

**MINUTES**

1. **Call to Order** – approximately 1:02 PM EST

2. **Roll Call**

**Steering Committee Members Present** – Richard Harrison, Marty Hettel, Carey Johnson, John King, Chris Lorentz, Heather Mayfield, Chuck Somerville, Mike Steinmaus, Jeff Thomas

**Steering Committee Members Absent** – Laurel Cornell, Brian Farkas, Sarah Hippensteel-Hall, Kari Mackenbach, Robin Peak, Harry Stone

**ORBA Advisors Present** – Jim Lazorchak

3. **Adoption of the Agenda** – no requests to change, adopted as distributed.

4. **Minutes of the 24 February Conference Call** – no minutes were distributed. The SC members on the phone were unable to review.

5. **Report from the Chairperson** (Chuck Somerville) – no report in favor of other discussions

6. **Regular Reports from Other Committee Members**

a. **Financial Update** (Chuck) – ORBA has an approximate balance of \$11,800 with \$293.95 in approved travel expenditures leaving a balance of approximately \$11,500.

CS discussed the payment to Harry Stone. RH noted that it would be helpful to have the \$5,000 payment in order to meet the WIK required for the PAS grant from USACE. ORSANCO paid the remaining \$63,000 of the cash match and is waiting for reimbursement from Kentucky. Including an ORBA payment to HS, we would be in the low \$40,000 range of WIK, and that would allow completion of the project.

CS asked for comment on the payment to HS. No comments were made in support or against the payment. Having heard no objection, CS stated that the payment to HS was approved from ORBA funds, and that it would be included as part of the WIK required for fulfillment of the PAS agreement.

b. **Update on Website/Social Media** (John King/Heather Mayfield) – HM reported that no comments had been received in response to the distribution in December 2019

of the mock-up pages. HM and HS have sent out reminders to make comments. HM has made some updates based on direct comments from HS. HM will work on more pages, and will then come back and finalize the move from USACE hosting to ORSANCO FORE hosting.

CS asked who to contact regarding listing working group leadership and membership on the website. HM stated that the POC for now would be her.

- c. Update from the AWI Liaison (Marty Hettel) – MH has continued to work as a liaison between ORBA and AWI. He noted that AWI was hosting a web-based meeting on 24 March (and also on April 6<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 PM) to review an early draft of the 2020 report card.

CS asked if a broader distribution of the invitation to review the report card would be possible. MH indicated that he would follow up and let us know.

- d. Update from the ORBCRE Liaison (Chris Lorentz) – CL reported that an outline of the meeting schedule was in place, but that it had not been finalized yet.

CS asked if Tamara Sluss (who will host the ORBCRE meeting at University of Louisville) was aware that ORBA was now planning to host summit meetings one day in advance of the ORBCRE meetings. CL reported that Tamara was aware and said that there would be no problem.

- 7. Reports from Working Group Leaders** – CS indicated that we had one Working Group with an active charter [this was an error, because on the previous call the Steering Committee had agreed to extend the charters of the Working Groups led by Sarah Hippensteel-Hall and Kari Mackenbach so that they could continue working in that capacity until new working group charters and leaders were in place].

CS reported on a Skype call regarding standing up new Working Groups that were closely aligned with the strategic actions included in the current version of the PAS document. Harry Stone has started working on draft charters for the new working groups, and one of the drafts was included with the meeting materials for this call. But we do not have completed charters for approval on this call.

CS asked if any SC member would like to make a nomination for a new Working Group Leader. Nominations will be accepted on the call or via email later. No nominations were made on the call.

- a. Research & Education (Heather Mayfield/Chris Lorentz) – HM reported that there was no official report. She made comments on the draft ORB Strategic Plan and was waiting for a final version. No additional comments from CL.

## 8. Unfinished Business

- a. PAS Agreement – Next Steps (H. Stone/Laura Mattingly) – RH made a request on behalf of ORBA to Laura Mattingly to delay the final release of the Strategic Plan until 15 May. The reason for the request was that states were not responding to requests to comment on the plan.

Request for an extended comment period and delayed release of the final plan was approved by USACE.

CS asked if all SC members have had a chance to review the latest draft of the Strategic Plan, and requested that they contact CS or HS if they would like to be sure that they have the latest version.

- b. ORBA Strategic Planning for 2020-2023 – no discussion on this conference call
- c. ORBA Reception/Visits on Capitol Hill – no discussion on this conference call. CS did note that ORBA was still planning to engage with USACE on an ORBIT for mid to late August 2020, but that those plans might be altered in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

RH reported that ORBIT has been scheduled for 16 to 19 August 2020. ORBIT will involve 5 stops along the Ohio River, using the Mississippi River Commissions towboat, which is amenable for public meetings. Presentations on all goals of the basin plan would be made at each stop with opportunities for interaction with media. ORBIT would attempt to grow interest in the Strategic Plan in advance of the fall summit.

CS asked if stops had been selected and/or if individuals had been selected to make presentations. RH suggested that we reach out to USACE to be involved in the planning.

Marty Hettel reported that USACE has cancelled their high-water inspection tour due to Covid-19. MH thought that it was unlikely that the ORBIT schedule would be maintained.

CS asked if delays caused now would be likely to interrupt ORBIT even if the country was past actionable risk of Covid-19. RH thought that the possible delay was more likely related to direct Covid risk. MH reported that DHS has designated the inland waterways as critical infrastructure, so no maintenance on locks and dams has not been delayed.

- d. How should ORBA engage with ORBCRE 2020 meeting? – A preliminary draft schedule of the ORBA summit was distributed, and CS asked for comments. No comments were made. CS stated that ORBA would continue to work with ORBCRE to solidify the schedule.
- e. Seeking Partnerships with Mitigation Banks – John King reported on the Watershed Resource Registry, maintained by US EPA. Ellen Bryson is managing this resource in Region 3. It provides an online interactive mapping tool that prioritizes areas for preservation and restoration on a state by state basis.

JK reported that WV DEP, US EPA, USACE were engaged. Agencies listed on this website could be good partners for ORBA if we decide to maintain a mapping/GIS database.

JK can serve as a liaison to the organizations that maintain these databases.

Jim Lazorchak asked if there were habitat restoration projects that were being undertaken on the mainstem of the Ohio River.

CS suggested that we may want to invite someone working on the registry to attend and present at the fall summit.

- f. ORBA Steering Committee Terms – this discussion was started on the last SC conference call, and was followed by a Skype meeting on the following Monday to align the working groups with the Strategic Plan.

CS noted that we need to receive nominations for the SC seat vacated by Ron Brooks and that, once the new charters were completed, we would need nominations for leaders of the new working groups. Those nominations are not limited to existing working group leaders, but those leaders are not excluded.

CS asked SC members to look at the top-line goals of the ORB Strategic Plan as the focus of the new working groups, and to be thinking about people who would be good leaders for those groups. No nominations were made on the phone

CS asked for nominations for treasurer. No nominations were made on the phone.

- g. Steering Committee Talking Points and Guidance – CS distributed guidance and talking points for SC members who may be approached by the press upon release of the Strategic Plan.

## 9. New Business

- a. Next SC Call – 27 April 2020

b. Other

**10. Adjourn**