

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LAPORTE COUNTY DRAINAGE BOARD
FEBRUARY 13, 2024
8:30 AM, LAPORTE COUNTY COMPLEX MEETING ROOM 3
LAPORTE, INDIANA**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tony Hendricks; Jeff Mitzner; Pat Vance; Hugh Glasgow

STAFF PRESENT: Christine Keil

MEMBERS/STAFF ABSENT: Joe Cuson; Connie Gramarossa; Brad Adamsky

PUBLIC PRESENT: See sign-in sheet.

Jeff Mitzner called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Attendance was taken. Hugh Glasgow motioned to approve the last meeting minutes. Pat Vance seconded. Motion carried.

SCOTT PELATH, KANKAKEE AND YELLOW RIVER BASIN COMMISSION, YEARLY REPORT: Pelath approached the Board to give an update on the River. Current projects include logjam management working around the bat roosting season. Delta 3 removed logs around and upstream of Highway 421 and near Lomax. In Porter County, work will be done to clean around bridges. A sediment trap at the Sabones property will be permitted and done. Yellow River Bank Reconstruction bid period is happening in Marshall and Starke Counties. This reduces the sediment in the river. The State Line Bridge is being discussed and budgeted for removal scenarios since it catches debris and no longer supports traffic. Bank stabilization and sediment reduction in Jasper County is being done. Logjams are continually monitored for in the 75 miles of River with public input welcome. Invasive species eradication will be performed in the summer months. We are also toward the end of a hydraulic study of the Kankakee Fish and Wildlife Area. The current old water control structures divert water into the Kankakee from the Yellow when the Kankakee is in flood stage and the Yellow is not. There are suggestions to remedy this that are being discussed such as adjusting the height of the spillway on the Kankakee and to notch one of the internal cross levees to allow the water to fill up and flow back into the Yellow. Glasgow asked questions about bank stabilization. Pelath explained one of the processes that uses rip rap at the toe then using erosion matting, regrading at a 1:1 slope, and seeding with cover crop and natives. Sometimes root balls are used. Additional riprap is used in sandy areas. The Board thanked Scott for all his hard work.

WARWICK DITCH PROJECT BIDS:

Mitzner opened the floor for bids as follows:

J&J Excavating \$6,248.00

Superior Excavating \$9,300.00

The project was rebid from last month since the scope of work changed due to the ditch being cleaned by private owners, Messer Gas, west of Highway 39. Keil spoke with employees at

Messer Gas. They stated they cleaned their section because the ditch was plugged and was backing water up into their retention pond. There is also beaver activity. There is a dam there currently holding water back. The employees are trapping and will notify Keil so that the dam can be removed. The new project scope is from Highway 39 going downstream to Wilhelm Road. Glasgow motioned to accept the bid from J&J Excavating for \$6,248. Vance seconded. Motion carried.

FIELDSTONE ESTATES UNIT NO 1 URBAN DRAIN PROJECT: Hendricks reported that this is a subdivision on the east side of Westville that has flooding issues. The County Highway alerted us to the problem. Upon investigation, it was found out that the subdivision was accepted by the Drainage Board, Commissioners, and County Highway but the drains going north into the retention pond were never built. The owners at the time were Coulter, Elliott, and Miller. They were an LLC, but that no longer exists. The County Highway is willing to put the pipe in with the Drainage Board offering the assessment money to cover the expense. There is a problem with a NIPSCO box in the easement with a cost to move at \$20,000. There is a current retention pond that the pipe will be run in to. Charity at the County Highway has been putting the scope of work together with a cost of approximately \$6,000. This is an urban drain that is assessed \$100 per lot per year for 12 lot owners. There is \$3,900 in the fund currently, with a four-year ceiling of \$4,800. The problem is with the NIPSCO transformer and the pond. The remainder of the money would come from the General Drain Improvement Fund. The assessment would go back into effect until the money is repaid to the General Drain. Hendricks suggested approving using the money to pay for the amount that would come from the assessment, pending review by the Drainage Board attorney and the County Commissioners attorney, since there are legal questions here due to the County approving the project and the work not being completed. The assessment would be in effect until the General Drain is repaid and the 4-year ceiling is built back up to \$4800. The road is flooded. Glasgow motioned to use the \$3,900 and borrow the rest from the General Drain Improvement Fund, pending legal review by both attorneys. Vance seconded. Motion carried.

IC 36-9-27.4 REMOVAL OF OBSTRUCTION PETITION: Tom Vater approached the Board to submit a petition. He owns property in Springfield Township. His tenant farmer is Gary Kessler, who was also present. He presented a map and explained the nature of the problem. The adjacent property was purchased by Skorski. There is natural drainage on the farm since the early 1900s. There is an existing natural drain and a culvert under the road. The owner, Skorski, has blocked the natural drainage to the west and it now backs water up to the east. Zolvinski was also present, who farms to the south. Vater presented the petition to the Board and that also includes a letter that Vater sent to Skorski that went unanswered. He was told by another that the purpose was to block water into the woods to prevent mosquitos. Hendricks stated that this must be restored to the way it was. Vater has owned the property since 1995 and didn't have any drainage problems prior to the other owner doing this work. Keil explained IC 36-9-27.4 with the next steps being a surveyor's report for next month and a public hearing in April. Pat Vance motioned to accept the petition pending review. Glasgow seconded. Motion carried. Vance motioned to set the public hearing in April pending the surveyor's report and attorney review. Glasgow seconded. Motion carried.

HUDSON LAKE: Georgette Joyce approached the Board to give a monthly report. The water is 12” above the weir. No incidents have been reported. The website is continually updated. Sediment removal and invasive species grants have been applied for. The DNR and the New Prairie High School are working on a program and the Hoosier Riverwatch. The County also approved 1.5 million dollars of work for the sewer project at Hudson and Saugany.

TONY HENDRICKS, SURVEYOR REPORTS: He reported that the Kankakee and Yellow River Basin Commission will meet on March 22 in Morocco.

There being no other public comment or other items, Jeff Mitzner adjourned the meeting. The next meeting is Tuesday, March 12, at the LaPorte County Complex at 8:30 AM.

Christine Keil, Secretary
Dated: February 23, 2024