

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LAPORTE COUNTY DRAINAGE BOARD
MARCH 10, 2026
LAPORTE COUNTY COMPLEX MEETING ROOM 3
LAPORTE, INDIANA
8:30 AM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeff Mitzner; Connie Gramarossa; Chad Hertges; Mark Scarborough; John Matwyshyn;

STAFF PRESENT: John South, Brad Adamsky

MEMBERS/STAFF ABSENT: Pat Vance

PUBLIC PRESENT: See sign-in sheet.

Jeff Mitzner called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Attendance was taken. Connie Gramarossa motioned to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Mark Scarborough seconded. Motion passed.

SCHURZ DITCH, LOUIS SPEAR: Louis Spear approached the Board and asked John Matwyshyn if he had received anything for the City in regard to the Cherry Cable? Matwyshyn replied that they had not provided him with any information, but perhaps the secretary had received some information. Jeff Mitzner asked Louis Spear what he was asking for. Spear responded that he was looking for the Cherry Cable, all of the entities that are putting water into the Schurz Ditch that have never been assessed as benefited. Mitzner stated that he didn't know he had asked for that. Spear responded that it was at the first meeting. He sent in a letter asking for all the plan specifications, for all the entities. He spelled it out from Wal-Mart to Howmet, obviously they turned nothing over. That answers my question. Spear that stated he wanted to take the time to go through the packet he provided to the Board. Spear stated that he didn't put the packet together specifically for the Drainage Board, he put it together because this is obviously going to end up in court with a judicial review, and/or damages. Mitzner responded, that before Louis goes through the packet, the Board has already determined that there is an issue and that they are working on the issue. Mitzner continued that he doesn't want to spend an hour going over things they already know. Mitzner stated that they have had Elmer Varro go out and take a look at the two sinkholes on the tile and give the Board an estimate to try to get those fixed. Mitzner has contacted Scott Pelath to try to get hold of someone from the DNR, from the state, to see if we can dig through the wetlands to try and get the ditch better from where Mr. Spear's tile jumps out to where the inlet of the tile that goes under the railroad. Mitzner state that the Board has already identified all these things with this situation. Spear responds that the Board is missing the elephant in the room, all the water the City is putting on us. This is a 110-year old farm drainage system. Mitzner adds that we understand that, we know water is coming from the City. Spear asked if the Board is going to call for it's reconstruction? Mitzner responds that the Board is working with the City right now to try and figure this out. Spear states there is nothing

to figure out. Mitzner states that the Board needs to figure how water is going to get down an 18" tile. Spear states that it's not going to, that's why he's here. Mitzner responds that the Board understands that, the board is going to try to figure out they need to do. Spear then states then that's why it needs to be reconstructed. Mitzner asks are you going to come up with a million dollars? Spear states why don't you listen to what I have to say, because the law states that it's not the Board's decision, it's not his decision, the Board's decision is to decide if it needs to be reconstructed. Mitzner adds that the Board is working with the city right now to try and figure it out. Spear continues that the last time the Board was trying to figure out how to pay for it. Spear then requested the Board go the second page of the packet provided to the Board and read the following: "We will now re-clarify the **"Assessed For Maintenance"** terminology. If the Drainage Board was never requested nor approve given in writing for the last 110 years since the La Porte Circuit Courts acceptance of the Schurz Petition signed by nine farmers." There are 536 assessed for maintenance. The ones that were assessed for maintenance where never allowed to put their water into that ditch. Mitzner asks if they are being assessed for maintenance, why can't they put their water into that ditch? Spear responds why don't you ask Brad? Brad Adamsky responds that the Board was just provided this today, so he's not going to offer an opinion on it on the fly, for risk of not being accurate. Adamsky continues that Spear's point being that when this was established there were nine petitioners who set it up, who probably owned the majority of land out there, yes circumstances have changed 110 years later. It doesn't mean the people being assessed aren't being properly assessed, is that what you are trying to assert or are you saying they shouldn't be putting water into the ditch at all? Spear asks Adamsky if he can give a yes or no, if it has not been assessed. Adamsky responds that he is not going answer a definitive statement on information he was just provided right now. Mitzner asks are you asking us if these people have never been assessed? Spear responds not assessed as benefited. If they have been prove it to me. Show me where Wal-Mart was assessed as benefited. Mitzner asked when was the last time anyone was assessed? It's capped at \$35,000. We can't assess anybody when we haven't spent any money on that ditch. Spear states that he wants to show Jeff something, he refers to a map from the packet showing the assessed land in 1916. Connie Gramarossa asks Spear if he can tell the Board what page he is referring to? Spear added that he was going to go from the start to the finish, but he's not allowed to do that. Mitzner states that he's not telling him he's not allowed do it, we've been over this, we know there's an issue. Spear adds if you don't know the law then don't tell me or ask questions, if you won't listen... Mitzner responds I'm not going to put up with it. Here's the deal; we know that there's an issue. Spear interjects then vote on it! Mitzner responds we're not going to vote on, because we have to do studies to figure out what's going on and we have to work with the City to figure out how we are going to come up with the money. Spear adds the people that benefit from the drainage, which is Wal-Mart, and every one of those 500+ north of the tracks, will pay. It's not up to you or the City, how it's done. It's done by determining that this drain is in need of reconstruction. The judge will decide. Mitzner asks how far north the assessment goes? South responds by producing a map of the Schurz watershed. Mitzner asks so, everybody in this watershed has been assessed? South responds yes. Spear adds for maintenance, not assessed as benefited. Gramarossa suggests that this be moved to an executive session. Adamsky adds to give it the attention and detail that Mr. Spear is requesting. Gramarossa states that given the fact that a majority of us went out there last week, Thursday, to look at all the ditches. We're being

provided this paperwork. We know that John South, the department head, has the names and who is assessed on that property. Our attorney, Mr. Adamsky, has just been given a whole slew of paperwork, and I know Louis, you really do want some answers. Spear responds that he wants relief. Gramarossa continues that you want us to vote on something, but, unfortunately, given that John South may have some information, now you've provided us with new information. I do know that Jeff is working on a plan. I would ask our Attorney at least 72 hours to review the new documentation, work with the department head, try to gather all the information, and maybe have an executive session with just the Board, so that we can try to work something out or have a better understanding of exactly what we are doing and then come back and table it to the next meeting, so that we can have an executive session and give our Attorney an opportunity to look through all this paperwork. Gramarossa states that is her motion. Spear states that he has three paragraphs he'd like to read. Adamsky asks spear to highlight those paragraphs and give them to him after the motion and they we can address it. Spear states he wants to read three paragraphs to this board after waiting 70 years of damage. is that asking to much, Jeff? Mitzner asks did you give it to us in this packet? Spear responds that it's in the packet, but you won't allow me to read it. Mitzner states that he has a motion on the floor right now and I have to recognize the motion. Mitzner would like the City of La Porte is included in that motion. Gramarossa adds that we will be meeting with the different entities, which will open it up to whatever entities we need to for an executive session and that would be her motion. Mark Scarborough seconded. Motion passed. Spear read three paragraphs from the packet: "Thus, although an owner is entitled to natural discharge of his surface waters, he may not collect and discharge such water upon his lower neighbors in volume. Weideroder v. Mace (1916)". B, "where water is, or has become part of a natural watercourse an owner may not divert the channel and cast the water upon his neighbor without liability." Another case law. C, "we have, also, long accepted that an owner who creates an artificial impoundment of water on his land will be liable to his neighbor if he permits it to escape and the neighbor is thereby injured". Another case. This is in Starke county, this is law. nobody in the City of La Porte has adhered to any drainage laws in the last 70 years. Every Drainage Board, previous to this, including every Surveyor, has not done their job. And it's obvious that you're not going to either. Gramarossa thanked Louis for bringing in the paperwork and trust the fact that we are going to go through this, our attorney is going to look through it and hopefully we can come up with some kind of resolution. Spear adds that damages are going on to this day. Mitzner adds that in the situation we went out there, we found two sinkholes on the Schurz ditch, on the tile. Elmer went out and looked at it. He has not submitted a bid to us yet, for what is going to cost. Mitzner asks Adamsky if we can do it through an email to try and get this done as an emergency? Adamsky responds yes. Mitzner asks for a motion that when Elmer gets us that bid, that John South sends it out to us and we vote on it as an email, so we can get the two sinkholes fixed on Louis Spears' ground, so that we can start showing that we are doing something to help him. Adamsky adds that you don't need a motion for that you just need to let the Board know to look for that email.

SINKHOLE, RIDGE RUN, VARRO SERVICES: John South reported that Elmer Varro went out to project site and found that the tile was in great shape and didn't need repair. Varro did find that a few of the slip joints weren't sealed, so he went ahead and sealed those up with concrete. Varro's bill was for \$12,936.79. South reported that we don't have that amount in that account,

so we will need to borrow from the GDIF, approximately \$8,700. Connie Gramarossa motioned to approve. Mark Scarborough seconded. Motion passed

DRAIN CROSSING APPLICATION, TRAVIS DITCH, DEWBERRY: Pat Hill approached the Board and gave an overview of the project. The proposed plans that are with the City of La Porte are for mass grading plans for the property located at 360 E Boyd Blvd. The proposed plans include mass grading for pad development across approximately 438 acres. The proposed improvements also include, in addition to temporary sediment traps and sediment basins for erosion and sediment control during construction. The plans also include permanent stormwater management basins, wet ponds. The ponds along the east side of the property are sized for two conditions. The proposed plans would be ultimately resulting in primarily grass restoration, grass cover across the property after mass grading is complete. The ponds are sized for that interim condition, after the mass grading is complete, to manage stormwater from those conditions, as well as potential ultimate conditions we've analyzed to set them up for future development. Jeff Mitzner asks if the ponds that are going to be permanent, retention or detention? Hill responds that they are wet ponds, they have a detention permanent pool of the bottom 3 feet or so, will retain water. it will be a permanent pool that will provide water quality treatment as well as encouraging water to infiltrate into the soil, to reduce the volumes leaving. There will be storage above the permanent pool that will provide peak flow mitigation through an outlet control structure that is designed in accordance with the La Porte stormwater technical standards. Mitzner asks so, these retention ponds are not going to directly dump into the Travis Ditch, correct? Hill responds that is correct. Mitzner states that there are two 7" pipes coming out that for overflow, plus an 18" that will come over for a 100-year flood. Hill responds that it varies between the ponds, but on that order, yes. Mitzner asks are the ponds connected? Hill responds that some of the ponds are interconnected to each other in order to take advantage of the larger storage volumes and different timing of in-flows. They're sized based on maximum drainage area, specifications from the governing stormwater manuals. Mitzner asks so, you're going to dump water from two 7" drains onto the grass, are you trying to get it to percolate first before it gets to the Travis ditch? Hill responds no, there will be outlet culverts that will drain towards the ditch, they would be controlled by orifice. Mitzner asks so, they will go to the ditch? Hill answers they would drain to the ditch, but they're not directly connected. Mitzner states so, there is 300' between the ditch. Mitzner asks Jerry Jackson from the City of La Porte to approach the Board. Mitzner continues so, you have 300' between the pond and the Travis ditch, so what you are trying to do is let that water out slowly into your property, but eventually, say if we get a 3" rain, you're trying to get that water to percolate on your own property, but if we get a 3" rain that water is going to go the Travis anyway. Hill responds that they are designed conservatively with that assumption that there is going to be outflow needed, so the ponds are sized with enough volume to hold those storms for a certain time, slowly release the water, so it's dropping the outflow rates down below the per acre. Mitzner asks what is the outflow rate out of one 7" if it is full? Mitzner adds there are two 7" per basin? Hill responds that they are larger than that. The outlet structures will vary, I think generally they are 18" outflow culverts, but the 7" orifice would control the flow. Jerry Jackson states picture a manhole with two orifices going out of it, normal flow would go through those, the level gets above the 100-year storm and comes over the top, dumps down and then out the 18" culverts. Hill states that the proposed design will not

impact the ditch or the 75' buffer around the ditch, so what we have included is downstream of that culvert, a rip-rap plunge pool. The water will come down, hit the rip-rap, slow down, and a level spreader to get it back to an unconcentrated flow, between the ditch buffer and the ditch itself. Jerry Jackson asks how wide is the level spreader? Hill responds that they vary, but in general 20'-30'. Jackson states spreads it out to a sheet flow before it discharges. Chad Hertges asks how much water to you figure is going to hit the Travis ditch? Hill responds that they have that summarized. There is a drainage summary table for each pond in the plans. We can pull that out and highlight it. They are all sized based on the La Porte stormwater standards. it's a tenth of a CFS, a tenth of a cubic foot per second flow per developed acre for a ten-year storm and .3 CFS per developed acre for the 100-year storm. we're showing those flows being reduced below those thresholds. Hertges asks if there are any plans to shape up the Travis ditch before we take all this water on? Hertges states that it gets pretty hairy and there are a lot of trees done in the Travis, so are we going to be preventive on this? Mitzner responds that he told Jerry and Tom yesterday that we really need to look at this Travis ditch because this is not going to be the only project that dumps into this ditch. We already know that. We don't want to run into a situation like we have right now with Wal-Mart, Howmet, and all that. We want to make sure we do our work. 20-25 years ago, when Wal-Mart went nobody worried about this stuff as much as we're worrying about it now. This Board is going to worry about it, because I don't want somebody coming back in a few years saying you guys didn't do your job. Well we're going to do our job and make sure we do it right. One thing on that comment, Chad, I would like to make sure the Board, Jerry, Mayor Dermody wants to come with us, to go out and look at the Travis ditch, so that we see where the water flow is going to go. It is a court drain ditch, but there is no assessment on it, so there is no money there. We're going to have to try to figure how we're going to get this taken care of, so that we don't have an issue somewhere. Jackson states that the ditch is in generally good condition right up by the wastewater plant except for tree falls, there's plenty of tree falls. Mitzner adds the problem is the downstream. Jackson adds that there are minimal flows on the north end and much, much larger on the south end. Hill adds that designing to those outflows, allowable discharge rates in the standards, is a reduction in the flow compared to existing conditions. the peak flows would be reduced. mark Scarborough asks it's not reduced more than the agricultural field is allowing right now, right? hill responds that it will be reduced below that at a peak flow level. Mitzner asks if the detention ponds are big enough to hold a 2" rain and then slowly release it? Hill states that that is correct. the peak rainfall is 4-6 hours and the ponds are large enough to hold that water temporarily and release it at a slower rate, so their reducing that peak outflow. Mitzner asks so, what are you asking from us today? Jerry Jackson states that they are looking for approval to discharge to Travis Ditch for this project. Tom Dermody, Mayor of La Porte approached the Board and states the goal is, and again, you and I had the conversation, we're not sure if we need approval or advisement, but either way we want to be good actors, we want your approval, to work together with you. We just want to make sure that the ground movement can be done. To update you, we will be removing topsoil. I know this water situation is a ways down the pike, so it gives us a chance, at your convenience, or sooner than later, to go down and see exactly what you want, while they begin their process with the topsoil. Mitzner answers no matter how you look at this, you're going to have to come into our ditch, so, whether you are slowing the water down, you're still running water into our ditch and it's going to change the aspect of how the water gets to the ditch. I'm not telling you you're

wrong, I'm not telling you you're right, but one thing we've got to look at is how this is going to affect the area, so we don't run into a situation where we are at right now with somewhere else. We want to make sure we are doing this right. I think you need to give us some time to look at this Travis ditch, because that is where the water's got to go, and like you said, I think there is going to be at least one more project or two more projects, that is going to dump in that ditch, so we need to make sure we have our ducks in a row. Dermody responds I know they want to be good partners, but are you comfortable with them removing topsoil, because I think that's the first step, correct? Hill responds that the plans we have in with the city are mass grading plans. That's all that is proposed at the moment and restabilizing with mostly grass and gravel in some areas. That's what we are looking for is the concurrence needed for the City's approval on that mass grading permit. Mitzner responds so, to do the stuff you guys want to do, you don't really need our approval for that, but we want to make sure that we're discussing this. Mitzner asks Adamsky they can start work, but it's going to have to be under our, when they get ready to start dumping water in, that we approve this the way this is going to be, correct? Adamsky answers correct, what you are asking to do right now as far as the leveling and grading wouldn't necessarily fall under the Board's jurisdiction, but once the ditch becomes involved. What Jeff is saying, what the Board is saying, is they appreciate you coming forward and keeping us a part of that conversation, especially at this beginning stage of it, but also what the board is saying is they want to take a close look at that ditch and make sure that as this project goes along, we're not creating another situation like we dealt with at the beginning of this meeting. Dermody responds are you comfortable, I know you're all busy, but all of us getting out there next week. Adamsky adds you weren't here at the beginning of the meeting, but we are setting up an executive session to deal with the other ditch. Adamsky recommends to the Board that we put both subjects on the executive session and prior to that meeting do a walk-through. Dermody adds you mean like next week? The board responds yes. Connie Gramarossa states that unfortunately we got inundated with a lot of paperwork today and so, just before you came in, what I had asked the Board was for an executive session to allow our attorney the opportunity to go through all the paperwork, see what some of the residents are providing and the documentation we currently have in our office and come up with a solution of how we are going to fix it. Gramarossa adds that they need to clarify one thing, when water falls, that's an act of nature and it's really not anything that any company has control over, so, if someone were to move the ground, we would still be taking in that water. I think we all need to look at the paperwork we've received today, match it up with the paperwork we have, have our attorney have the opportunity, I've asked for 72 hours, for him to have the ability to look through it. We can plan the executive session after we do the walk-through and this way we can go out and walk on the property, but what your asking for right now as far as moving topsoil, that has to do with the City, that is not within our jurisdiction, so whatever you would normally get done with the City and the city permits, that's fine. We're here to just worry about the water and I think we can get that accomplished by our next meeting. Dermody adds but I want to make sure that none of you have issues with just grading, I understand about the permit, but obviously we want a good partnership. Mitzner adds that he doesn't think there's an issue. you guys can go out and do your grading, but I want to make sure that we are understood, that everybody is square about what we are talking about, you need to come back to us before you make the final plan on how were getting the water to the ditch, so that we have time to look at it. Dermody adds that we can be relentless and we looking forward

to partnering up again. Scarborough adds that his concern is if there is maintenance downstream, that money is going to have to come from somewhere, the city, the county. Like you said it isn't as assessed ditch. It's a court drain, but there is no money there. Mitzner adds that we might be leaning on Microsoft to help fund that, because there is no money there. I already know we are going to have to do some maintenance and I haven't even looked at it yet and I'm sure there hasn't been anything done there 40 years. Dermody adds that Microsoft has already shown that they're a great partner, but it's also not a free pass, writing checks everywhere, but I think there's a good balance that we can solve this. Our only ask is if we start the grading, let's get out there next week, we value what you have to say and let's see what you need so we can plan and we don't want to hold up the process. Hill adds that the goal for this package is to get the earth moving started and the challenge with improvements in the ditch, if I'm understanding correctly, is that it's protected by zoning ordinances and buffers, so working in the ditch adds another layer of permitting and approvals. Mitzner asks are you guys going to be doing any work in our easement, on the ditch? Hill responds no, this plan set doesn't propose any work within the ditch or the buffers. Mitzner adds if you are going to do something, come and talk to us before you do anything there. Jerry Jackson states that he'll have a conversation with the contractor who is going to do some tree removal real quickly, so he will make sure they are not in the 75' easement removing any trees. Mitzner states you know what, as long as you are not going to do anything in the ditch right now, why don't we give you a hold harmless, so that if you do go on the easement to remove some trees off of there, that we're covered. Dermody responds thank you. Mitzner states get with John, whoever the contractor is, get a hold harmless agreement, get that taken care of, so if you happen to get into our easement, we're covered on that. Dermody asks do we know how to get ahold of you John? South states, yes, I can send it to Pat if you want, do you want me to send it to you, would that be fine? Hill responds yes. Dermody states that the contractor has not been selected but should be imminent. Adamsky adds it should be by motion to give them access to the easement. Mitzner asks does it have to be them or the contractor, sign that? Adamsky responds all parties should sign the hold harmless, but you're giving them permission and their agents. Mark Scarborough motions. Connie Gramarossa seconds. Motion passed.

O'HARA-RICE DITCH, MOWING PROJECT #2, REBIDS: One bid was received for the project and was opened by the Board:

Jeff Mitzner asked if we ever sent a letter out asking them to remove the fence? Brad Adamsky responded yes. Mitzner asked if the letter was sent out certified? Adamsky responded that it would have been sent out certified and regular mail.

Al Allsop - \$19,000

Mark Scarborough motioned to not accept the bid and to table this until next month. Connie Gramarossa seconded. Motion passed.

DRAIN CROSSING APPLICATION, RIDGE RUN, SURF INTERNET: John South reported that he spoke with Rachel at Surf internet, who submitted an updated application with the stipulation that the conduit be placed at a minimum depth of 25'. South mentioned that the

surveyor has been in contact with them as well. John Matwyshyn added that he was asked, he believes about 60 days ago now, to get in touch with them. He said he spoke to the people that are actually going to get their hands dirty, doing the horizontal drilling, they said they are about a month away from starting and that they will contact the surveyor when they are a week away from starting, so he can be there when they are doing the horizontal drilling. Connie Gramarossa motioned to approve the Drain Crossing Application. Mark Scarborough seconded. Motion passed.

DRAIN CROSSING APPLICATION, MULTIPLE DITCHES, ZAYO: John Matwyshyn reported that he has been in touch with the project manager for Zayo. They sent him the diagram indicating the route they took and the depth the conduit was placed at. Matwyshyn stated he has other meetings scheduled with them to go over the details of how actually to determine how far down they are. it's conduit underground, we have the elevation, but we need someone to verify the conduit is where they put it. Jeff Mitzner asked how many feet did they tell you they put it? Matwyshyn stated that they gave him an elevation, they didn't give the elevation of the ground, they gave him the elevation of the conduit. That's what he needs to determine, to go out there and verify. They said four feet. Mitzner asked, four feet below the ditch or four feet below the top of the grade? Matwyshyn responded four feet below the surface and four feet below the ditch. He stated he needs to go through and verify at each point. Mark Scarborough asks if we need to have a surveyor survey that elevation? Matwyshyn responded that that is available information. Mitzner states that that is not going to be at our cost. They came in and did this without asking anybody, so that is going to be their bill and they need to prove it to us and you need to tell them that. Matwyshyn stated that he has scheduled a meeting with them coming up, but they haven't responded yet. Mitzner stated that they are going to table this for now. Mark Scarborough motioned to table this item. Connie Gramarossa seconded. motion passed.

DRAIN CROSSING APPLICATION, KABELIN DRAIN, KAWACIN: Tim Kawacin approached the Board and stated that he wants to rebuild a garage lost to a fire. He stated he contacted Tony Hendricks to do a dig. Tony Hendricks said he wouldn't do a dig because it is 42' down and not on his property. Kawacin stated the beacon map is wrong. Kawacin presented maps to the Board showing the actual location of the drain. Connie Gramarossa after reviewing the photos, motions to approve. Mark Scarborough seconded. Motion passed.

DRAIN CROSSING APPLICATION, KABELIN DRAIN, MCDERMOTT: Emily McDermott stated they wish to expand their home away from where the drain is located. They cannot meet with their designer to do any plans until this is approved, because the county will not give them their setbacks and the designer will not meet with them until they get their setbacks. Mark Scarborough makes a motion that if they expand their home they do it in the opposite direction of the drain. Connie Gramarossa and Chad Hertges both seconded. Motion passed.

WEBSTER DITCH, GEORGE LEDONNE, TREE REMOVAL UPDATE: Mr. Ledonne was not present. Jeff Mitzner stated that it looks good out there. The water is flowing.

HUDSON LAKE: The lake is measuring around within inches below the weir. We are still quite low for the season. The drain gate continues to be closed. LARE Grants: A grant for invasive weed treatment was awarded. Nothing was awarded for a dredge plan. We will reapply for 2027 funding. Sediment removal: The dredger has not removed his equipment. Restoration of the sediment sites will be completed once the muck has dried out. Securing more grants: HLCA continues to work on securing more grants. Amazon Web Services will meet with us within the next month. Other businesses are being identified for support.

BRAD ADAMSKY, ATTORNEY: A small claims has been filed in regard to the White Ditch. Adamsky recommended it be added to the agenda for the executive session

JOHN MATWYSHYN, SURVEYOR: John Matwysyn stated I pretty much reported on the things I was supposed to cover, one thing that occurred to me during today's meeting is, there was mention of potential litigation regarding the Louis Spear issue. If that's the case, I'm likely to be summoned to make some testimony. For example, I didn't know about Thursday's excursion, to examine the situation on his property. I will meet with him in the future, probably this week, to go over it. But, if for example, I have to make a statement, in a courtroom, I'd like it to be more than, I didn't know about it.

JOINT BOARDS: Jeff Mitzner reported that he had nothing on joint Boards, but Representative Pressel texted him a contact at IDEM and Scott Pelath provided a contact at the DNR. Mitzner, for the record, wanted everyone to know that we are trying to do something for the Schurz Ditch, but it's not going to be an easy task.

CLAIMS:

VARRO SERVICES, RIDGE RUN, TILE REPAIR PROJECT - \$12,936.79

This was approved earlier in the meeting.

VARRO SERVICES, LITTLE KANKAKEE RIVER, TREE REMOVAL - \$6,500

Mark Scarborough motioned to approve the claim. Connie Gramarossa seconded. Motion passed.

PRECISION LAND, O'HARA-RICE DITCH, TREE REMOVAL - \$3,200

Chad Hertges motioned to approve the claim. Connie Gramarossa seconded. Motion passed.

\$2,735 available in engineer fund

PUBLIC COMMENT: Scott Pelath approached the Board and reported that river levels have been low for most of the winter, which means we have room in the channel to store extra water, but 2"-3" of rain, the river goes up very, very quickly. I'm also concerned about the number of trees that can come down in high winds. It means a lot of maintenance and clean-up afterwards, but I'll let this panel know that we'll get right on that as those things transpire, when safe work conditions permit. Couple major projects for 2026, first is the removal of Stateline bridge at the Illinois-Indiana Stateline. That's a major artery clog for the entire Kankakee watershed. It traps

every stray log from Indiana, they blow through when the river comes down, but you can't take them out during the flood event, so we're going to take that bridge down, stack it up for somebody else to enjoy elsewhere at some point. We're also working on, and this is good news, reconfiguring the water control structures at the Kankakee Fish & Wildlife Area, this is very important for La Porte County farmers upstream of the game preserve, because the way these water control structures were built back in the 80's, they divert water from the Yellow river when the river is not flood stage and move it into the Kankakee river when the Kankakee might be at flood stage. The water enters with perpendicular movement, it slows down the velocity, so we are planning to raise that spillway, notch one of the cross levees, so water moves parallel to the river versus perpendicular. I just got approval on the plan yesterday at 4:00 from DNR. We are also going to repurpose a Yellow river island and continue with some major bank repairs up and down the Kankakee, along with the usual maintenance we're doing. Connie Gramarossa thanked Scott for the work they have done on the Kankakee. Pelath wanted to thank Dick Welsh, who is your representative on the commission. He's a great partner and a good friend. A strong advocate for the County. You couldn't do any better with your appointment there. Also, a special thanks to your Chairman, Mr. Mitzner and our Surveyor, for being members of our technical committee. they did good work on our flood response plan a couple of weeks ago. Tuesday, there is a commission meeting.

John South asks if he can say a couple of things. South reported that they did a good job on the beaver dams on Slocum ditch and south wanted to thank Connie and the Highway department for the O'Hara-Rice tree removal on 1000 S., they did a fantastic job. Gramarossa adds that a lot of times we bring these issues up at the meetings and now that we are working so nicely together, we get the information and make sure we are getting it done right away, sometimes we are not bringing those issues to the meeting, but kudos to our highway department, because they really do do a good job of helping out a lot of departments. Mitzner adds that there seems to be a lot better communication between Charity, Aaron and the Drainage Board and we want to thank them for that. Mitzner adds the Slocum ditch is where a couple of farmers working together did a great job getting that done.

ADJOURNMENT: Connie Gramarossa motioned to adjourn. Mark Scarborough seconded. Jeff Mitzner adjourned the meeting at 9:42 AM. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at the LaPorte County Complex Meeting Room #3 at 8:30 AM.

John South, Secretary
Dated: March 10, 2026

Video replay of this meeting can be found at this location:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zjaR5r6YHQs&list=PL8L8Y5g9S6bq8rUrYSH2oxusFpU9II_Z&index=1