

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
LAPORTE COUNTY DRAINAGE BOARD
AUGUST 11, 2026
LAPORTE COUNTY COMPLEX MEETING ROOM 3
LAPORTE, INDIANA
8:30 AM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeff Mitzner; Mark Scarborough; Connie Gramarossa; Chad Hertges; Pat Vance; John Matwyszyn

STAFF PRESENT: John South, Brad Adamsky

MEMBERS/STAFF ABSENT: None

PUBLIC PRESENT: See sign-in sheet.

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

DRAIN CROSSING APPLICATION FEES ORDINANCE: Brad Adamsky introduced the amended ordinance and informed the Board they can vote to approve the changes, if they wish, but the Commissioners are going to vote on it on Monday. Pat Vance motioned to accept the changes to the ordinance. Mark Scarborough seconded. Motion passed. John Matwyszyn relayed some feedback from his council liaison, Justin Kiel, pertaining to the potential for large fines.

Jeff Mitzner moved Agenda item four up to number three.

WHITE DITCH, TREES IN DITCH, MICHIANA SHORES: John south reported that the Board received a couple of bids for the White Ditch tree removal emergency project:

Davey Resource Group - \$4,000

Allsop Excavating - \$7,500

Mitzner states that there is no money in that account, so the board will need to borrow money to pay for this project.

Ken Purze, Michiana Shores, approached the board and described the history of flooding in this particular area and this emergent obstruction and the Board's obligation to act. Purze stated that Allsop is the correct bidder and he urges the Board to do what they are statutorily required to do. Mike Bohacek, Michiana Shores, approached the Board and described a historical event in Michiana Shores that flooded the back half of the town. He stated that the Board can approve both bids and then discuss. He stated that he understands no one likes to borrow funds. Connie Gramarossa stated that there have been a lot of storms with a lot of trees down, plus another

storm coming today, so she makes a motion that she will go to highway after this meeting to see what we can do. the Board will approve both contracts. Ken Purze explained that the town owns lots on the opposite side of the ditch where the trees can be placed. Gramarossa states her motion will be to contact Highway, see if they can get out there before the next storm and then, if that doesn't work out, she'd like to approve the Davey and Allsop bids. Pat Vance seconds the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

EMERGENCY REPAIR, SCHURZ DITCH: Jeff Mitzner described the emergency situation which arose from unpermitted drain crossing work damaging the Schurz Ditch tile. Mitzner reported that the tile has been repaired and it's currently in the County Attorney's hands.

RODMAN DITCH, DIVERTING OF WATER, DNR: Chad Hertges spoke on the issue of the DNR diverting water for their wetland, which causes water to back up upstream affecting the properties just north of the Kingsbury FWA. Hertges proposes, during times of heavy rains, could the Board ask the DNR if we could remove a couple of boards for 48 hours to keep the water table down and then put them back in? He states there is probably two feet of sand that has been held back this summer. John South states that he can contact Reed at the DNR and ask him about it.

CULVERTS, CENTER TOWNSHIP, NEAL NEALIS: Neal Nealis approached the Board and stated that he has property on Small Rd and described the situation with the pond on his property and the issues with the neighboring pond culverts being blocked and causing water to inundate the dyke between the two ponds. He explained that he has issues with the neighbor not cooperating in working to replace the culverts between the two ponds and alleviating the problem. Nealis asks if the Board could possibly send a strongly worded letter to the neighbor. he believes this could be solved just by someone with authority sending a letter. Connie Gramarossa states she will call Paul Vicari, La Porte County MS4 Director, to see if we can come up with a solution. Gramarossa motions to have John South sit down with Paul Vicari, go back out to the site and try to come up with a solution. Pat Vance seconds. Motion passed, 5-0.

BEAVER DAM, MILL CREEK LATERAL, YON LINDBORG: Yon Lindborg, Union Mills, Indiana, approached the Board. Lindborg stated that he has asked Brian Woodward to speak for him. Brian Woodward, Woodward Law Offices in Merrillville, Indiana, approached the Board. Woodward states that there was going to be some investigating into this issue and was looking for feedback. John South gave a brief update on the investigation. Woodward questions whether the culverts were permitted. Mitzner questions why this obstruction is in the ditch. Woodward explained the reasoning behind the obstruction, which was for use as a crossing. Brad Adamsky asks for the status of the legal proceedings. Woodward explained that the litigation will be stayed until the results of this request for relief from the Drainage Board. Lindborg states that a couple of the culverts are blocked. Chris Lebo and Sarah approached the Board. Lebo explained that the road over the Ditch has been there since the '60's. She explained that she checks the Ditch three times a week for obstructions. Lebo provided a synopsis of the history of this issue from their perspective. Lebo also stated that they did not intentionally flood someone out. Lebo states that

they would grant access to the Board to look at the issue. Mitzner states that the Board will table this until they can get out there to look at the issue on the Bernacchi's property.

BANK SPRAYING 2026: Jeff Mitzner described the poor job by Davey Resource Group on the five bank spraying projects they worked on. John South added that he found consistently poor results on all five projects as well. Mitzner asked for a motion to table these five projects until the next meeting. Mark Scarborough motioned to table until next meeting. Chad Hertges seconded. Motion passed, 5-0.

O'HARA-RICE DITCH MOWING PROJECT #2, TABLED FROM LAST MONTH: Brad Adamsky reported that he will have to check and see if the certified letter was received. Jeff Mitzner states that we need to send him another letter and he needs to be at the September meeting. Tabled until next month.

DRAIN CROSSING APPLICATION, MULTIPLE DITCHES, ZAYO: J.D. Hecht with Infraxis Utilities approached the Board. Hecht stated that we had been working with Joey McGinnis on this issue. Hecht briefly described the project issues and asked what the Board needs from him to move the project forward. Jeff Mitzner stated that they need to either, pull the conduits and start over, making sure they are 48" underneath the bottom of the ditch or they need to show us that they are 48" below the bottom of the ditch. Hecht replies that we need to figure out where we are with this and offered to come back with some cross-sections showing the location of their conduits to see what they need to move that we they can see where the problems are instead of pulling everything out and starting over. Mitzner stated that they would have to reapply for all of the drain crossing permits. Hecht wanted to know if the Board wanted them to hire a land surveyor that's licensed through the State of Indiana or a company that the Board trusts. Tony Hendricks recommended giving them the list of surveyors available in the surveyor's office.

DRAIN CROSSING APPLICATION, HANNA ARM OF THE TUESBURG DITCH, BRIDGE REPLACEMENT: John South reported that he received Tony Hendricks' report which recommended lowering the culvert. Tony Hendricks approached the Board and explained that he is requesting the box culvert be lower by 1.5'. There is currently 2' of silt in that ditch and it hasn't been cleaned in 10 years. We don't want a hump in that ditch since it's so flat. Mark Scarborough asks why they decided to go with a box culvert to replace the bridge. Tony Hendricks responds that typically, they go to a box culvert because it's pre-engineered, cheaper, and it functions just as well. It lasts longer than a bridge. Jim Yeoman approached the Board and had questions about the responsible party for the bridge replacement. Jeff Mitzner responded County Highway. Yeoman stated that the ditch was cleaned two years ago. Mitzner explained why the Board hired Tony Hendricks to take a look at this bridge replacement project. Connie Gramarossa stated that she doesn't think there's a problem between the drainage board and highway. We all work together and sometimes you need technical help and I think Tony has provided us that technical help. Mitzner explains that that is why we need to lower the culver 1.5' so that when it's cleaned in the future, water won't need to go uphill to get over the culvert. Connie Gramarossa motions to accept Tony Hendricks' report. Mark Scarborough seconds. Motion passed 5-0.

HUDSON LAKE: Georgette Joyce was not present, so John South read the Hudson Lake report. The lake is measuring at 14.88” above the weir. No issues. Drain gate maintenance was scheduled once parts were received, but more parts are needed. The timing of the repair is dependent on securing the additional parts. The DNR is aware. The drain gate remains closed. As previously noted, operation of the drain gate is suspended until repaired. Treatments for EWM and SSW have been completed. SSW had 2 treatments. A Tier II survey was completed on August 5th. It showed positive results for EWM treatment – a significant decrease of this invasive species. 13 native species were found – this species richness is one of the highest that Aquatic Weed Control encountered among lakes in northern Indiana. What’s left is another treatment of Phragmites next to our eagle island and potentially a third treatment of SSW. Restoration of the sediment site will be started over the next months. Amazon has awarded \$40,000 in grants to HLCA for invasive weed treatments and fish stocking. Thousands of walleyes will be added to Hudson Lake in the fall with DNR approval and oversight. HLCA reviewed other estimates for additional grants with Amazon. A few weeks ago, we gave a lake tour to our Amazon contact. This helped with a better understanding of our needs which is promising for future grant awards.

BRAD ADAMSKY, ATTORNEY: Nothing we haven’t already covered.

JOHN MATWYSHYN, SURVEYOR: Matwyshyn reported that he was asked to prepare a letter to present to the Board on a subject that was discussed at our last meeting about the flooding south of the Wal-Mart: “I am called upon to make a determination of the requirement to maintain regulated drains when they fail to meet the needs of the landowners which they are meant to serve. I find that the Schurz Ditch is not serving the needs of land which it is designed to drain. At the time the Schurz Ditch was established the land was used for agriculture. There appear to be many new industrial, commercial and residential developments in the Schurz basin which have not been granted permission to add water to the regulated Schurz Ditch but are doing so. I recommend that the discrepancy be addressed by reconstructing the Schurz Ditch to meet the demands being placed on it at this time. The damage to farmland which is caused by excessive discharges should be mitigated by restricting the water volume to that which the Schurz Ditch is able to handle.”

JOINT BOARDS: Jeff Mitzner states, I’ve got nothing on Joint Boards.

CLAIMS:

Charles Hendricks & Associates, Travis & Schurz Ditch - \$465

Charles Hendricks & Associates, plan review – bridge replacement - \$635

Pat Vance motions to accept the claims as presented by the president. Mark Scarborough seconds. Motion passed 5-0

\$1,635 available in engineer fund.

PUBLIC COMMENT: *Ken Purze* approached the Board and thanked them for the emergent action that was initiated by Commissioner Gramarossa. Purze also asked the Board to consider a motion to authorize the chairman to make a decision after Commissioner Gramarossa goes out. Connie Gramarossa makes a motion to allow Jeff Mitzner to decide who is awarded the bid, if the Highway Department can't get to it. Mark Scarborough seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Matt Courtney, Summit Homebuilders, approached the Board and requested a motion to approve his Drain crossing Application. Connie Gramarossa motions to allow them to do it and then they'll pay the fee. Mark Scarborough seconds. Motion passed 5-0.

Diana Dumbrys, Michiana Shores, approached the Board and wanted to thank the Board for addressing the issue with the trees.

Jerry Cooley, 1777 W 1000 N, approached the Board and wanted to report a beaver dam on the ditch near his property.

Jerry Jackson, City of La Porte, approached the Board and reported that the City of La Porte has received funding from Microsoft for improvements to the Schurz and Travis and the money has been deposited. Jackson also stated that the Drainage Board and the City of La Porte need to get an MOU signed to spend that money. He also asked the board to review the MOU he sent out.

Louis Spear, 6434 S 3rd Line Rd, approached the Board and stated multiple issues with Brad Adamsky, the Drainage Board, Schurz Ditch, Jerry Jackson, the City of La Porte, and the Cherry Cable stormwater sewer separation project.

ADJOURNMENT: Jeff Mitzner adjourned the meeting at 9:49 AM. The next regular meeting is Tuesday, September 8, 2026 at the LaPorte County Complex Meeting Room #3 at 8:30 AM.

John South, Secretary

Dated: August 11, 2026

Video replay of this meeting can be found at this location: Please note, that due to technical difficulties, the first 10 minutes of this meeting was not recorded.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NA9z-WHZgDE&list=PL8L8Y5g9S6bq8rUrYSH2oxusFpU9Il_Z&index=1