

LAPORTE COUNTY REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT

MEETING MINUTES

October 3, 2023

9:00 a.m.

Time and Place:

The LaPorte County Regional Sewer & Water District monthly board meeting was held on Tuesday, October 3, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. Central Time, at 809 State Street, Room #3, LaPorte, IN 46350 and by Zoom Meeting, Login:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82015295897?pwd=SjllK0FsYnFzM3B5TFZxNUsxQ0xvdz09>

Meeting ID: 820 1529 5897 Password: 060992

Attendees:

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Mitch Bishop, roll call was taken. Those present included the following: Marcella Kunstek, Mitch Bishop, Mark Danielson, Dalia Zygas (by Zoom), and Amanda Lahners. Not Present: John Carr and Jerry Jackson.

Approval of Minutes:

Marcell Kunstek made a Motion to approve the minutes from August 22, 2023. Seconded by Amanda Lahners. Roll Call vote was taken – Marcella Kunstek – yes, Mark Danielson – yes, Dalia Zygas – yes, Amanda Lahners – yes and Mitch Bishop – yes. Motion approved unanimously.

Public Comments:

No one for Public Comments.

Public Comments was closed.

Reports - Finance Staff:

Steve Carter, the Board's accountant, presented the financial report to the board with the following reports and reported that Month End reports have been completed and reconciled to the bank accounts.

Financial Report

1.) Toll Road

A.) Beginning balance \$118,741.71 as of August 1, 2023.

1. Deposits: \$0.00
2. Interest Paid: \$196.89
3. Disbursements: \$24,158.99
4. Voided check \$0.00

B.) Account Ending balance as of August 31, 2023, is \$94,779.61.

2.) Rolling Prairie Service Area

A.) Horizon Bank Checking-Rolling Prairie Account - had a beginning balance of \$128,620.43 as of August 1, 2023.

1. Deposits: \$11,040.52 and interest Paid \$264.24.
2. SRF Deposit Reimbursements \$0.00.
3. Bond Proceeds: \$0.00.
4. Disbursements: 11,913.92
5. Loan Principal County: \$1,830.00
6. Reimbursement: \$5,000.000
7. Transfers Bond & Int Acct: \$5,666.68
8. Loan Payment paid: \$0.
9. Transfers Debt Serv Reserve Acct: Paid \$566.68, ending Balance \$4,533.42, Bond & Interest Acct: \$5,666.68- Ending Balance of \$23,398.78.

B.) Horizon Bank Checking had an ending balance of \$114,947.91 as of August 31, 2023.

3.) Hoosier Fund:

A.) Beginning balance \$338,396.02, August 1, 2023.

1. Interest Paid: \$1,549.59
2. Transfer Funds: \$0.00

B.) Hoosier Fund ending balance as of August 31, 2023, is \$339,945.61.

4.) Hudson/Saugany – Horizon Account.

A.) Beginning balance \$3,029,336.87 as of August 1, 2023.

1. Deposits: \$7,828.46 (Rolling Prairie)
2. Interest Paid: \$13,215.85
3. Reimbursements: \$0.00
4. Disbursements: \$84,954.20
5. Bank Fees: \$0.00

C.) Account Ending balance as of August 31, 2023, is \$2,965,426.98.

5.) Claims

Steve Carter presented claims in the amount of \$156,844.01 with adjustments from IN MI Power Invoices for a total of \$150.44 for consideration.

Marl Danielson made a motion to approve the claims in the amount of \$156,844.01. Seconded by Amanda Lahners. Roll Call vote was taken – Marcella Kunstek – yes, Mark Danielson – yes, Dalia Zygas – yes, Amanda Lahners – yes and Mitch Bishop – yes. Motion approved unanimously.

Reports:

Astbury

- Chris Vogeler was on Zoom to review Astbury report. Backflow preventer at WWTP has started leaking – need to get the part and do some routine maintenance on it. Chris has ordered it and is waiting for it to be delivered and then Astbury will install it.
- This month will be hauling sludge and receiving Ferric. Those 2 bills happen twice a year.
- Battery backup was purchased and installed.
- Excess flow during weekend of 15th – 18th of September. Toll Road plaza had a flushing toilet which was stuck wide open. They didn't do anything about it for 4 days. Normal

flows are usually 15-20K/day but it was running around 78K/day. Chris talked to manager at TR Plaza, and nothing was done for 4 days – Chris even made a second visit to get it taken care of. By Tuesday afternoon Chris was going to shut off the valve at the TR Plaza for them but then the manager finally shut it off – he was waiting for someone to fix it but didn't shut it off. N

- Board wants a letter sent to the TR for all the extra flow. Once we know the actual amount of flow then a letter will be sent showing the flow and amount.
- This is the second time something like this has happened.
- Automatic Chlorine Analyzer – cost for repair kit is \$500+ and they don't know if it will fix it. Company went out of business. Chris can repair it when he gets the parts. Company that was making them went out of business.
- Chris believes a new one will cost approximately \$7-\$10,000.

Mark Danielson made a Motion for Astbury to get the repair kit and install it. Along with looking into the cost for a new one. Seconded by Marcella Kunstek.

Roll Call vote was taken – Marcella Kunstek – yes, Mark Danielson – yes, Dalia Zygas – yes, Amanda Lahners – yes and Mitch Bishop – yes. Motion approved unanimously.

JPR Billing/Collection:

- Jennifer Ransbottom reported there is nothing more than what is in the report.
- Customer Connection & Reimbursement Program – 1 property owner would like to be reimbursed. July submitted permit paperwork and connected August 18, 2023, and sent me the paperwork in September 2023.

Mark Danielson made a motion to approve this one and final property owner for payment for the reimbursement program. Marcella Kunstek seconded the motion.

Roll Call vote was taken – Marcella Kunstek – yes, Mark Danielson – yes, Dalia Zygas – yes, Amanda Lahners – yes and Mitch Bishop – yes. Motion approved unanimously.

Phase II Update –

- Remaining Funds: Dan Byam discussed the remaining funds after the approved Reimbursement amounts were paid to the property owners. Approximately \$73,398 left in remaining funds.
- Engineering Committee discussed potential uses of the remaining funds. They are as follows:
 - SCADA for generators at Rolling Prairie Pump Stations.
 - Chemical Feed System upgrades at Rolling Prairie Pump Stations.
 - Spare pumps & parts for Rolling Prairie Pump Stations.
 - Spare Mission SCADA controller.
 - Trailer-mounted trash/bypass pump.
 - Request whether funds can be used for Water Filter Project at TP#3 Water Plant.
 - Transfer funds to Hudson/Saugany Project.
- Most likely the chlorine equipment cannot be replaced using any of these funds – they come out of separate funds. They will check into it.

Hudson/Saugany Project –

1. General

- a. Project Schedule (Scenario 2, Phase I)
 - i. Complete Design – October 2023
 - ii. Submit Permits – October 2023 (
 - iii. Receive Bids – November/December 2023
 - iv. Projected Closing – February 2024 (best case)
- b. Proposed Project Contracts
 - i. Scenario 1 – Constructed all in one Phase.
 1. Contract A – Travel Plaza #3 Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion
 2. Contract B – Sanitary Pump Stations and Force Mains
 3. Contract C -Saugany Lake Wastewater Collection System
 4. Contract D -Hudson Lake Wastewater Collection System I
 5. Contract E -Hudson Lake Wastewater Collection System II
 - ii. Scenario 2 – Constructed in Three Phases
 1. Phase I
 - a. Contract A – Saugany Lake Pump Station and Force Main
 - b. Contract B -Saugany Lake Wastewater Collection System
 2. Phase II
 - a. Contract A – Travel Plaza #3 WWTP Expansion
 - b. Contract B – Hudson Lake Pump Station and Force Main
 - c. Contract C -Hudson Lake Collection System I
 3. Phase III
 - a. Contract A -Hudson Lake Collection System II
 - b. Contract B -Hudson Lake Collection System III
 - c. Contract C -Hudson Lake Collection System IV
- c. Equipment Pre-Selection
 - i. Preselected Equipment Vendors are currently working on preparing their product submittals for use in project design.

2. Wastewater Treatment Plant

- a. Established WWTP flows and loadings for system design.
- b. Working on establishing WWTP flows and loadings for the existing TP#3 WWTP Facility in the “Phase I” project, where just Saugany Lake is proposed to be connected to the existing WWTP.
 - i. These loadings may result in minor modifications to the existing WWTP site to better handle wastewater flows on peak day conditions.
- c. Structural and Architectural Design of WWTP Facility is underway.
- d. Final design shall take place after Equipment Preselection is complete and equipment drawings and specs are obtained from pre-selected vendors.

3. Wastewater Collection System

- a. Completed hydraulic modeling of Saugany Lake system.
- b. Completed hydraulic modeling of Hudson Lake system.
- c. Preliminary Plan and profile alignment and drawings
 - i. Prepared for Saugany Lake pressure sewers and mainline force mains.
 - ii. Saugany Lake Plan & Profile alignments have been designed and reviewed.
 - iii. Saugany Lake Grinder Station Placements and labeling are underway.
 - iv. Saugany Lake permits are anticipated to be submitted in October.
 - v. Hudson Lake plan and profile drawings to be continued to be worked on.
- d. Geotechnical Engineering Services work – ongoing. We have generated a list of areas where soil borings have been unsatisfactorily restored and have instructed Terracon to repair them.

4. Land Acquisition

- a. Grinder Station Easements
 - i. Easement packages have been sent to all property owners.
 - ii. JPR is currently in the process of regularly meeting with property owners to discuss grinder station placement.
 - iii. Easement Open Houses
 1. Several hundred property owners showed up for the meetings.
 2. Meetings were a success, provided information to the public and assisted those that showed up with establishing grinder station locations and signing easement.
- b. Mainline Easements
 - i. Right of way research is being continued to identify segments where mainline easements will be needed.
- c. Pump Station Sites
 - i. Preparing boundary descriptions and market valuations of proposed pump station parcels.
 - ii. Preparing offer packages to property owners.

Funding Update:

- Ken Jones discussed the funding call held last week with SRF and USDA.
- Somewhat surprised they did not have the funding previously discussed for the project.
- They seemed confused that the project was as advanced and that we were ready to close in early 2024.
- Ken is sending information to do project in Phases.
- After group call – Camille Meiners called and said she would contact Jim M from USDA and further review.
- Ken is waiting to hear back from her regarding the status.
- Apparently, there was confusion on funding sources part as to how this would proceed and the timeline.

- JPR will recommend this project go forward in 3 phases.
- Phase I will be the connection from the force main to the WWTP to the Saugany Lake community and building the entire collection system at Saugany Lake.
- Phase II will be the upgrade of the WWTP improvements and half of Hudson Lake the next year.
- Phase III will be to finish Hudson Lake the following year.
- According to Steve Carters analysis we should be able to receive \$5Million/year from the funding sources. This would leave the monthly invoices at \$100/month.
- Currently, JPR is preparing an application to the EDA program for additional funding. Will need a spokes person to attend all the calls and meetings, etc.
- Also submitted for REDI program and going to follow up for the status.
- Met w/Representative Yakem at his office to discuss the project and additional funding avenues.
 - Currently, reviewing a Farm Bill that Yakem office mentioned.
 - Ear Mark program is being investigated as well.
 - Ken is following up with Rep. Yakems Chief of Staff to let him know he can attach to either budget – Ear Mark or Farm Bill. Would request \$8-\$10 Million of the \$590 Billion budget.
 - Even with the additional fundings we are seeking will still use USDA for the WWTP and from SRF funds for the WWTP and the collection system, depending on how those resources would partner up.
 - Building the project in Phases gives us time to work on these additional resources. This will help with a reasonable utility rate.
 - Might want to discuss the design effort – need to know from Fiscal Advisor is where we would start to be concerned with the budget and the BAN payments. Asking Steve to look at that and get back to us.
 - Steve Carter indicated with this month’s invoices we are at \$800K spent out of \$3.5 Million.
 - Note expired January 2026 – have a little over 2 years until must refinance or take it out.
 - We are in positive with the interest. Earning 5.2% on \$3 Million and paying on \$3.5 Million. Currently will be losing a little each month.
 - Would like to be able to tell the board at the next meeting the percentage of completion relative to design, and if we were to slow down how long would it take to catch up again.
 - This would help confirm we are heading in the right direction.
 - Targeting under \$100/month for invoices for property owners.
 - Ken went to County Council last night to close the ARPA \$1.5 Million request.
 - Lot of dialogs – Ken will follow up with a couple of board members.
 - Next Meeting moved to October 30th – Will need to have a representative available for the meeting.
 - Showing the local funds is good to get the additional funding sources.
 - Ken said he suggested going forward as if we are bidding and closing in the Spring unless they tell us they just don’t have funds for us.

- Worst case scenario is we complete Saugany Lake and work through the other phases as funding is available each year.

Grinder Station Location Guidelines:

- Steve Henschen discussed the proposed Grinder Station Policy at the last meeting which was presented.
- Some changes were made, and Barry reviewed and approved the recommendations.
- JPR recommends approval of the Grinder Station Location Guidelines.
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Marcella Kunstek made a motion to approve this revised Grinder Station Location Guidelines. Mark Danielson seconded the motion.

Roll Call vote was taken – Marcella Kunstek – yes, Mark Danielson – yes, Dalia Zygas – yes, Amanda Lahners – yes and Mitch Bishop – yes. Motion approved unanimously.

Vacant Lot Policy:

- Some property owners have vacant lots and want to get a grinder on the property during the construction of the project.
- Important to set guidelines on how this can take place.
- The project cannot afford to put in vacant lot grinders – this policy sets out how the property owner accomplishes this task.
- Option #1 - The Property Owner must execute a special Agreement, along with an Easement, to pay the debt service on the vacant land. It’s important the District collects as much income as necessary.
- They don’t pay operation expenses part until they connect to the grinder.
- Once out for bids and closed on financing all property owners could come on but they would have to pay the full cost of the grinder station.
- Option 2 – Property owners are not provided with any service and property owners would have to come on at their own costs.
- Engineering Committee agreed with Option #1.
- JPR will draft the agreement for review by Barry and the board.

Mark Danielson made a motion to move forward in the preparation of the Vacant Lot Agreements. Marcella Kunstek seconded the motion.

Roll Call vote was taken – Marcella Kunstek – yes, Mark Danielson – yes, Dalia Zygas – yes, Amanda Lahners – yes and Mitch Bishop – yes. Motion approved unanimously.

Notice of Statutory Exemption and Extension of Service Letter:

- District must provide a formal notice of the statutory exemptions for the project.
- JPR has drafted a letter providing the information to the property owners.
- This notice goes out when sending IDEM Permit, which could be as early as November 2024.
- Barry has reviewed and added additional information and comments which were inserted into the letter.
- Public Notice will be posted on the website, along with each property owner receiving a copy of the letter.

- Steve and Jennifer are going to sit down with Amanda to review the exemption inspection process prior to the letter being mailed.
- If Saugany Lake goes before Hudson Lake, then there will be a different letter with timeline for Hudson Lake property owners.

Marcella Kunstek made a motion to approve the Property Owner letter as presented and upon the added information from the exemption inspection process. Mark Danielson seconded the motion.

Roll Call vote was taken – Marcella Kunstek – yes, Mark Danielson – yes, Dalia Zygas – yes, Amanda Lahners – yes and Mitch Bishop – yes. Motion approved unanimously.

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Engineering Committee:

- None.

New Business:

Michigan City Campground – Cory Frederickson

- Property owner needs to upgrade septic or tap into sewer system. Michigan City can provide this service and LaPorte Regional Sewer District will need to sign off.
- At some point the continental divide needs to be formalized and so each property owner will not have to come to the sewer district and request this approval.
- Corey wants to start construction in spring and needs to work with engineers on his site information.
- Barry will follow up with Jim Meyer to make the formal request at the next board meeting.
- Next Meeting, October 24, 2023.
- Pre-Agenda Meeting, October 17, 2023, to discuss Agenda.

Old Business:

- Laptops and Portal for Board Meeting Packets/documents. Laptops are ready and can be given to all board members who are present today. Jennifer will get with John Carr and Jerry Jackson prior to the next meeting to give them their iPad.

Adjournment:

Mark Danielson made the motion to adjourn at 10:15 a.m. Seconded by Marcella Kunstek.

Roll Call vote was taken – Marcella Kunstek – yes, Mark Danielson – yes, Dalia Zygas – yes, Amanda Lahners – yes and Mitch Bishop – yes. Motion approved unanimously.