

Intercounty Drain Board Meeting Minutes

N. Branch Mill Creek Intercounty Drain Sanilac, St. Clair & Lapeer Counties

**Thursday, January 25, 2024
Goodland Township Hall
2374 N. Van Dyke Rd.
Imlay City, Michigan**

Members Present:

Brady Harrington, Chair, Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
Doug Sweet, Sanilac County Drain Commissioner
Robert Wiley, St. Clair County Drain Commissioner
Joseph Suma, Lapeer County Drain Commissioner

Others Present:

See attached sign-in sheet

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Harrington called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. at Goodland Township Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to conduct necessary and appropriate business of the drainage board.

2. Motion for Secretary

Motion by Wiley, supported by Sweet, that Lapeer County acts as secretary. Yeas: all, Nays: none. Motion carried.

3. Agenda

Motion by Sweet, supported by Wiley, to approve the agenda as amended – add Cameras and Height Sensors to section 5. Yeas: all, Nays: none. Motion carried.

4. Approval of minutes

Motion by Sweet, supported by Wiley, to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2023 meeting as presented. Yeas: all, Nays: none. Motion carried.

5. Communications and reports of Board members, committees and consultants.

Cameras – presented by Chuck Bush of Thumb Alarm and Erik Schwanz of BMJ
Suma asked Bush and Schwanz to explore putting cameras on the dam to monitor water conditions and for security. Bush proposed two fixed panorama cameras that are solar powered. Video clips will be motion detected and stored on a SD card. The clips will typically be available for 30-days and up to 25 viewers can pull images

through the app. Schwanz proposed two locations – one at the top of the dam facing west to monitor debris and water levels, and the second near the outlet facing north to monitor the outlet and for security. Some limitations of these cameras are that the range is 300 feet, and cold weather and snow and the solar panel can lower the battery level and cause the camera to go into hibernation. Estimated lifespan of the camera is 10-12 years, solar panel is 5-10 years and the battery is 2-4 years.

Motion by Suma, supported by Sweet, to proceed with the quote for option 1. Yeas: all, Nays: none. Motion carried.

Discuss request by Consumer's Energy re: solar farm

Suma was approached by a representative of Consumer's Energy with an offer to cross the dam with electrical lines for a proposed solar field in the area. The board agreed that this is not a good decision because it could compromise critical dam infrastructure. Furthermore, Consumer's Energy should be made aware of flooding rights behind the dam.

Motion by Wiley, supported by Sweet, for Suma to work with engineer to send a letter to Consumer's Energy to deny their request. Yeas: all, Nays: none. Motion carried.

Status of SGI/BMJ study

Mike Quaine of BMJ Engineering explained that the meeting with landowners was informative. Many of the people in attendance were farmers from St. Clair County. Their concerns involve including S. Branch Mill Creek in the project, a dam in Yale, and who would initiate the petition process. Quaine recommends one more information gathering meeting with the property owners, to be held at Goodland Township Hall.

Nick Czerwinski of Spicer Group explained that he has converted the 9-year-old flood map studies into his new software so he can run different scenarios. He is reviewing rainfall data that was gathered by property owners, mapped existing flood easements, and analyzed LIDAR. He expects to work with BMJ and be ready to present findings to the property owners in 30-60 days.

Suma expressed concern that the current design allows for flooding of Blacks Corners Rd and Utley Rd, and goes all the way back to Summers Rd. This presents a safety issue.

Height Sensors

Hy-Fi offers self-contained sensors for tracking water levels. It is approximately \$1,500 per year for rental of the unit. The data collected is viewable online and will be beneficial to an Emergency Action Plan. Czerwinski suggested installing a permanent sensor on the dam, and a short-term one at another location, perhaps Brown City Rd.

Motion by Wiley, supported by Suma, to let Spicer Group work with Hy-Fi to get information and bring back a recommendation to the board. Yeas: all, Nays: none. Motion carried.

Receive the Treasurer's Report

Lapeer County's total cash balance is (\$53,424.85). Sanilac County reported a balance of \$198.34. St. Clair County reported a balance of \$2,034.28.

Motion by Sweet, supported by Wiley, to receive and file the Treasurer's report. Yeas: all, Nays: none. Motion carried.

6. Approval of Invoices – None Presented

7. Other Business

Emergency Action Plan – Suma reported that Goodland Township and the Lapeer County Emergency Management have requested copies of the Emergency Action Plan. The last one on file is from 2018 and needs to have contact information updated. Czerwinski stated there is no requirement to update the plan when dam inspections are done and recommends waiting until we get data from the Hy-fi height studies before updating the plan. He can do a quick update of contacts now, with a more in-depth update to be done later when the data becomes available.

Motion by Suma, supported by Sweet, to have Spicer Group update the Emergency Action Plan. Yeas: all, Nays: non. Motion carried.

8. Public Comment – None

9. Set the Date, Time and Location of the Next Meeting – To be set by the board.

10. Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tanya Suter
Lapeer County Drain Office

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ATTENDANCE SHEET

Brady Harrington, Chair, Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development
Doug Sweet, Sanilac County Drain Commissioner
Robert Wiley, St. Clair County Drain Commissioner
Joseph Suma, Lapeer County Drain Commissioner
Nick Czerwinski, Spicer Group
Erik Schwanz, BMJ Engineering
Mike Quaine, BMJ Engineering
Chuck Bush, Thumb Alarm
Ashley Ballard, St. Clair County Drain Office
Tony Youtsos, St. Clair County Drain Office
Tanya Suter, Lapeer County Drain Office