

## **Madison River Foundation**

*Minutes for Board of Directors Meeting*

*Date: 10/19/2015*

*Location: Moonlight Offices, Ennis*

### *Board Members in Attendance:*

J. Dilschneider  
B. Richards  
B. Barker  
J. Montag  
R. Clark  
N. DiMeola  
M. Petroni  
S. Shows

### *Others Present:*

Liz Davis – ED  
Jackie Mathews

President Dilschneider welcomed the newest Director, Jackie Mathews, to our Retreat. Jackie will officially begin her tenure at the Foundation on January 1, 2016.

### **Minutes**

Joe asked for any comments on the Minutes from the August 10 meeting of the Board. There being none, Mark moved and Jeff seconded their approval. Motion carried.

### **Executive Director's Report**

1. Liz reported on her experience with the recent Conservation District Range Tour, showcasing innovations in ranching practices. Granger Ranches was part of the tour.
2. FWP proposed rule changes have continued to generate negative feedback regarding the MRF position. Jackie said there had been 15 negative comments received by Craig Mathews since the FWP meeting at El Western. The Board continues to believe we took a position consistent with the best available science, and the ethic of "Catch and Release." There was discussion about the appropriate role of MRF in advocating on issues such as these. It was decided that Liz should attend the FWP Commission meeting on November 12 in Helena to listen and show our interest. Are we able to make comments as a 501(c) 3, or must we be a (c) 4? [Subsequent research by Jeff indicates we may do so as a (c) 3.] The Board hopes we and FWP will nurture closer communication in the future.
3. BLM will fund the operation of the Varney gauge for 2016, in the amount of \$5,000. Good news!
4. Granger Ranches has asked for MRF to partner with Wildlife Conservation, either through cash or volunteers, to install wildlife friendly fencing. The Board was receptive. Jeff Laszlo will provide more detail in the future.

## **Old Business**

1. The Free Membership program is going well, with about 70 new members signed up this year. No further reports of problems.
2. Kelly Welch is ready for the Board to review her website design.
3. The push for Membership Renewals has begun. Liz is making a special effort to obtain email addresses for all members and will put these in tiers, based on size of their contributions. Brian recommends sending renewal notices in the anniversary month of the original sign-up. It was agreed Liz will order the Buffs as a gift for renewals.

## **New Business**

1. Northwestern Energy sent out a newsletter dated October 7, 2015. It contained the surprising announcement that there would be additional phases to reconstruction of the Hebgen Dam. The final phase is scheduled for 2017 and will reline the existing wood pipeline in the new intake tower. NWE proposes to divert water once again over the spillway during the summer months, sending warm water into the Madison. MRF discussed possible responses and agreed Liz should mention this in her next newsletter and let members know where to send comments.
2. Montana Land Reliance (MLR) approached MRF to ask for participation in acquiring a Conservation Easement (CE) on the Reints property, which contains a section of Odell Creek. The easement would be priced at one-fifth of its market value, according to a well respected appraiser. Should MRF participate? Brian said cows are damaging the banks and asks for consideration of tying ranching or fencing practices to this possibility. The controversial aspect of the project is there would be no public access, but the Board felt this was proactive conservation on a vital tributary to the Madison. Jeff moved and Mark seconds approval of \$5,000 from MRF toward this CE, with the goal of raising a total of \$20,000 from our members. Several Directors say they would contribute personally. Motion passes. Brian and Jeff will talk with Reints and MLR and have a final answer to MLR by the next Board meeting on December 9, 2015.
3. Treasurer Montag presented the Financial Report (see attached). The balance sheet shows \$266,000 in the checking account, of which \$131,000 is earmarked for the Odell, Hebgen, and Wigwam projects. Of these, Odell has the largest amount at \$110,000. Other current liabilities total \$3,800. This leaves MRF with unrestricted cash of \$130,000.
4. Turning to the Profit and Loss statement, Jeff noted that we are generally on budget for revenues such as the Festival, Gala, and general grants. We are also on budget for expenses such as Administration, Marketing, and project expenses such as Bear Creek, Hebgen, Odell (mainly maintenance this year), and the Varney gauge.
5. Jeff mentioned that not all expenses are tallied for the Festival, but he estimates a net profit of \$10,000 this year. He cautions this does not include any allocation of costs for staff time in setting up the event, which amount to approximately one month for Liz and one month for Pam. Jeff asks for ideas to delegate much of this work to volunteers for next year.

6. Jackie Mathews asks for MRF support regarding truck traffic in the Madison Valley. Joe says this is his biggest concern – a truckload of hazardous materials going into the river. It is moved by Jeff and seconded by Mark to urge Montana Department of Transportation to reduce the number of interstate trucks, particularly those carrying hazardous materials, using Madison Valley highways and going through Ennis. Jackie will carry this message.

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, THE MEETING ADJOURNED AND  
RECONVENED AS THE ANNUAL RETREAT**