

LAPORTE COUNTY REGIONAL SEWER AND WATER DISTRICT

MEETING MINUTES

April 29, 2025

9:00 a.m.

Time and Place:

The LaPorte County Regional Sewer & Water District monthly board meeting was held on Tuesday, April 29, 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, Jerry Jackson, Marcella Kunstek, and Amanda Lahners

D. Approval of Minutes

Corey Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes of the special meeting held on March 18, 2025, as presented. Marcella Kunstek seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

Corey Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes of March 25, 2025, as presented. Marcella Kunstek seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

Corey Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes of the special meeting held on April 7, 2025, as presented. Amanda Lahners seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Public Comments:

Drew DeGeter 5983 Saugana Trail – I have a few questions that are going to come up. Would we be able to address this at the end of the meeting, as the agenda indicates there are going to be some updates and stuff, and maybe that will be answered then. Barry McDonnell indicated that if anyone has any technical questions, for example, we happen to have some of the engineering staff here, and so if we have not covered your questions

during the meeting, they are usually very good about answering your questions after the meeting.

Don Lode, 7882 N. Pottawattamie, and I am also President of the Saugany Lake Conservation Club. I am totally in favor of the sewers. As a conservationist, we want to keep Saugany Lake pristine the way it is, and one of the ways to do that is to have the sewers. Thank you

Mark Hever, 5791 E. Saugana Trail – We are on the agenda today to apply for an exemption to the sewer project. We do believe we qualify based upon the letter. I do have a few documents with me to submit if you need it, but the one was the septic tank absorption system is to be new at the time it was installed, I have a copy of the septic system, have a copy of the bill that Sedlow put the system in, pictures of the property after it was done. Second the septic tank absorption system was to be approved in writing by the local Health Department, prior to closing our house in June 2017 the approval for the entire new septic system and received just after the property closing transfer a septic system certificate which was approved by the Health Department. Although we missed the deadline to provide written notice, we wish now at our own expense if there are any more certifications that need to be done and any of the information that needs to be provided would do so as soon as possible. Every other year we have our septic pumped, I have receipts from KFex with proof that the septic system has been inspected and cleaned. We are part time residents, so we have been on the property about 8 years, but if you deal with that on a full-time basis there have been 2 people in the house for about 4 months a year. So, the septic system is probably only 3-4 years old by 2 people and the summer by a few more than that. So, we respectfully request your approval to file for an exemption and file all qualifying information and documentation. Thank you for consideration of this request and remember in the Pledge we said and liberty and just for all.

F. Reports

- **Steve Carter – Claims and Finance**

Steve Carter provided the financial report for the month ending March 31, 2025

1.) Rolling Prairie

- a. Ending balance of \$337,332.21
- b. Receipts for the month of \$16,327.40
- c. Interest income: \$402.97
- d. Operating disbursements: \$7,904.02
- e. Two payments to the County on the loan of \$3,660.00
- f. O&M Fund of \$273,851.49
- g. Debt Service Reserve Account of \$8,500.18
- h. Bond & Interest Account of \$54,980.54

2.) Hudson Saugany Service Area

- a. Ending cash balance of \$2,139,035.17
- b. Interest income of \$7,620.54
- c. Non-operating disbursements of \$1,430.00

- 3.) Toll Road – Horizon Account.
 - a. Ending balance of \$579,021.79
 - b. Operating Receipts of \$53,920.00
 - c. Disbursements of \$19,169.51
 - d. Interest income of \$1,600.01
 - e. O&M Account of \$210,111.12
 - f. Improvement Fund of \$368,910.17
- 4.) Claims
Claims totaling \$199,382.73

Jerry Jackson made a motion to accept the claims in the amount of \$199,382.73 as submitted. Marcella Kunstek seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

- **Astbury Water Technologies**

Chris Vogeler stated he is still waiting to hear from Pavey, who is doing the work to replace the hydrant that busted over the winter. In the process of getting a contract for routine maintenance on the generators.

Items fixed over the last month were an airline fixed on the air mod system that was completed. There is an airline leak on the main header that runs the plant. The Astbury maintenance team will be making a service call on this item.

Pricing for the Ferric from will be approximately \$1,200.00 for a half tanker. When ready, this will be delivered. Jerry Jackson inquired if the estimate is from Comerica's. Chris Vogeler stated that the estimate is from Alexander Chemical. Jerry Jackson to share with Chris Comerica's price.

Chris Vogeler stated Astbury did testing on the drinking water that the EPA requires, and all the results came back lower than the detection level.

Jennifer Ransbottom reminded Chris Vogeler that he was to provide a list of items for regular annual maintenance. She also stated that the Board approved a quote for Astbury to do the locating. Chris Vogeler stated that the locates have been completed. Jerry Jackson also asked for a list of items that are getting old and should be replaced before they fail.

G. JPR Billing/Collection:

Astbury to be new billing provider as of July 1, 2025.

H. Phase II Update –

No update until billing out to SRF remaining funds.

I. Hudson/Saugany Project

Project Update

On Wednesday, May 7, at 11:00 AM CST, the presentation on Build, Operate and Transfer and Guaranteed Savings Contract will be held at JPR's South Bend office.

The Post Bid Document Submittal was sent to SRF on April 25. They responded with a couple of comments, which JPR has addressed.

The railroad crossing permit is still being worked out. The railroad agency has requested adjustments to the casing pipe that will be installed underneath the railroad.

In a final push to get easements prior to closing. Currently, for the Saugany reduced scope project, 73% of the required easements are in hand with 27% remaining. Steve Henschen stated a extra push has been made in the last few weeks to the property owners that are affected by the project to sign their easements. He stated there is an adequate number of signed easements in place for the project to move forward. Anyone that has not signed their easement, the project is still moving forward and that means property owners that have not signed the easement will have to make their own arrangements to get a grinder pump installed at their own cost at completion of the project. With 73% that have signed their easements, there are another 6 or 7 grinders that we could located in the right-of-way in front of those properties. This is something that will be looked at and discussed with the County Highway Department. Those property owners who failed to sign their agreement will still be required to connect, still have to pay the bill and they will have to connect at their own cost at the end of the project.

Jennifer Ransbottom stated in the Board Packet was one last letter to be sent to property owners who have not signed their easements. This will be one final letter that has been sent to those who did not sign their easements.

J. Executive Committee

- Executive Committee

Jennifer Ransbottom stated that an email was sent to the Executive Committee members to schedule a meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss involvement with the Toll Road in the current project.

Steve Carter stated that a discussion needs to be held on when to begin interim billings after closing occurs. Jennifer Ransbottom indicated the names of the customers will need to be sent to the new billing company.

K. Engineering Committee

- No meeting was held
- Notice of Statutory Exemption – 3 Properties for Board Approval. These properties followed the appropriate protocol and have been approved by the Health Department
 - 5622 E 800 North
 - 7620 N Huron Trail
 - 5777 E. Saugana Trail

Jerry Jackson inquired how long the exemption applies. Jennifer Ransbottom stated they get up to 20 years. The owner gets an initial 10 years, renews the process to get another 5 years, and then renews it again for another 5 years. That is, if they don't have a failing septic system during that time. If they do, they have to connect to the system, and at the end of the exemption period, they have to connect at their own expense, as there will be no grinder placed or set aside for them.

Jerry Jackson made a motion to approve the exemption requests for 5622 E. 800 N., 7620 N. Huron Trail, and 5777 E. Saugana Trail, as presented. Corey Campbell seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

L. New Business

- Next Meeting – May 27, 2025, in person and Zoom/Teams Links.
- Pre-Agenda Meeting & Attendees – John, Marcella, Steve H, Steve C, Randy, Jennifer – May 20, 2025 @ 9:00 AM Central (10:00 AM Eastern)
- 2022 and 2023 Audit – Completed
- Late Exemption Request – Mark Heuer, 5791 E. Saugana Trail
Jennifer Ransbottom stated that included in the Board Packet was the mailing that Mr. Heuer was sent on October 23, and the Certified Receipt signed on October 25 for the exemption information. All exemption requests expired at the end of last year. His Exemption Request was not received. Now he is seeking an exception to the rule. Barry McDonnell stated Indiana Code 13-26-5-2.5 states for qualification, “a property owner must,” and that then starts the 60-day notice from when they received notice. The concern would be that if we approve this exemption, then we may get more requests. The problem is from the standpoint of set rates, which we have a Bond Package approved by the State, and a project approved by the State with a certain number of exemptions granted. If it starts to affect the number of rate payers, then we affect the cost per rate payer.

Mr. Heuer stated that their interpretation was that they felt under pressure to sign the easement to allow for it when it would eventually go through. They were under the impression, after talking with several people, that the system could be put in and not hooked up, and then, when you do hook up in the future, then you pay for the cost of the Bond, which was supposed to be half until the time hooked up. They did inadvertently miss the deadline and apologized for that. Have all the documentation for the soil absorption, all new septic, and part-time residents. Asked for approval.

Jerry Jackson inquired how many met the requirements. Jennifer Ransbottom stated that 15 property owners. The Board cited the Indiana Code, not having a current IOPA inspection.

Jerry Jackson made a motion to deny the late exemption request for the property owner at 5791 E. Saugana Trail. Corey Campbell seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

L. Old Business

- Interlocal Agreement

Barry McDonnell stated he reached out to the County Attorney and County Auditor to let them know the project is moving forward. They will need closing documents after May 22 that will be provided by Barry McDonnell and Steve Carter.

M. Adjournment

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:46 AM.