report of Subcommittees turns the floor over to Trotter to provide an update on the website creation process. Janel of Stahr Media sent sample links to what the website would look like and requested any feedback moving forward. The Group agreed that the website looks excellent thus far. Christensen asked if Janel would be generating a list of information that she still needs in order to include on the site. Trotter answered that a lot of information has already been sent to Janel, but may not yet be included on the website as she's only recently started working on it. More updates to its appearance will be forthcoming. Christensen then suggested to the Group that we create a generic email address that isn't tied to one specific member entity; this email address would be a way for the public to contact the Group as a whole. Barber agreed that this was a good idea. Trotter indicated that this was doable, the Group would just need to determine who would monitor the email and relay any information back to the Group. Trotter will work with Janel to set up the email address and include a link to it on the website. Additionally, Janel had some questions on how long the watershed is, to which Kelsey responded that he will get some facts and figures over to her to include on the website.

With no further discussion, the Group will next meet on **Wednesday, January 12th at 10:00AM**. The subcommittee will also meet on **Wednesday, January 12th at 9:00AM**.

Cassaro asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Barber made the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 10:58AM.