

Executive Committee Meeting
West Tennessee River Basin Authority
August 20, 2024

The Executive Committee Meeting of the West Tennessee River Basin Authority was held at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, August 20, 2024, via in-person at the WTRBA office. Executive Committee members in attendance were Mayor AJ Massey, Mayor Nelson Cunningham, Dr. Jim Byford, and Mr. Joe McKinnon. Others attending in person were Executive Director David Blackwood, Kris Gordon, Paige Keith, Dustin Bennett, and Patrick Parker. Chairman Massey verified a quorum and called the meeting to order.

The following agenda items were discussed:

Special Projects

- WET Center Program
 - Tennessee Meetings – Director Blackwood informed the Executive Committee that he and Alison Franklin have been meeting with future WET Center partners, such as TEMA and will be traveling to Knoxville to visit with individuals at the University of Tennessee to discuss certification curriculum. Blackwood stated that while traveling through the state, they also plan to meet with TVA, TDOT, Tennessee Stormwater Association, and NRCS to gauge what curriculum the organizations would be interested in seeing developed for the WET Center and how to engage and partner with them.
 - EPA Community Change Grant - Director Blackwood spoke of the Environmental Protection Agency's Community Change Grant, which was presented to him and Ms. Franklin by the TVA, adding the grant provides funding for community-driven projects that help disadvantaged communities address environmental and climate justice challenges. Blackwood stated he and Ms. Franklin are interested in applying for the grant in conjunction with the Rural Infrastructure project in which WTRBA is score carding rural counties and the culvert systems throughout each county. Blackwood added this grant would aid in completing the project as well as, assist with funding the implementing of example pilot repairs, and trainings on culvert passage and placements. Blackwood informed the Executive Committee the grant amount ranges from \$10-\$20MILLION, 100% federal, and would aid in paying for staffing, study, construction, and potential vouchers for training. Blackwood added he and Ms. Franklin are looking to partner with UTIA and a community-based organization on the grant. With no further discussion Chairman Massey asked for a motion to be made to present this item before the Board of Directors at the October meeting, Mr. Joe McKinnon made a motion, with Dr. Jim Byford seconding. All voted in favor and the motion passed.
- Restoration Property

Director Blackwood stated with all the stream restoration projects WTRBA has been involved with over the past couple of years, it has become apparent that tree and species availability are scarce, adding the agency has been experimenting with growing these items and performing restoration work inhouse. Blackwood informed the Executive Committee of a piece of real estate property for sale in Three Way, TN that would be ideal for furthering these inhouse projects adding restoration dedicated funds available to potential use for the purchase of the 10-acre property. Blackwood added the property (Dutch Garden Center) is equipped with greenhouses, infrastructure, and other features that would be advantageous in aiding in the programs. Blackwood asked for executive committees' approval to move forward with exploring the purchasing of the property. With no further discussion Chairman Massey

asked for a motion to approve. Dr. Jim Byford made a motion with Mr. Joe McKinnon seconding. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

- TN Riverbank Stabilization Update

Director Blackwood updated the Executive Committee on the Tennessee Riverbank Stabilization project that WTRBA is working on with TVA and the Tennessee Valley Farms Group to stabilize the erosion taking place along the riverbank between Pickwick and Savannah. Blackwood shared that he and Ms. Keith visited with the two groups on location to discuss the project and when and what proper funding will be available and how to move forward. Blackwood stated pilot projects have taken place and a practice has been implemented that all groups are agreeable on. Director Blackwood stated TVA has a federal funding coordinator to aid in researching opportunities and there is a possibility the NRCS has RCPP monies available. Blackwood added the Tennessee Valley Farms will be the lead group on this project, but WTRBA will aid in managing the project if the grants and funding require it. Director Blackwood concluded by stating the group is working on environmental permits for three stretches in preparation for implementing a portion of the project.

Outreach

- Wetland Summit

Blackwood informed the Executive Committee of his participation in the Wetland Summit which took place on August 5th in Nashville. Blackwood stated the summit focused on stakeholders along wetland develop roadways. Director Blackwood stated that this summit was more information gathering session and was not the Summer Study for a precursor to it.

- Governors Conservation Summit

Director Blackwood shared with the Executive Committee of his attendance at the Governors Conservation Summit which took place on August 7th in Nashville at the Tennessee Library and Archives. Blackwood stated the was similar to the Wetland Summit but with more of any emphasis on conservation and aided in informing the Governor as he puts together next year's budget. Blackwood said the feedback gathered was focused on maintaining staff and recurring funding.

- USACE Low Water Trip

Director Blackwood spoke briefly on attending the three-day USACE Low Water Trip on the dates of August 14th-16th. Blackwood stated the summit addressed regional groundwater and what is taking place in areas were aquifers are already depleted and working on finding solutions to recharge them.

Other Business/Adjourn

- Mayor Smith Highway Dedication

Blackwood shared an invitation with the Executive Committee to attend a Highway Dedication for former Haywood County Mayor Franklin Smith, a former WTRBA board member, on October 10th at 3pm.

- Middle Fork Bottoms Dedication Day

Director Blackwood spoke of the Middle Fork Bottoms Dedication Day event, stating it was a well-attended event and thanked those in attendance for being a part of the day.

- Madison County Commission Meeting

Blackwood informed the Executive Committee of his attendance at the Madison County

Commission meeting on August 19th. Blackwood stated the purpose of this attendance to was present on the federal grant for Middle Fork Bottoms and its completion and a public comment period was open for discussion for two weeks following the meeting.

- Tipton County Boat Ramp

Director Blackwood stated the Tipton County Highway Superintendent contacted him regarding a boat ramp in the county and along the Mississippi River, in which they are needing assistance with low water issues. Blackwood informed the committee that if the water isn't moving to swiftly then the WTRBA maintenance team will move forward with aiding the department with their needs.

With no further business, Mayor Massey asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Cunningham made the motion with Dr. Byford seconding.

Mayor AJ Massey, Chairman

Dr. Jim Byford, Secretary

Upcoming meeting:

Executive Committee Meeting on September 17, 2024, at 9:30am

Board of Directors Meeting on October 11, 2024, at 11:30am

Executive Committee Meeting on November 19, 2024, at 9:30am