

# LAPORTE COUNTY REGIONAL SEWER AND WATER DISTRICT

## MEETING MINUTES

July 22, 2025, 2025

9:00 a.m.

### **Time and Place:**

The LaPorte County Regional Sewer & Water District monthly board meeting was held on Tuesday, July 24, 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**

Mitch Bishop 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: Mitch Bishop, Corey Campbell, Mark Danielson, Jerry Jackson, Marcella Kunstek, and Amanda Lahners

Also Present: Daniel Byam, Jones Petrie Rafinski  
Steve Carter, O.W. Krohn & Associates  
Steve Henschen, Jones Petrie Rafinski (Via Zoom)  
Barry McDonnell, Esq  
Jennifer Ransbottom, Jones Petrie Rafinski  
Chris Vogeler, Astbury

### **D. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from June 24, 2025, Monthly Board meeting were presented. Corey Campbell made a motion to approve the June 24 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Marcella Kunstek. All were in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

### **E. Public Comments:**

No Public Comments

**F. Reports**

• **Steve Carter – Claims and Finance**

Steve Carter provided the financial report for the month ending June 30, 2025

1.) Rolling Prairie

- a. Operating Receipts for the month - \$10,660.94
- b. Disbursements of \$5,500.10
- c. Interest income: \$361.02
- d. Loan Principal of \$1,830.00
- e. Ending Total Balance of \$326,648.25
- f. O&M Fund of \$302,508.31
- g. Debt Service Reserve Account of \$16,058.46
- h. Bond & Interest Account of \$8,084.48

2.) Hudson Saugany Service Area

- a. Cash Flow was \$315,307.51 that came in May but not recorded until June from Toll Road Account
- b. Ending cash balance of \$2,899,456.91
- c. Interest income of \$7,395.06

Breakdown of funds:

- d. Horizon Account \$198,049.99
- e. Debt Service Reserve (BNY) - \$1,500.00
- f. Bond and Interest (BNY) - \$5,142.86
- g. Hoosier Construction Fund - \$1,703,493.00
- h. BNY Construction Fund - \$991,271.06

3.) Toll Road – Horizon Account.

- a. Ending balance of \$542,758.49
- b. No Operating Receipts for the month
- c. Disbursements of \$40,430.57
- d. Interest income of \$556.58
- e. O&M Account of \$171,195.97
- f. Improvement Fund of \$371,562.52

4.) Claims totaling \$53,660.67

Mark Danielson made a motion to accept the claims in the amount of \$53,660.67 as submitted. Corey Campbell seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

b. **Astbury Water Technologies**

i. **Operations**

Chris Vogeler reported that the chlorine meter at the water plant is not working. He recently purchased a re-built kit, but unfortunately, it has stopped working. He stated the manufacturer no longer supports this equipment. He stated he will get quotes for a new chlorine meter at the water plant.

Chris Vogeler reported that the wastewater treatment plant had an air leak in the air header that runs underground between the blower units and the plant. A quote from Astbury for \$5,000 to locate, excavate repair the leak was obtained.

Mark Danielson made a motion for Astbury to repair the air leak at the wastewater treatment plant and not to exceed \$5,000. Marcella Kunstek seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chris Vogel reported that at the wastewater treatment plant, the Ferus has been delivered. On June 21, a service call was made to deactivate an oxygen alarm. On June 26, a service call was made to respond to a power surge alarm, and on June 27, the Astbury Collection System Service Group responded to an alarm at the Influent Lift Station.

Chris Vogeler reported that he discussed with a representative of Toll Road the excess water due to a water leak, which they indicated had been repaired. Chris Vogeler will be monitoring the Travel Plazas water usage.

ii. Billing

Jennifer Ransbottom reported included in the Board packet was the Billing Report from Astbury. Also, Astbury reported they have received 3 payments from the Toll Road.

**G. JPR District Administrator**

Jennifer Ransbottom is taking phone calls and answering questions related to the project and status.

**H. JPR – District Engineer**

1. Project Update Timetable

The timetable was included in the Board Packet.

**I. Phase II Update – Closing/Transferring Funds**

Dan Byam stated Rolling Prairie Phase 2 in the Pre-Agenda meeting discussion was held regarding figuring out a good invoice to make the final draws on Phase 2. Jennifer Ransbottom stated she needed to get the final number, and JPR will submit an invoice to be taken from the final SRF.

**J. Hudson/Saugany Project**

1. Saugany Wastewater Collection System – Phase I

a. Pay App #1 – Contract A

Dan Byam stated Pay App #1 from TGB Unlimited for the project. He stated this pay app includes 50% of the mobilization charge, as a 330 excavator has been

moved to the pump station, and \$3,000 in materials for HDP piping. Steve Henschen stated Dave Williams, JPR Inspector, counted every pipe, and it is in a secure location. The exact date has not been determined other than late Fall. JPR has reviewed Pay App #1 and recommended Board approval.

Mark Danielson made a motion to approve TGB Unlimited Pay App #1 for \$402,705.00. Amanda Lahners seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

b. Change Order #1

Dan Byam indicated JPR is working on Change Orders #1 for Contract A and Contract B and will be present at the August meeting. Items to be included in the change order are jack and bore crossing at the NICTD right of way in Contract A. The bore pits in front of the Teeter cemetery on CR 700 along force main to adjust the bore pits for archaeological monitoring during construction if feasible. On Contract B will be looking at a minor revision to the pressure sewer alignment along Saugana Trail due to some property acquisition and elimination of the exempted properties.

Steve Henschen asked Barry McDonnell to review the exemption law applicable to the 12 properties currently granted exemptions. Specifically, he asked for clarification on whether, upon expiration of these exemptions, whether due to failure to meet conditions or the conclusion of the 10 year or the two 5-year renewal periods, is the District obligated to provide grinder stations, or if the responsibility falls to the property owners to install them at their own expense and subsequently dedicate them to the District? Steve stated the process would be similar property owners who do not sign an easement, which would be the District gets the grinder station and puts it in storage until the District forces connection, then the property owner is given the grinder. He stated the difference between those granted exemption and those who did not sign the easement is that those who did not sign are getting billed. The property owners who are exempt are not getting billed. There has been case law that if a property owner did not sign an easement and then is forced to connect, the District has to give them the same equipment, materials, etc., that were given to the property owners in the original project. Steve Henschen stated that most of JPR's projects this is being handled if the property owner is granted an exemption, then they are not part of the project, and a grinder is not saved for them. He stated that another district JPR is working with, the attorney is looking at different exemptions. For anyone that was granted an exemption, they have to purchase the grinder, install it, connect to the system, and then it is dedicated to the District to operate and maintain. Barry McDonnell to review the exemption law before the next Engineering Committee meeting.

c. Additional Authorization Signatories Besides John Carr

Dan Byam stated John Carr is the only member on the District Board who is eligible to sign the Pay Apps, as he is the authorized signatory with SRF. At the Pre-Agenda meeting, potentially getting an alternate signatory if John is unable to attend a meeting, then the alternate could sign Pay App, and Change Orders in order to continue to move the project forward.

Mark Danielson made a motion for Mitchell Bishop to be the secondary signatory on documents when John Carr is not available. Marcella Kunstek seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

Dan Byam stated that the hard copy of the Pay App and Change Order signatory form has to be signed by John Carr, President, and Jerry Jackson as Secretary of the Board. Therefore, the Board will need to authorize John Carr and Jerry Jackson to sign the signatory forms outside of the board meeting.

Mark Danielson made a motion to authorize John Carr to sign the Pay App outside the Board meeting. Marcella Kunstek seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Pre-Construction Meeting – July 16 – Contract A and Contract B

Dan Byam reported Pre-Construction meetings were held on July 16 for Contract A and Contract B. TGB Unlimited Contract A has mobilized equipment but does not plan to begin work until late Fall and Selge Contract B plans to begin work in September. Minutes from the Pre-Construction meeting are to be sent to the Board members.

3. ITRCC Rate Increase Discussion – July First Reading

Barry McDonnell stated that if the Board wants to have a public hearing at its August meeting, then the first reading needs to be held at this meeting. He summarized the new Water Ordinance would increase \$2,900 per month for the ITRCC new rate would be \$14,575. The sewer rate would go up \$4,500 to \$19,785. Barry McDonnell indicated the surcharge was set several years prior and they are still the same of 26,500 gallons whether it was sewer or water. In the ordinance any day that the usage exceeds the 50% surcharge for those days are included in the monthly bill.

Barry McDonnell read the first reading of Ordinance No. 2025-03 for the First Amendment to Sewer Rate Ordinance 2018-02 for the Rolling Prairie Travel Plazas. AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SEWER RATE ORDINANCE NO. 2018-02 (THE “ORDINANCE”), AND ESTABLISHING AN AMENDED SCHEDULE OF RATES AND CHARGES TO BE COLLECTED BY THE DISTRICT (AS DEFINED IN THE ORDINANCE) FROM OWNERS OF PROPERTY SERVED OR TO BE SERVED BY THE DISTRICT IN THE SERVICE AREA OF THE

DISTRICT COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE ROLLING PRAIRIE TRAVEL PLAZAS (“FIRST AMENDMENT”)

Mark Danielson made a motion to carry over the First Amendment to the Sewer Rate Ordinance 2025-03 for the Rolling Prairie Travel Plazas for Public Hearing. Corey Campbell seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

Barry McDonnell read the first reading of Ordinance No. 2025-04 for the First Amendment to Water Rate Ordinance No. 2018-01 for the Rolling Prairie Travel Plazas. AN ORDINANCE AMENDING WATER RATE ORDINANCE NO. 2018-01 (the “Ordinance”), AND ESTABLISHING AN AMENDED SCHEDULE OF RATES AND CHARGES TO BE COLLECTED BY THE DISTRICT (as defined in the Ordinance) FROM OWNERS OF PROPERTY SERVED OR TO BE SERVED BY THE DISTRICT IN THE SERVICE AREA OF THE DISTRICT COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE ROLLING PRAIRIE TRAVEL PLAZAS (“FIRST AMENDMENT”).

Marcella Kunstek made a motion to carry over the First Amendment to the Water Rate Ordinance 2025-04 for the Rolling Prairie Travel Plazas for Public Hearing. Mark Danielson seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Proposed Phase II Discussion

Dan Byam stated JPR and W.O. Krohn had a call with the Indiana Finance Association (IFA) to discuss future phases of the Hudson/Saugany project since it scored favorably on the project priority list. Several alternatives were presented. Phase 2 would include the remainder of Saugany Lake, treatment plant expansion, the Hudson Lake pump station and force main and a small portion of Hudson Lake. Phase 3 would be the remainder of Hudson Lake. Another alternative presented was Phase 2, which is just the remainder of Saugany Lake. This alternative was suggested because there is capacity in the TP3 wastewater plant to handle the remainder of Saugany Lake, and it may be beneficial for the District to break that project as its own entity. During the call, IFA mentioned that the Saugany Lake as a project by itself would not fund favorably on the priority list. JPR proposed running a rate analysis on that project if the District pursues SRF Pool Funds for Phase 2 without subsidization, and how that would impact rates. A much lower cost per connection is being noted in Phase 2 than what was in Phase 1. Phase 2 for the connection of Saugany Lake will be about \$6.2M to serve approximately 200 additional customers.

Marcella Kunstek made a motion to have Steve Carter or Jones Petrie Rafinski to respond to the Indiana Financial Association, interested in pursuing a Phase 2 for Saugany Lake without subsidization, but ask for a 0% loan financing to keep rates similar to Phase 1 of Saugany Lake. Mark Danielson seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

**K. Executive Committee**

No meeting was held

**L. Engineering Committee**

An Engineering Committee meeting was tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, July 30 at 10:00 AM EST/9:00 AM CST. Jennifer Ransbottom will follow up with Jerry Jackson on his availability.

**M. New Business**

1. ITRCC Amended Sewer and Water Ordinance – First Reading
2. Next Meeting – August 26, 2025, in person and Zoom/Teams Links.
3. Pre-Agenda Meeting & Attendees – John, Marcella, Steve H, Steve C, Jennifer – August 19, 2025 @ 9:00 AM Central (10:00 AM Eastern)
4. Other Business

As an information point, Mitch Bishop stated that the Redevelopment Commission installed sewer and water under Interstate 94 to Service Area 300N US421 near the Harbor Dealership and Loves. The Commission has been trying to transfer ownership of the assets to the City of Michigan City. This has been difficult, and it has been a year and a half since the project was finished. Negotiations are still under way, but there is a future possibility for this Board taking over that system and being a customer of Michigan City's Sanitary as opposed to turning the whole asset to them.

**N. Old Business**

**O. Adjournment**

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:13 AM.