

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LAPORTE COUNTY DRAINAGE BOARD
NOVEMBER 12, 2024
8:30 AM, LAPORTE COUNTY COMPLEX MEETING ROOM 3
LAPORTE, INDIANA**

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

STAFF PRESENT: John South, Brad Adamsky

MEMBERS/STAFF ABSENT: Joe Cuson

PUBLIC PRESENT: See sign-in sheet.

Jeff Mitzner called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Attendance was taken. Pat Vance motioned to approve minutes from October meeting. Jeff Mitzner seconded. Motion passed.

MICHIANA SHORES, WHITE DITCH AGREEMENT: Brad Adamsky reported that the (Michiana Shores) Board will be meeting tonight. They are looking through their numbers to see what they have spent over the years. Basically, what it comes down to is over a period there were two grants the town applied for One of those agreements has expired. Basically, in order to get the grant, the Board had to cede control over some of those funds, so the Town could make improvements and with that expiring jurisdiction control of maintenance goes back to the Drainage Board. For the entire time we have been collecting assessments on the Ditch. It's just a matter of the Board confirming that they don't want to come back to the Board and request to extend the agreement and that portion of the Ditch will shift back to the Drainage Board. They are reviewing it on their side to look at the financials of it to see if they want to be responsible for it. They haven't made that decision yet. But without them making that decision, there is no option for the Drainage Board to take at the moment.

Kenneth Purze stated that he formally served on this Board and was involved with the Town of Michiana Shores when these agreements were made. Adamsky has most of it right. For the section the Town took responsibility for, because of the reshaping of the banks, the Coastal program wanted to know that typical Drainage Board practices would not be done in that one section. The Ditch has a number of sections in town. The town does a great job running the town, the roads, the streets, the parks. The town president is here. She does a great job of leadership in the town and she's got her hands full and limited resources. He believes that the community and stakeholders would best be served by this Board taking back that section because everything that was expected in that grant application was done and completed. They did a great job of maintaining it and the banks are sloped. The Drainage Board has access and there is a path for access on one side. They've had flooding in the past, but they haven't had it since this program was done. He here because he sent an e-mail to Surveyor Hendricks, a copy to Adamsky, he knew the agreement was ending. I believe it's in the best interests of the stakeholders to have an

updated report, so that long term maintenance can be planned for this Ditch. Unlike all the other Ditches this Board oversee, this one runs through a residential area. You guys have these funds available and it's easy for the board to manage it. Hugh Glasgow asked how much money is in the fund. John South responded \$33,000. Jeff Mitzner asked when was the last time we did anything up there. Tony Hendricks stated 4 or 5 years. Pat Vance asked if we should go up and shoot elevations again. Pat Vance made a motion that Tony should go up and shoot the elevations before the end of the year. Connie Gramarossa seconded. Hugh Glasgow requested discussion on the motion. Glasgow asked Tony if he thinks the elevations need to be taken? Hendricks responded yes. Motion passed.

TREE REMOVAL, BULL DITCH: John South stated this was carried over from last month. Jeff mitzner asked if this is the one tree that has access from here to the door? South responded that this is the one with the tree running parallel in the Ditch and another tree partially on the homeowners' property with the tree across the top of the Ditch. Mitzner suggested tabling this and move it along to the next meeting and maybe he will have it cut up by that time.

MCKELLIPS DITCH PROJECT: John South stated that this project was initiated by Christine Keil in the spring but was pushed back to the fall. The project is for maintenance on the McKellips Ditch for approximately 1.8 miles. South requested permission to put this project out for bids. Hugh Glasgow stated he has a problem with list of stabilization seeds. He believes it is way too extensive and a waste of money. You can plant all these grasses and 3 months later you have horseweed, foxtails, and cottonwood trees. These grasses cannot compete in a low ditch where you take muck out. You are already pulling out thousands of seeds out of the ditch. These grasses are a waste of money, because the contractor has to come back, with special machinery, reseed it, probably two different times, as opposed to just cleaning the ditch and leaving. It adds money to the bid and we do not have much money in these funds to clean these ditches. Believes that in this situation it's unnecessary and a waste of money, in his opinion. Jeff Mitzner says that he is going to have to agree with Hugh. Can we bid without them coming in to reseed? Probably need to reseed something, but I don't think we need to reseed this. For 1.8 miles that is probably going to be \$10,000 an acre for that. Brad Adamsky asked if the seeding is something we put in or is coming from somewhere else. John South responded that this is what has also been used. He just copied what Christine Keil had used in the past. South said we could reseed with the appropriate local mix. Tony states what John is saying is we will amend the bid to say reseed with the appropriate local mix and take the chart out. Pat Vance motioned to send it out for bid as discussed. Hugh Glasgow seconded. Motion passed.

TOBIN ARM OF THE RODMAN DITCH PROJECT: John South stated that this is also a project pushed back from the spring. The complainant asked that we wait until after the harvest. The project is a 0.5 mile stretch on 300 E and 300 S. Hugh Glasgow asked how are the banks on that ditch? South replied it is a low ditch. Mitzner asked if this is just maintenance or tree removal too. South replied it is just maintenance. Connie Gramarossa motioned to send it out for bid with the appropriate local mix added. Pat Vance seconded. Motion passed.

BERRINGER DITCH PROJECT: John South described this project as being north of 200 S for approximately 3,700 feet to the Grand Trunk railroad. There are a lot of sumac plants along the ditch that the complainant asked to be removed. The plants are overwhelming the ditch. It is still running but it is constricted. The complainant was Dan Szilagyi. Jeff Mitzner asked if we need to remove the brush or clean the ditch? South responded both. Jeff Mitzner made a suggestion to have someone go in there and mow it. Then make sure we get it sprayed next year. Hugh Glasgow wanted to emphasize spraying next year because the sumac is tenacious. Jeff Mitzner asked for a motion to mow the sumac and then clean the ditch. It would be up to the contractor on how they want to do it, but it needs to be stated in the bid. Jeff Mitzner stated we need to get on that and make sure it gets sprayed next summer. Hugh Glasgow stated that it will need to be a summer spray not in the spring. Jeff Mitzner stated late June, early July. Connie Gramarossa motioned. Pat Vance seconded. Motion passed.

KANKAKEE RIVER TREE REMOVAL PROJECT: John South detailed the tree removal project. One area from 421 to the county line and one area from the sheet Dan Gumz put together with the most trees in the channel. Both areas were broken up into sections to be put out for bid. South stated that there isn't enough money to cover the cost and that we are hoping the KRBC will share the cost of the project. Jeff Mitzner asked if the 421 to county line section is all one bid. South responded that someone could bid the whole thing, or they can bid on individual sections. South stated he tried to keep each section less than a mile in length. Hugh Glasgow motioned to put this project out for bids, but he stated he would like to prioritize the lower part of the river (421 to county line). Pat Vance seconded. Motion passed.

COOK DITCH, BEAVER DAM: Jeff Mitzner asked where we were at on the Beaver Dam. John South stated that the Dam was still there. Mitzner questioned why we are footing the full bill when half of the Ditch is in Porter County. Mitzner and Adamsky asked South to contact Porter County Surveyor to discuss cost sharing options.

HUDSON LAKE: Georgette Joyce reported the lake was hovering around 1" throughout October. It's currently at 1.3". It did get up to 2" when a little bit of rain did fall. There have been no incidents on the lake. They met with LARE on October 22nd. LARE did a survey on the lake. The lake is very healthy, invasive species in fewer sites, and native plants are abundant. The dredging efforts will resume tomorrow. It's a six-week effort that is required to be finished by December 31st. If not, they will have to get approval for an extension, but they should still be on track. The drain agreement with DNR is in good shape as it's moving through the signature process. Hopefully that will go into effect January 1st. The drain was serviced on October 30th. Tomorrow is the Taylor Ditch tour. People involved include the La Porte and St. Joseph County Drainage Boards. John will be there. DNR will be bringing a drone to go over the La Porte County portion of Taylor Ditch. A couple of landowners effected by the ditch will be there, plus someone from the Hudson Lake Conservation Association will also be there. Today is the Hudson Lake Conservation Associations' public meeting.

BRAD ADAMSKY, ATTORNEY: No report

TONY HENDRICKS, SURVEYOR: No report

JOINT BOARDS: Jeff Mitzner reported there is a meeting on Thursday, but he will not be able to attend.

CLAIMS: ALLSOP EXCAVATING, LITTLE KANKAKEE, TREE REMOVAL, \$2,000

Hugh Glasgow motioned to pay the claim. Connie Gramarossa seconded. Motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Jake Wetzel introduced himself and his Veteran-owned small business. He has a drone application company called Heritage Drone Service. He described his company in detail and what they can provide the Drainage Board. Jake Wetzel answered a number of questions from the Board.

.
Jeff Mitzner adjourned the meeting at 9:07 AM. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, December 10, at the LaPorte County Complex Meeting Room 3 at 8:30 AM.

John South, Secretary

Dated: November 12, 2024