

KNIFE LAKE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Annual Meeting Minutes

August 21, 2021, 10:00 am

Board members present:

Kyle Hams, Terry Wells, Ray Ludowese, Jeff Suess, Ron Groebner, Kurt Seidel, Ed Hamlin

The following attendees signed in:

Gene Anderson, John Davis, Mario LeBlanc, Ron Kuhn, Paul Rocheford, John & Bernie Griffin, Pat Johnson, John Ulasin, D Helen Thompson, Julian Reytel, Melanie Mainquist, Robert Hecht, Tracey Leeman, Terry Rafferty, Jim Jackson, Pam Meggitt, David Storlie, Dianna Thingelstad, Ron Domino, Sharon Tufenk, Zaven Tufenk, Gerald McCabe, Mike Tohey, LuAnn & Kevin Johnson, Doug Sabinash, Pam Suess, Diane Norby, Rachel Hamlin, Gene Carda

Kyle Hams called the meeting to order. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance

The agenda was presented for approval. Motion by Ray Ludowese, second by Kurt Seidel to approve the agenda. All ayes, motion carried.

President Kyle Hams expressed to the following:

Knife Lake Sportsman's Club - \$5,000 donation toward treatment of nuisance weeds
Ogilvie Lions -- \$2,000 donation from pull tabs
Diane Norby – assistance with ballots and elections
Board Members and Commissioners for their service
Ed Hamlin – liaison from Sportsmen's Club to KLID – a lot of work on social media
Terry Wells -- a lot of time and effort regarding treatment of weeds

Minutes for the previous year's annual meeting were provided for review. Motion from Kurt and second by Jeff Suess to approve. All ayes, motion carried.

Treasurer Ray Ludowese provided copies of the monthly and annual Treasurer's Report.

Major sources of income and expenses were reviewed. Report did not include newly received income: \$2,000 from Ogilvie Lions and \$5,000 from Sportsmen's Club and expense: invoice from Clarke Aquatic for \$6,388.00 (these are NOT included in the prepared report). Motion by Kurt, second by Terry Wells to approve payment of bills as presented including addition from Clarke Aquatics. All ayes, motion carried.

Nominations for two open board positions.

Candidates who had expressed an interest were given an opportunity to introduce themselves:

Kevin Johnson bought property in 2015 and became a fulltime resident in 2017. He has served on other boards and has some knowledge of watersheds and wants to do what he can to make the lake clean and enjoyable for others.

Bob Heket has owned land on the lake for 5 years. Prior to that he has had property on several lakes. He likes the flow of the river into the lake. He wants to maintain quality of the lake for all to enjoy now and for future generations.

Ron Gruebner is a current board member who decided to run again as a write-in. He has lived here 16 years and is always there to help when needed.

Kyle called for nominations from the floor. There were none. Kyle explained that one vote is permitted per assessment. There are two open positions, so each eligible voter will vote for two people. Ballots were distributed and collected.

Reports

Financial Report (Ray) – each month Ray presents a Treasurer’s report and requests payment of bills. The fiscal year is September through August. KLID needs to submit a proposed budget to Kanabec County. KLID was originally formed to take care of the dam. Since then, resolutions have also made KLID responsible for water quality. The biggest expense is weed control. Since the cost of weed control has continued to increase, this year KLID put weed spraying out for bid. With a different vendor we hoped to save a little money.

Currently, lake shore property owners are assessed \$100 per year by Kanabec County, which goes to KLID. The last known increase was from \$88.00 to \$100.00 in 2016. Meanwhile, prices for services have continued to rise. Per state statute, KLID is supposed to be funded by the county. Money from the property owner assessment does not cover expenses.

Attendee Jerry McCabe indicated he served on the KLID board for 10 years. He asked a question about when the last year was that the county provided funding. He indicated from 1987 to 1989 there were county, state, and federal funds available through the Rim Grant for reclamation.

Ray indicated KLID has had conversations with the Kanabec County commissioners, who feel KLID is being treated the same as other improvement districts regarding county funding.

Ray reviewed the proposed budget for 2022 including anticipated expenses and income, with a proposed shortfall of \$19,00. To remain solvent, KLID needs to either increase income or reduce expenses. Board members all volunteer their time.

KLID is eligible for \$5,00 per year for dam maintenance funds which is not reflected.

Question from audience: are property owners current on paying assessments? The county provides the fee list, but KLID is not privy to information on whether or not people are current on paying taxes and assessments.

Action needed – to approve the proposed budget for 2022, which assumes donations and grants. Also, whether or not to increase the assessment.

Motion from Ed Hamlin to increase the property owner assessment from \$100 to \$125 per year. Second by Ron Suess. Discussion. \$55.00 increase per owner assessment would cover the deficit.

The question was raised regarding balance in the bank. If KLID continues to fall short, we will not remain solvent. Attendees expressed concern regarding increasing assessment with the recent tax increase for building a new high school.

Attendees mentioned people who use the lake but are not property owners, so do not pay for the lake. The DNR controls this and issues permits to them.

Kyle suggested we table the motion until other reports from the board have been presented. All in favor; motion tabled until later in the meeting.

Weeds -- Terry Wells read a handout explaining KLID's efforts and expense to control weeds in the lake. He explained how weather conditions and delayed DNR response time impacted efforts to control weeds.

Kyle indicated we cannot control the weather. KLID will push DNR for further curly spraying in May (can only be done in May). Will try to get nuisance spraying done in June instead of July, followed by a second spraying where needed.

An attendee raised a question regarding whether or not a cost analysis had been done regarding harvesting weeds? There was discussion regarding expense to purchase (\$90-100,00) and related expenses, as well as previous experience from long time owners. In addition to cost to purchase, must consider expense to operate, insure, maintain, and store equipment. Previous experience -- was poorly researched -- weeds were worse, no one would take the harvested weeds, and could not sell the used harvesting equipment. It also impacted quality of fish in the lake.

Not everyone on the lake has a problem with weeds or wants to be sprayed. An attendee provided handouts regarding DNR requirements regarding weed treatment. There was discussion regarding the timeframe for sending out the notice and requirement to respond for spraying. Could it be sent out earlier? Terry requests the list from the county in January. Mailing is sent March 10 with response required by May 1. Historically, mailing earlier has not helped -- people put it off and response was poor. Per DNR requirements, people are required to sign, so cannot set it up for them to opt out. Several factors impacted this year, including increased number of people who wanted to be sprayed and limited staff in DNR office.

Question from attendee regarding whether or not products would damage lily pads and bull rushes? They are not supposed to be sprayed. There was some overspray, but plants rallied. Some attendees indicated lily pads were killed. DNR information previously distributed during the meeting describes what individuals can do to control protected species in their dock area. An attendee also mentioned a company called Dive Guys who can be hired to pull weeds.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) -- Kyle reported on the Coalition of Lake Associations (COLA) that provides funding for education and boat inspections. Will receive a report later in the fall regarding this from the Soil and Water Conservation. Knife Lake is the largest lake in the area but receives the same funding as the smaller lakes.

There has been discussion about a decontamination unit. KLID is currently holding \$27,000 for this. It would require level two inspectors (currently use level one). There is also discussion about harvesters.

Baby zebra mussels have not been detected at the two landings or the river. We do have an infestation of faucet snails, but they clean algae. Note; if you sell a dock it needs to sit for 21 days before it is moved to a different lake.

Reports are sent to RMB Laboratories. Information about algae and phosphorus is posted on their website. Look under Lakes Survey, then Kanabec County. Ed Hamlin will publish information about this website in the Lakelines.

Water Testing – Kyle reported that when there is clear water weeds grow. Weeds take care of phosphorus. Soil and Water is working on rivers that flow into Knife Lake. Things that individuals can control are assuring sewers are functioning properly, watch use of fertilizers, and create buffer zones.

Lake Level Testing – Jeff Suess reported that the lake is down 1 ½ to 2 feet. The DNR is supposed to provide information about what is “normal”. Recently the marker was moved.

Dam Inspection – Kyle reported that the dam is working well; there has not been any shift. Minor maintenance will be done when the weather cools down. The dam is flushed each year.

Aerators – Ray reported that KLID is required to get a permit each year regardless of whether or not aerators will be used. He is currently watching DVDs and will become the operator since Chuck Hartl is no longer on the board. In March the DNR notifies KLID regarding the oxygen level. Aerators are a huge liability/risk and a lot of work. We are required to publish an announcement that aerators may be used on the lake. Holes are cut into the ice in two locations and markers are put in place.

Fisheries – Kyle read information provided by Leslie George from Hinckley regarding fish spawn report. Also noted they are looking for a person to work the remainder of the year (October) to complete the Creel Study.

Action Items

A motion was required to move the tabled motion to active status. Motion by Melanie Mainquist, seconded by Ray Ludowese. All ayes, motion carried.

Question from attendee whether funds are in checking account or CDs? Per Ray, in checking account. County was charging fees to manage until KLID took it over.

Question from attendee about fishing contests; those permits are issued by DNR.

Comment from attendee: individuals can contact their commissioner regarding concerns. Commissioner Gene Anderson is in attendance as a lake resident but is not a commissioner for this area.

Ed Hamlin restated his motion to increase the owner assessment from \$100 to \$125 per year. Seconded by Ron Suess. Kyle called for a show of hands. One opposed, motion carried. Ray will contact Kanabec County with this decision.

A motion was required to approve the proposed budget for 2022. Motion by Ed Hamlin seconded by Melanie Mainquist. All ayes, motion carried.

Motion by Kyle, second by Terry Wells for Knife Lake Sportsmen’s Club Liaison to KLID board to be a voting member. All ayes, motion carried.

Election Results – Diane Norby reported the election results:

Kevin Johnson – 28

Ron Groebner– 22

Robert Hecket -13

Discussion – Kyle opened the floor for any other discussion. None.

Adjournment -- Ed motioned, Ray second for meeting to be adjourned. All in favor, motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Sue DeGolier