

LAPORTE COUNTY REGIONAL SEWER AND WATER DISTRICT

MEETING MINUTES

March 25, 2025

9:00 a.m.

Time and Place:

The LaPorte County Regional Sewer & Water District monthly board meeting was held on Tuesday, March 25, 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

John Carr called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

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, and Amanda Lahners

D. Approval of Minutes

Corey Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes of the special meeting held on February 25, 2025, as presented. Jerry Jackson seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Public Comments:

Angela Eggleston – 5311 E 800 N, Rolling Prairie – We’ve gone ahead with Phase I which will start. Are all the phases going to be completed? With DOGE coming in and cutting back on all this unnecessary waste, are you going to be able to get the funding you need to complete everything? I think it is unfair if we can’t get the completion done. Sewage costs up to \$120.00, that is crazy. I don’t know how you expect people who are disabled, retired to add that additional funding to their monthly bills. When we talked about this, we found out there were people who had their sewers leaching into their water supply. She stated that a lot of people said the houses were so close. A lot of people had those houses renovated and brought up from fishing shacks to homes. Where is our building department if they allowed that and knew that they were so close? Why are they not taking care of those problems? Why is it not the homeowners' responsibility? I pay my taxes; I have everything taken care of. When something fails at my house, I don’t ask for a handout to get my problem fixed. It is your responsibility as a homeowner to get that fixed. So why are we having to fund it? Why are all the taxpayers? This is millions

of dollar project, and you're asking them to pay for something that should be automatic as a responsibility of the homeowners. I don't know whose fault that is, but someone failed at their job to not make sure that this was handled, and now you're going to put a sewer project that does not even need to be done. I think that it is just crazy and wild, and I think you guys need to take into account that maybe we need to think about this before we go ahead and proceed. In the other public meeting, they talked about the trees for the bid process. When was that disclosed to the people? Do they know, besides hooking up and those costs that they now have to pay for the tree removal service? When are you going to let them know about that? When? When are they going to put that in their budget? This is a multi-million-dollar project on spending, and it is wasteful spending. If I need a roof fixed, are you guys going to get together and fix my roof? Let's fix all the roofs out there on Saugany Lake? Do you have a fund for that? You know, I look at this as being Medicaid in order to fix it. You're asking us to have Medicaid pay for this. This is wrong. Have the homeowners responsible. Why did the Building Commission fail us? How did they fail us? That is wrong. They should be up to speed on that. If they need to get the Health Department in then they need to get the Health Department in.

Luann Smith – 5777 E Saugana Trail Rolling Prairie – I served on the New Prairie School Board for 8 years, and I know as a former member that there were times when it was very difficult that decisions had to be made based on challenging circumstances. My first priority was always to base my decisions on what was best for the children and also be accountable to the taxpayers. In my opinion, all officials, elected or appointed, should have the same perspective. Do what is best for the majority of the community, listen and take into consideration the voices of the community members, and be accountable to the taxpayers. If Saugany Lake has a contamination problem and it can only be rectified by installing a sewer system, then I would be wholeheartedly in favor of it. However, the facts are not there that the lake is contaminated, and therefore, it is not prudent for this Board to spend millions of taxpayers' dollars to fix a problem that does not exist. I realize there are a few property homeowners in this community that probably do not have a compliant septic system, but I believe the county should enforce the ordinance already in place and hold those homeowners accountable for their own property. Since there is no guarantee for additional funding to be secured to complete this project, it seems irresponsible to start and burden 86 or whatever the reduced scope ends up being with the cost of this project. Based on the bids received taking the lowest for Contract A and assuming the mandatory alternates for Contract B this project would equate to each of the 86 or whatever number, would be spending \$100,633 per home to put this in. That is not only a shocking amount but totally absurd. We have homes on Saugany Lake that are not even assessed at that, quite a few actually. I just don't see how you can justify by spending that much of the taxpayers money on a project that has no guarantee of completion. If you take for example on the map of the new outline of what will be projected to be put in, on the green there \$198,000 for alternate #2. The bid was \$198,321. That is 5 homes, those 5 homes are only assessed at average \$82,000. That is \$40,000 per home to put the sewer in. That makes no sense. You are spending half the assessed value is on a home to put in a sewer system. I just don't understand how you can justify that much money. So I would ask you to please reconsider what would be best for

our community on the whole, enforce the ordinances in place by making the homeowners responsible for their own property, listen to the voices of the community and be accountable for the taxpayers money.

Robert Smith – 5777 E. Saugana Trail – I don't understand why this is happening either. They have said everything I pretty much agree with. \$120.00 a month cap, that is ridiculous. It is ludicrous. Anyway, I have sat there, I just talked to Mike Holyfield, a good friend of mine and glad he is on the Commission now, but I have sat there and have brought paperwork into you about an affluent system. It is a liquid sewer. The cost of actually installing a liquid sewer system is so much less than what these grinder pumps are. They run off a 110 volt, which runs off the homeowners utilities. It does not come off the pole. You have 240 volts off a grinder pump, that holds 30 gallons. The fluent system or liquid sewer step system that has a 1,000 tank. You are not going to cut out any of the people who pick up the waste, that actually pump these system out, you are not going to eliminate them. These tanks are actually put on the property and they run into a central drain. They have a pump on them. The pump is either ½ force, it is not 2 ½ force, just like your grinder pumps. There is no comparison in it. If your going to offer something to people, if your going to do this, give us something we can actually live with. These grinder pump you've got some people out there that have 15-16 people come on a weekend. That grinder pump will never shut off. At 30 gallons that is nothing. If you are going to push it, your going to shove it up our backside, put something in that the people want. This has not even been put on the table because the fluent system cost so much less. You don't have to have the wastewater treatment you can actually put it into a lagoon. It does not have to be filter like the grinder pumps do because you don't have any pulp, solids. I know Jerry you told me that you did not think these fluent systems were used. I just talked to several of my friends at H&G and they just did 144 home around Nappanee/Warsaw area. They are not putting in the grinder pumps. Jerry Jackson stated he went through several of the EPA documents and could not find any indication that there is any savings and the homeowner has costs of pumping the tank, so it did not see any savings. Mr. Smith stated the tank only gets pumped every 10-11 years. It has an antibacterial thing that it actually dissolves those solids. It does not make any sense putting a grinder pump that has only a 30-gallon and you have to have problems with it. Those guys at H&G don't want to work on them even. They have to tear those things apart to change the grinder motor out, it is a pain and I asked them about it when they did this and that is why they said they put the fluent system in because they don't have to be checked all the time and the maintenance is way down. The cost of installing them is much less than what my wife just said. It is absurd that we can't actually look at all options on the table to try to give the best to the community. I mean to bring a sewer system in at Saugany Lake you are going to bring in a lot more people to the lake, people are going to be building out there. Our lake right now you can go out there an there may be 10 pontoon boats, a few fishing boats on the lake at any time. You bring in a sewer system people are going to build. That lake will not be the jewel of Indiana. It has been in the top 5 cleanest lakes in Indiana since I was a child. It is ridiculous. Make the people be responsible for their homes and the building department, which Angie was talking about earlier there has been stuff done out there that is totally against everything. I really think

if you are going to do the system, you need to go to Hudson Lake first, do that, but we have less than 50% of the homes are occupied year-round. We have 48 homes on the lake, 3 of them, there is nobody in them. We have only 14 people that live on the lake year-round. I don't know why we can't get the Health Department out there to do their job to check stuff out. The people that I know are on the lake and have signed the petitions, and we have 134, and the reason we cannot get any more is because we can't get in touch with people, they are not out at the lake. You are looking at putting in a sewer system for less than half the homes out there that are going to be utilized. It's just absurd. If something was wrong with the lake, I could see doing something for it because we have our septic tank pumped every other year, we have it inspected, it is a step system. It is a liquid sewer system. It is fantastic. We still have it cleaned. I want to know if that lake is getting polluted. We have the conservation club out there, and we have a lot of people who come fishing boats that don't belong on the lake, but they are allowed to come in there. If you are going to put this sewer system in, you're going to change one of the jewels of Indiana. It is sad. I think if there is a problem, let the homeowner fix their problem, be responsible. To bring the government in to do something like this, I think we need to be overlooked. Go to Hudson Lake, do the project there, if no body is disagreeing with it, but leave Saugany Lake a jewel still.

Mark Hurer – 5791 E. Saugany Trail – I spoke at the last meeting. I followed up with an email to Ms. Gramarosa and she forwarded it to Mitch and Mitch forwarded it to Jennifer. I would like to thank you for being responsive to the email that was sent with regards to my issues with regards to having a septic system put in. In light of the new proposal and in light of everything you've heard at other meetings and this meeting, I did not, and Jennifer sent this back to me, meet the exemption timeframe. I would like to revoke what I had signed in October and put in for an exemption. I think it should be our right since everything has changed regarding this project itself. Like everyone has said if there is no issue with the lake and the issue is with Hudson and not Saugany then go do Hudson. We don't have an issue at Saugany. We are getting lumped in for no particular reason that I can ascertain that would be good for any improvements to our properties. In fact it is going to cost me another \$30,000 over the next 10 -20years just to deal with this let alone the monthly cost. It is ridiculous. I am one of the part-time people there, but we've been coming to the lake, I myself since the 1980's, but my wife's family since the 1940's when they bought property there and now we have 6 family homes. We don't want this. There is no reason for it. We have a fairly new septic system. It was put in place when the law stated you had to have it inspected before you could transfer properties. They put in a brand new system, much like Smitty's system. Works just fine, it is roughly 8 years old with the limited usage it is like 4 years old. I don't have any problem with regards to a septic system. Basically would you be willing to let me revoke and follow through actively with getting an exemption to this project if it indeed goes through. There is no cost benefit analysis you can do that justifies the cost of this. Furthermore I think I am going to email Elon Musk and ask him to have DOGE come look at this type of project.

F. Reports

- **Steve Carter – Claims and Finance**

Steve Carter provided the financial report for the month ending February 28, 2025

- 1.) Rolling Prairie
 - a. Ending balance of \$332,165.87
 - b. Interest income: \$353.00
 - c. Operating disbursements: \$4,746.99
 - d. Positive cashflow for the month of \$10,546.34
- 2.) Hudson Saugany Service Area
 - a. Ending cash balance of \$2,132,844.63
 - b. Interest income of \$6,894.22
 - c. Non-operating disbursements of \$1,750.00
- 3.) Toll Road – Horizon Account.
 - a. Ending balance of \$542,670.79
 - b. Operating Receipts of \$26,960.00
 - c. Disbursements of \$21,209.17
 - d. Interest income of \$1,448.31
 - e. Positive cashflow for the month of \$7,199.14
- 4.) Claims
Claims totaling \$30,491.13

Mark Danielson made a motion to accept the claims in the amount of \$30,491.13 as submitted. Corey Campbell seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

- **Astbury Water Technologies**

Chris Vogeler reported there are no issues at the wastewater treatment plant or the water plant as far as being in compliance. There will be some additional costs in the next month or so for installing the UV system. Ferric will be delivered in the next few days, which is a high-cost delivery. Chris also reported that locates have been completed and a report will be submitted in the next few weeks.

Jennifer Ransbottom inquired if a second quote has been received for the generator maintenance. Chris Vogeler stated he has reached out to H&T on several occasions, but they are not returning his call.

Mark Danielson made a motion to accept the quote from H&G for the generator maintenance in the amount of \$2,125.73. Jerry Jackson seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mark Danielson inquired if Chris Vogeler knew what the cost would be for the upcoming chemical delivery. Chris Vogeler stated he did not know the cost from last year. Mark Danielson asked if Chris Vogeler would have a price of the delivery before it is delivered. Chris indicated he would know the cost prior to delivery.

G. JPR Billing/Collection:

Jennifer Ransbottom stated no additional report for the billing and collection other than what was provided in the Board's packet. Astbury will begin billing as of May 1. Barry McDonnell stated he reviewed the agreement and asked for some changes to be made. Barry McDonnell asked Chris Vogeler that the agreement be sent to John and to have Jennifer Ransbottom and Barry McDonnell included in the email.

H. Phase II Update – Update – Closing/Transferring Funds

No update at this time

I. Hudson/Saugany Project

- Hudson Saugany Wastewater System Update – Phase I – Engineers' Recommendation

Dan Byam stated bids were collected on March 18. A total of 4 bids were received for Contract A and one bid for Contract B. The low bid on Contract A was from TGB Unlimited at \$4,403,406.00, and the low bid on Contract B was from Selge at \$2,960,658.00 and the various Mandatory Alternate Bids. The Engineers did a thorough review of all the bids and determined that all were acceptable with the bidding instructions. One minor math error was found on TGB Unlimited bid. The unit price for asphalt pavement did not calculate correctly, actually lowering the bid cost by \$500, which was highlighted in yellow on the bid tab.

The project bids were discussed with both of the apparent low bidders. Both contractors insisted that they were comfortable with their bids as presented. TGB Unlimited indicated that they intend to start the Contract A project in Summer of 2025 and finish by Fall of 2026. Selge Construction indicated on Contract B that they intend to start the Contract B project in Fall of 2025 and finish by late summer/fall 2026.

After bids were received, a subsequent meeting with key staff from the Indiana Finance Authority (IFA), State Revolving Fund (SRF), the District's Financial Advisor developed several user rate scenarios based on the \$5,000,000 grant funding commitment from the SRF, \$1,500,000 ARPA grant commitment, and different combinations of Contract awards.

As a result of review of the initial user rate analysis, JPR recommends moving forward with the entire project as bid, including Contract A Base Bid, Contract B Base Bid, and all Contract B Mandatory Alternates.

Dan Byam stated JPR has prepared a Post Bid Project Budget showing the updated construction and non-construction costs for this phase. Phase II and III would move forward over the next few SRF funding cycles depending on the grant commitment

from SRF and will continue to see grant funding with those projects likely moving forward with closing in March of 2026 and March of 2027.

JPR recommended that the Board of Trustees take action on the following:

1. Accept the Engineer's Recommendations and tentatively award Contracts A and B. Contract A awarded to TGB Unlimited and Contract B awarded to Selge Construction.
2. Authorize the District Board President to issue a tentative Notice of Awards upon successful closing of the SRF financing in May 2025.

Mark Danielson made a motion to accept the Engineer's Recommendation to tentatively award Contract A for Saugany Lake Force Main to TGB Unlimited for \$4,403,406 and Contract B Saugany Lake Wastewater Collection System to Selge Construction for \$2,930,658 and all 5 Mandatory Alternate Bids as presented in the Engineer's recommendation. Jerry Jackson seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

Jerry Jackson made a motion to authorize the District Board President to issue the Notice of Awards upon successful closing of the SRF financing in May, 2025. Mark Danielson seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

- Updated Timetable and Checklist

The timetable was included in the Engineering Committee report. The notable date is April 7 Special Board Meeting will be presentation of the final rate study prepared by the municipal advisor and will be presented to the Board. The first public hearing on Rate Ordinance and adoption of Rate Ordinance and Amending Bond Ordinance. On track for closing in late May.

- Project Update

Dan Byam indicated the Asset Management Plan update is due to SRF on March 31, 2025. He will forward the Asset Management Plan to the Board members. He indicated he has been working with Barry McDonnell on a Cybersecurity Program for District for inclusion in the Asset Management Plan. The plan is to identify critical infrastructure, protect sensitive personal information, and develop a response plan should a breach occur. In order to complete the Asset Management Plan, Dan is awaiting Section 3 from Steve Carter.

Mark Danielson made a motion to authorize the District Board President, John Carr to approve and sign the Asset Management Plan Certification. Mitch Bishop seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

Dan Byam reported permits have been received from the LaPorte Highway Department and the LaPorte Drainage Board. The LaPorte County MS4 permit has

been received, and will be submitting the permit application with the state. Awaiting permit from the NICTD and will be pushing on this permit.

Land Acquisition with the reduced scope have 68% of the signed easement agreements and 32% are needed for an 80% target by closing.

J. Executive Committee - Engineering Committee

- Engineering Committee – no meeting held
- Notice of Statutory Exemption and Extension of Service Letter
Jennifer Ransbottom stated the property owner at 5685 N 800 N had met the timeline, had their septic inspected and was approved by the Health Department. Jennifer Ransbottom asked the Board to approve the exemption

Corey Campbell made a motion to approve the property owner's exemption at 5685 E 800 N., which completed the exemption requirements and were approved by the Health Department. Mark Danielson seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

K. New Business

- Next Meeting – April 22, 2025, in person and Zoom/Teams Links.
- Special Meeting – Public Hearing - April 7
- Amended and Restated Bond Ordinance (attached)
Barry McDonnell introduced the first reading of the Amended and Restated Bond Ordinance, read by title only. Tom Everett, Barnes and Thornburg, stated this is an Amended and Restated Bond Ordinance. The Board previously adopted a Bond Ordinance on October 25, 2022, which authorized Bonds of the District in an amount not to exceed \$35M for the Hudson and Saugany Sanitary Sewer Project. The Ordinance also contemplated that the Bonds be sold to the Indiana Finance Authority through its State Revolving Fund Program. But since 2022, when the Ordinance was adopted, the Indiana Finance Authority has changed some of the standard terms that they require in these types of Bond Ordinances as well as their form of Financial Assistance Agreement (Form B) to the Bond Ordinance. This Amended and Restated Bond Ordinance amends and restates the 2022 Bond Ordinance to include the latest terms the Indiana Finance Authority requires. This Ordinance does not change the maximum amount of Bonds authorized, or the maximum 5% interest rate, it does authorize Bond Anticipation Notes up to \$5M and authorized Indiana Finance Authority to purchase Bonds up to \$35M. These Bonds will be payable from the revenues of the District.

Mark Danielson made a motion to approve by title only for the first reading of the Amended and Restated Bond Ordinance. Mitch Bishop seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

- Pre-Agenda Meeting & Attendees – John, Marcella, Steve H, Steve C, Randy, Jennifer – April 15, 2025 @ 9:00 AM Central (10:00 AM Eastern)
- 2022 and 2023 Audit – Jennifer reported the audit was completed. Steve and Jennifer had the Exit Interview and final report will be presented at a future meeting.

L. Old Business

- Interlocal Agreement
Informational item – (being kept on the agenda as a placeholder) the next step will be after closing with SRF will have 30 days to submit an invoice to the County to obtain the money. This is to remain on the agenda as a reminder.

M. Adjournment

Mark Danielson made a motion to adjourn. Second, by Corey Campbell. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:56 AM.