

# LAPORTE COUNTY REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT

## SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

January 21, 2025

9:00 a.m.

### **Time and Place:**

The LaPorte County Regional Sewer & Water District monthly board meeting was held on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, 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

### **A. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by John Carr.

### **B. Pledge of Allegiance**

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

### **C. Roll Call**

Roll call was taken. Those present included the following: John Carr, Mitch Bishop, Corey Campbell, Mark Danielson, Jerry Jackson, Marcella Kunstek, and Amanda Lahners

### **D. Public Comment**

No public comment

### **E. Board Discussion on Financial Advisors Rate Report**

Ken Jones stated the open bids for the Hudson Saugany Project, Phase I which is Saugany Lake and the connection to the wastewater facility came in significantly over the expected budget. JPR has worked internally with several Board members and the State Revolving Fund officials to develop a project that fits into the budget. This will essentially add a phase to the project to fit into the available funds.

Ken Jones provided historical information on the PER filed several years ago to the SRF. The PER was updated in 2022 using bids from a project that was similar in scope to the Saugany Lake project for bid and pay items. Fighting through the project and being able to stay on the State's Project Priority list fundable range. JPR fought through continuing discussions with the county commissioners and county council to obtain \$1.5 M ARPA funds. Therefore having \$1.5M from the County's ARPA fund and \$5M forgivable SRF Loan Fund, which was thought to be sufficient for the Phase I project.

After opening the bids it was determined that even the lowest bidder was significantly over the budget allocated to the project. A discussion was held with the SRF and were told the

\$5M was the best they could do. The Head of the Indiana Finance Authority wants this project to go forward which includes the \$5M forgivable loan and the balance of the project 0% interest for whatever term.

JPR offered the Board several reiterations that would fit within this budget and variances to how the customers could pay for the project. It is understood why the Board did not want to go with these reiterations. Final effort applied if unable to bring higher rate or higher cost to the customer the scope of the project needed to be adjusted. The JPR team was asked to develop a project scope to fit within the budget. The team came up with sub-districts for the next couple of phases.

Ken Jones stated in agreement with Indiana Toll Road the Right-of-Way could be used but to access the right-of-way is almost unbuildable relative to terrain, access, and then after building of pipe how to maintain it. This phase for the treatment facility will go down county roads. The Hudson Lake phase will be buildable in Indiana Toll Road's right-of-way.

JPR has been working closely with Steve Carter, and he has issued his report to the State Revolving Loan fund, which is the schedule they are using to understand what is being proposed and how it will be paid. This new phase reduces the number of customers from 270 to 86. The 86 customers would pay a monthly rate that was anticipated to be under \$100.

Ken Jones stated the new phase I is still for 2 bids for Contract A and Contract B. Contract A is the full project for the connection to the Saugany Lake lift station, pipe connection, and upgrade to the treatment facility. Bids for that project are \$4.461M, there is a qualified bidder. The scope for Contract B has changed so much it is recommended to re-bid. Ken Jones does not recommend rebidding the entire project as there is a qualified bid for Contract A. Another concern JPR has regarding rebidding is will the rebids be higher and will the project get pulled out of reach again. Steve Henschen stated that JPR reached out to the other bidders, and one indicated their bids could be reduced by changing to an open cut instead of a directional drill and may be down to the \$4.5M low bid.

Marcella Kunstek stated that Contract A came in \$1M and Contract B came in \$2.1M over. She appreciated the work JPR has done, but personally, since these bids were received over 30 days ago and significant changes have been made she feels in all fairness that both Contracts should be rebid.

Mark Danielson inquired about what outreach is being done to obtain more contractors. Steve Henschen reported that even on the original bid, JPR has an interested bidders list that JPR maintains. When bids need to be obtained information is sent to a mass list of contractors across Northern Indiana, advertisements are sent to plan rooms that contractors subscribe to where they get information and JPR makes direct calls. Some contractors indicated they were not going to bid due to their workload, and some due to directional drilling, which was going to cost them more money for that equipment. Steve Henschen stated an addendum was to extend the contract time extending the project through 2026 to entice bids.

Steve Carter indicated Bill Harkins, SRF, has indicated SRF is willing to extend closing to May 9. No indication regarding the 0% interest, but this is anticipated, The rate will be approximately \$93.50.

Marcella Kunstek made a motion to reject all bids and rebid both Contracts A and B. Mark Danielson seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Adjournment**

Marcella Kuntsek made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Mark Danielson. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 AM.