

LAPORTE COUNTY REGIONAL SEWER AND WATER DISTRICT

MEETING MINUTES

April 28, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Time and Place:

The LaPorte County Regional Sewer & Water District monthly board meeting was held on Tuesday, April 28, 2026, 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 9:002 a.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

C. Roll Call

Roll call was taken.

Present: John Carr, Mitch Bishop, Corey Campbell, and Marcella Kunstek

Absent: Mark Danielson, Jerry Jackson and Amanda Lahners

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

D. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from March 31, 2026, Monthly Board meeting were presented. Corey Campbell made a motion to approve March 31, 2026, meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Marcella Kunstek. All were in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

E. Public Comments:

Mark Huber, 5791 E. Saugana Trail – Have been told by one person that the project has received no complaints. Well, I have been to 3 meetings, my wife was at a conservation meeting at St. John's Church and there have been many complaints over the years in

regard to this project. A number of these are: the environmental study process, how that was conducted; the cost and funding, the cost of what it would cost in total and to the homeowners; a grinder system versus other systems which has come to light as possibly being significantly better; sewage piping size, back-up issues, usage issues – especially for those who are part-time versus full-time residents, what is going to happen if they don't use it for 6 months. There were petitions sent and signed with over 100 signatures of homeowners concerned about the high cost. The cost was originally significantly under \$100, a year ago it was \$103 and now the bill is \$58, that is \$116. How much is it going to be when the Sagauny Phase 1 is complete? There was a proposal in the petition for an alternative for lakefront property owners to have annual inspection to make sure there was no damage to the lake. No one that lives on the lake wants any damage to the lake as we have lived there for generations. How many homes are being installed in this phase, how many exemptions were granted, how many full time versus vacation homes is the septic system going in during Phase 1, who did the environmental studies; was it the DNR, the Army Corp of Engineers or just the consulting firm; with the monthly cost rising to \$116 a month, the estimated upon completion is significantly higher, now hearing estimates/rumors could be as high as \$130 to \$200 a month. What are the chances of the project moving beyond Phase 1? Where are you going to get the funding with cost estimates coming in now from \$43M to \$63M, what is that about, almost 50% increase over the last few months/year? Is the State or County going to give funding for that or are you going to charge homeowners? Furthermore, it was Hudson that really needed this so why was Saugany put in as the first phase?

Denise Blough, 5622 East 800 N – She feels she is talking in circles. They own multiple properties on the lake, one which already has a grinder pump installed and we've been making installment payments. There is a secondary building on that property that was built a long time ago and it has its own separate system, which is a little barbaric and should be hooked to the sewer system. They have no problem with that as they don't want to damage their lake either, and it is not being used, but could be used in the future. Their question has continually been if they sign the easement but have something contractually that does not void their exemption on their primary property. They worked with Health Department to put something in that was working. They have no problem paying. She spoke to Chris at the Building Department when they all of a sudden started getting bills and didn't get the right answers, just vague. All she is asking for is a contractual agreement that says their exemption on their primary property, which has met all the specifications and is on a separate system than this other building, is not going to be voided and then she would have no problem paying. Mr. McDonnell indicated he would follow up with them as this is the public comment section.

Gary McCloud, 7601 N. Huron – Last year, those who live on the lake part-time thought it would be best to let those who live on the lake full-time make the decision on the project. I regret doing that as we were told these would be low-profile grinders that were on the lawn and would not impact much of the view or impede any kind of parking. Now that I have been up to see the grinders are low profile, but there is also the 4-foot electric box that goes with every grinder, which does look ridiculous, and in front of his property

is a giant electric box that sits up 6 feet in front of my house. Dave from JPR was awesome throughout the whole process, making sure the grinder was put in a spot that would not impact anything. This 6-foot electric box is now blocking where we could expand, and it is not just his house, but up and down Huron Trail. He spoke to Jennifer last week and explained who Mr. Huber is referring to, because he said on his call with Jennifer that he feels kind of stupid: before he was for this project, but now he is not, and seeing how this looks on his property, he is definitely not for it. He understands funding for this Phase 1 was covered through the \$10M grant that was received, but then then need to seek additional funds for Phase 2. I would like to get answers to his questions and do not know where to go for these answers. Mr. McDonnell indicated he would not be able to answer the questions regarding engineering, and to follow up with Dan Byam, from JPR, who is the Project Manager for this project.

Robert Smith, 5777 E. Saugana Trail - No minutes since December, and would appreciate it if you would do your job. First question: How many of you have been out to Saugany Lake since the project started? What do you think? Have you stopped talking to anyone? Marcella Kunstek responded no one was out when she drove around. Mr. Smith stated that people are just not happy with this because you told us that there was nothing wrong with the lake and that it was not polluted. We have never been shown any data that the lake has any pollution in it whatsoever. So why are we putting in a sewer system for those who don't need it? There are some that may need it, but what is the Health Department for, I figured that they would come out and address septic issues individually with homeowners. Everyone would welcome checks to be done. The cost of this project has raised over 48%, what is that going to do to the monthly rates? Mr. Smith was looking at Mr. McDonnell, who indicated that he was the attorney and did not know about the budget numbers. Mr. Smith stated he was the one who brought it up at the last meeting. John Carr stated the rates are locked in at \$116. Mr. Smith stated that it is not going to change. How many years can you stay there? When you add to a job 48%, who have almost added half as much to that job, how can you do that? I think that JPR had the project at \$64M and came in at \$43M, so they could get their foot in the door. We don't need the sewer because the lake is completely clean, and now, we are dealing with all these ungodly parking meters stuck in front of people's yards. Some are stuck in the middle of people's yards because they are not around to say because they can't be moved. Septic has always been in the back yard and I don't know why it wasn't put in the budget to put the sewer in the backyards instead of these eyesores in the front yard. How does the project jump up 48%. I would like to see the numbers on how someone can come in at \$43M and jump to \$63M. You don't have a loan secured for those other property owners, so why aren't they exempt to getting their septic inspected to get an exemption? If they were to get inspected, I guarantee you those would pass and would put JPR out of business. I guarantee you 60% of the people who have these grinder pumps would get exemptions if they had their septic inspected, and the engineer Jenny, who came out and told them that there would be no sense in them wasting their money to have their septic inspected. I think that was totally wrong and very misleading, and I think that should be answered to. Also, at the last meeting, Ken stated he was talking to Yakim's Office, and we've been in touch with the Congressman and Lt Governor because we want to know

that things are going to be done right, and they were not very happy about some of the things that were going on. Ken actually said that Yakim was in favor of this project, but he is not in favor of the cost bearing on all of the homeowners. Congressman Yakim guaranteed him that there is no more SRF and no more federal grants, but yet Ken says we are talking to Yakim, and he is really in favor of it, but they are not getting loans anymore. Who oversees the Sewer Board?

Jennifer from JPR indicated that the minutes from the meetings are indeed on the website and had them pulled up on her computer. If you view them from a phone and not from a computer, they don't always show all of them for some reason.

James Moe, 5963 E Saugana Trail – Is the budget truly \$63M. Is there some guarantee for the price of the service, if it is going to be \$116 or a limit? As the public, we can only ask so many questions and so much we can do, but Commissioners, you have a fiduciary responsibility to manage this project and do what is right for us in the community, and I don't think anyone here is going to say you're doing a good job. Every other week, the utilities are being marked. If there is not going to be any work, why is this happening?

Phil Colburn, 73 N. Scenica Trail – Problem with our neighbors who already have the grinders in having to pay. That does not sound like good business practice, having to pay for something that does not work. The 6-foot electrical devices look like hell; they could be on the side of the house, not every 75 feet in front.

John Carr stated that the Board did take the monthly payment into consideration, and they carry a lot of weight with that. They are aware that this phase is \$116, and a lot of the members were uncomfortable with and that is the complete max. The Board is not going to move forward on the project where the monthly bill is going to be higher. The funding gaps and everything with the amount of inflation over the last few years. They have been working on this project for the past 5 years, and they have been scoring, and it is very tricky with the funding that is available. I can assure you that this board is not moving forward if it is going to be higher than \$116 per month.

Gary McCloud, 7601 N. Huron - If there is no money to continue with the additional phases, would those that have been put in Phase 1 continue to use the system that was put in place, or would they revert back to using their septic? John Carr stated that is why the project was broken into 3 phases. Phase 1, once done, would continue. Jennifer Ransbottom stated that Phase 1 funding is done and it is being constructed. Would not go back to septic once it is fully done.

Dee Eggleston, 800 North- Her husband and she went through all the requirements to get an exemption. They received the exemption. With the exemption, they still got one of those great big stinky boxes in their front yard. It is supposed to be some sort of vent, cleaning station, what is that thing? Dan Byam indicated it is an air release valve station. Ms. Eggleston stated it was scheduled to be on the east side of her driveway. The contractor that was in charge told them they were going to put it on the other side of their

driveway because the further away it is from the house, the less they smell when the system is enacted. You can imagine I am not happy about my front yard smelling like a sewer from everybody around the lake. How bad is this going to smell? Dan Byam indicated it is not going to smell that bad. Ms. Eggleston is not that bad. Dan Byam, please don't touch me (Ms. Eggleston was touching Mr. Byam). Venting stations have to be put in the system to allow air to escape because otherwise air entrainment could occur in the pipe, and the system would not be able to pump at all. Those systems have to be placed in local high points in the pipe to allow air to escape and enter the pipe.

F. Reports

1. Steve Carter – Claims and Finance

Finance

Steve Carter indicated the finances were 90% complete but ran into some logistical issues. He apologized and indicated the finances would be sent on Thursday.

Claims

Steve Carter indicated that claims with one amendment from the claims were distributed, which was the JPR invoice. There was an adjustment of downward of \$1,260; the new number is \$9,138.28. The new total Claims is \$152,191.13. He indicated the Citgo Water Bill for \$2,638.13 will be covered by a credit that we have with them. The I&M service installations for Hudson Saugany for \$9,390.55 was paid last month's checks, which had to be paid to keep service going. It was not approved last month; therefore, it is on this month's approval list.

Marcella Kunstek made a motion to approve the Claims as presented. Corey Campbell seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. Astbury Water Technologies

a. Operations

Chris Vogeler reported in the Astbury Report that the HVAC had been looked at; he indicated that it still needs to be scheduled and is not yet complete.

1. Lighting Quote – Lucas Electric, Inc - \$2,550.00

Chris Vogeler indicated that updating the lighting in the two buildings will save money in the long run with less utilization of fluorescent lighting.

Marcella Kunstek made a motion to approve the Lucas Electric, Inc quote for the lighting upgrade in the two buildings in the amount of \$2,550.00. Corey Campbell seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. Generator Quotes

a. H&G - \$4,357.77

b. MacAllister CAT - \$3,534.00

Chris Vogeler presented quotes for generator maintenance. Jerry Jackson recommended the MacAllister proposal.

Marcella Kunstek made a motion to approve the MacAllister CAT quote for generator maintenance in the amount of \$3,534.00. Corey Campbell seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chris Vogeler stated the water leak continues, but Toll Road is working on this issue. Marcella Kunstek inquired if Toll Road is paying for the water usage overage. Jennifer Ransbottom stated she had sent an email indicating the overage bill would be forthcoming. John Carr suggested sending them the bill to expedite the repair process. Barry McDonnell indicated that this has been going on for months, and this needs to be corrected.

3. **Billing**

Jennifer Ransbottom stated that Astbury's billing information was included in the Board's packet.

G. JPR District Administrator

1. Variance Invoices for Property Owners

Jennifer Ransbottom indicated variance payment information was included in the Board packet.

2. Toll Road – Emergency Repair and Water Leak Update

This issue was discussed under agenda item 2 above.

H. JPR – District Engineer

Dan Byam referenced the Project Update Report, noting that there are no change orders this month. The project is 50% done at this point. 39% of contingency has been used to date with a remaining balance of \$281,863.45 left in contingency. Quantities install TGB Unlimited has installed about 8,325 feet of pipe, which is about 48% complete, and Selge has installed about 7,962 feet of pipe, which is about 49% complete for a total pipe installed for the project of 48.5%. Selge has installed 17 of the 78 grinders on the project, which is about 28% complete of grinders installed.

Dan also updated the Retainage Summary column, which shows TGB Contract A, which shows TGB total contract amount to date as \$1,906,456.23 and retainage to date of \$95,322.81 for 39.6%. Selge Contract B is total contact amount to date of \$1,293,883.19 and retainage to date of \$64,694.16 for 32.2% of the contract.

1. **Hudson/Saugany Project Construction Update**

Due to time constraints the Board was asked to review the construction update on their own.

a. Contract A – TGB Pay App #9

Dan Byam presented Contract A - TGB's Pay App #9 for \$347,621.34. He indicated JPR reviewed all quantities and recommended Board approval for payment.

Marcella Kunstek made a motion to approve Contract A - TGB's Pay App #9 for \$347,621.34. Corey Campbell seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

b. Contract B - Selge Pay App #7

Dan Byam presented Contract B - Selge's Pay App #7 for \$276,098.23. He indicated JPR reviewed all quantities and recommended Board approval for payment.

Corey Campbell made a motion to approve Contract B - Selge's Pay App #7 for \$276,098.23. Mitch Bishop seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

c. Contract A – TGB Change Order #4

Dan Byam indicated that Change Order #4 is a net increase of \$5,430.50. This increase is for a 125-foot, 12-inch culvert across the front of the pump station #12 site. The slope at the entrance drive varied, thereby reducing the existing drain tile replacements, which will be reduced in the future from the project.

Corey Campbell made a motion to approve Change Order #4. Marcella Kunstek seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

d. Contract B – Selge Change Order #7

Dan Byam indicated that Change Order #7 is a net increase of \$8,287.00 for the modification of grinder station locations based on discussions with property owners.

Marcella Kunstek made a motion to approve Change Order #7. Corey Campbell seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. Hudson Saugany Phase II Funding/Timeline Discussion

Dan Byam indicated Ken Jones attended last month's meeting and presented Phase 2 funding models and timelines, which included a capital project of approximately \$22M. The proposed project included a capital buy-in from St. Joseph County and potential direct contributions from Amazon and the Federal Budget. JPR has determined that we are not at the point with some of those funding alternatives where a firm commitment from them. Because of not having a firm commitment, when SRF scores its project later this Summer, they are going to expect a complete design and bidding turnaround in order to close the project in March of 2027, in order to build the project in the 2027 fiscal year. Where the project stands as of right now, we don't have certainty that there will be 100% funding for the project. The Board was asked to decide whether to move forward with design efforts now in order to get the project ready for bidding in December /January, in order to attain the March closing. A meeting with the Executive Committee was held, and it was felt that if the District decides that we shouldn't

move forward, then we should reach out to SRF and let them know that we will not be pursuing the project in fiscal year 2027. As project engineer for the project we are recommending the project be put on hold until some of these funds can be secured.

Marcella Kunstek made a motion to delay Phase 2 until more funding alternatives can be explored. Corey Campbell seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

I. Executive Committee - 2026 Budget Information

1. Finance Committee

J. Engineering Committee

None

K. New Business

1. Astbury Contract

Marcella Kunstek indicated that, in discussion with Barry McDonnell, he had indicated there are a couple of other contractors that do the same type of work as Astbury, and it was thought to be a good idea to get a quote from another contractor before a final decision is made with Astbury. There are some concerns concerning Astbury charges, i.e., being charged 10% for the different invoices when it is something Steve and Jennifer could do instead of paying extra. The Board will continue with Astbury in the meantime.

2. Rolling Prairie Lift Station SCADA Follow Up

3. Pre-Agenda Meeting & Attendees – John Carr, Marcella Kunstek, Corey Campbell, Barry McDonnell, Dan Byam, and Jennifer Ransbottom, next meeting is May 19, 2026, at 9:00 AM Central (10:00 AM Eastern) – **this needs to be moved as JPR has a conflict.**

4. Next Meeting – May 26, 2026, in person and Zoom/Teams links.

L. Old Business

M. Adjournment

Mitch Bishop made a motion to adjourn at 10:15 a.m. Second by Marcella Kunstek. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:02 AM.