

WINNEBAGO COUNTY DRAINAGE BOARD  
LARSEN DRAINAGE DISTRICT  
Meeting Minutes  
7:00 p.m. on July 21, 2022  
Town of Winchester, 8522 Parkway Lane, Larsen, WI 54947

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I. Call to Order

Board Members:	Howard Miller	PRESENT
	Peter Romberg	PRESENT
	David Sleik	EXCUSED
	John Kunde	PRESENT
	Michael Pfankuch	PRESENT
Clerical Support:	Holly Stevens	PRESENT
District Consultant:	Gerald Peterson	PRESENT

II. Approval of Minutes

- A. Approval of the minutes of the May 26, 2022 Winnebago County Drainage Board Larsen Drainage District Meeting.

**MOTION:**

**Motion by Board Member Pfankuch**

**Second by Board Member Romberg**

**Motion to approve the minutes from the May 26, 2022 Winnebago County Drainage Board Larsen Drainage District Meeting as presented.**

**Motion carried by unanimous voice vote**

III. Open Forum: Drainage District related Matters not on the Drainage District Board Agenda:

- No Comments

IV. Business:

A. McMahon Group

1. GIS update

Ben Hamblin, McMahon Group, reported the Photo Mosaic from the drone survey was completed on the ARC GIS system. The drone survey and resulting data resulted in no changes to the recommended maintenance list previously provided to the Board.

2. Annual report

It was recommended the Board determine who will be preparing the annual report – McMahon or a Board Member. The Board reviewed a copy of the 2020-21 Annual Report which was prepared by McMahon Group for a cost of approximately \$2,967. It was noted

that the Treasurer, Diana Hellman had provided the financial data which was included in the report. It was also noted that the format for the report was available for updating.

Ben Hamblin, McMahon Group, recommended someone from the Board update the report for the current year. He said he would be available for consult, but the process was not difficult, and it would save money if a board member completed the work.

Board Member Pfankuch volunteered to take a look at the report noting he would reach out for assistance if needed.

**MOTION:**

**Motion by Board Member Kunde**

**Second by Board Member Romberg**

**Motion to have Board Member Pfankuch prepare and present the Annual Inspection Report for the Larsen Drainage District Arrowhead River Corridor.**

**Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

3. Maintenance issues identified

a. Erosion along Parcel 028-0941 (William Pucci Property)

Chair Miller noted that a considerable amount of erosion along the east side of the drainage ditch had been identified. He explained the erosion starts way back in the field as seen by the aerial photo taken from the county GIS property viewer. The Board reviewed other photos are from our GIS at location #50590 and an aerial view showing the location of the problem area. Board Member Peter Romberg and Chair Howie Miller had viewed this area and are recommending the Board determine what should be done in regard to the issue. Chair Miller recommended the Board take action to clean it up and install preventative measures such as riprap.

The Board discussed the necessary equipment needed for the work, including a backhoe. Board Member Pfankuch said he is able to operate the equipment if the Board wanted to rent a backhoe. Board Member Kunde noted he owns a backhoe but was unsure if its reach would be large enough for the work. Chair Miller noted that the bank level is very close to the water level and the reach isn't very far.

The Board discussed how to prevent the issue to continue in the future. It was determined a bigger stone would slow the water down preventing the erosion issues.

Matt Olson, 8303 Sauby Road, asked if anyone had spoken with the property owner. The Board indicated they had not, however, they know him well enough to know that he would allow the Board to do the work. Mr. Olson noted that the property owner should be held responsible for preventing the issue in the future if the Board takes the corrective actions now.

Board Member Romberg said he would talk to the property owners' whom he believed would not have an issue with the Board doing the work, but it is unlikely they would be willing to pay for the work.

Board Member Kunde said he is willing to make his excavator available, but he doesn't have a lot of free time to perform the work.

Board Member Pfankuch said he was willing to work as operator, but the work would have to wait until later in the fall after the corn is harvested.

b. Fallen Trees/Limbs in River

Chair Miller and Board Member Pfankuch reviewed the issues identified by McMahon relating to fallen trees/limbs in the river corridor. Chair Miller cleared one of the issues. The other three are in the process of being contacted regarding the issues. Holly Stevens reported letters has been sent to notify the property owners requesting they deal with the issues. She said she had not received any communications from the owners as of the meeting. She said she would send a follow-up letter if needed.

The Board noted that one of the fallen trees is close to the area they will be working in so if the issues do not get taken care of by the property owners, the Board could take care of it in the fall when doing the other work discussed.

Another issue was identified on the Rick Rubbert property south of STH 10. Holly Stevens said she would reach out to the family.

Chair Miller said the final issue which was close to the WIOWASH Trail was handled by him and his grandson, and Board Member Pfankuch's grandson.

4. Expansion of the drainage district:
- a. North of USH 10 near Fairview
  - b. The Arrowhead River watershed

Ben Hamblin, McMahon Group, had requested this discussion be added to the agenda. He said he had been thinking a lot about the previous meeting's discussion. He noted the river corridor provide drainage for a large area but is only funded by a smaller group of property owners along the corridor. He noted the district has been lucky and no major problems or projects have come up allowing the district to build up their financial coffers. He said it is inevitable that some sort of maintenance will eventually be needed and those benefitting should contribute. He suggested that the Board consider some sort of tiered taxation system. He said the property owners immediately adjacent to the river receive the most benefits with dryer lands and more farmable acreage. He noted that there are some landowners benefitting that are miles away and do not even know about the corridor. He suggested those closer with greater benefits could pay at a higher rate while those further away also receiving benefits to a lesser degree could be taxed at a lower rate. He said it is just something he wanted the Board to think about and consider.

The Board discussed potentially looking at the topographic maps and evaluating the benefits.

Matt Olson, 8303 Sauby Road, Larsen, noted that the property owners within the watershed area should be contributing to the district. He said even those at the highest elevations benefit because their stormwater run off ends up in the river and they are benefitting from that drainage.

Ben Hamblin said all the properties in the watershed are benefitting from the drainage.

Matt Olson said the Board could study the secondary drainage ditches and the tiling and he is sure they would see that the property owners are benefitting, and it is not right that they do not have to contribute to the maintenance of the corridor.

Board Member Pfankuch noted that his stormwater takes a course which ends up in the Arrowhead, but he is not taxed for the benefit. He agreed that it is not fair to charge only those landowners closest to the river. He added that his neighbor across the road has to contribute, but he does not. He said he agreed with Mr. Olson that many property owners are benefitting and not paying which is not fair. He said he would also agree with some sort of tiered method of charging.

Ben Hamblin said the Board must first figure out how much money they need to operate each year along with what big capital projects will be needed over the next five years. He said any work the Board would contract will likely end up in five figures these days. Holly Stevens noted the mowing they had bid last year—a mile on each side came in at \$12,000. She said the routine maintenance like that adds up quickly.

Board Member Romberg noted that there are three property owners along the Romberg ditch which need to clean out their section of the ditch and many of the issues in that area would go away. Mr. Olson said he agreed noting that many property owners have lost site of the necessity of keeping drainage ditches clean.

Chair Miller said he would like to try to get the discussion about expanding districts on the agenda for the state drainage district association, but that meeting does not happen until December. He said he intends to attend and will keep the Board apprised of the information.

Board Member Pfankuch added that he feels the district needs to be mindful of the northern border and should not expand too far north because it would risk Rat River waters being rerouted into the Arrowhead. The Board agreed.

## B. Water Levels

Chair Miller said he has continued monitoring water levels and flow rates and the river continues to have very little flow. The river is at the same level as Lake Winnebago and therefore flow is minimal. He noted that there has been no measurable flow at the Woodland bridge since May 24. The river is essentially an extension of Lake Poygan.

## C. Government Funding for Secondary Drainage Ditch Repairs

Chair Miller reported on June 29 there was a video meeting with DATCP, regarding the possibility of federal funding for drainage ditch repairs. This funding is not available to drainage districts but to individual landowners. He said he knows there has been some discussion of the poor condition of the Romberg Ditch and asked if there is interest in trying to get funding for this or any other secondary ditch project. Another project might be the north end, north of highway 10. He said the state will cover the cost of all engineering and

potentially some of the project costs. He said the grant funding is partially dependent upon the number of farmers benefitting from the project.

He suggested that anyone aware of a project may want to make the property owners aware of the funding.

D. Accounts Payable

The Board reviewed a copy of the meeting attendance per diem log for this meeting totaling \$223.40.

They also reviewed copies of invoices 926867 from McMahon Group. The services provided and charged for were previously approved by the Board. The invoice is being provided to the Board for information regarding services received.

Ben Hamblin, McMahon Group, noted that the Annual UAV Survey charges for which payment was previously delayed will now be invoiced as services have been completed. He said he would send the invoice to Ms. Stevens for processing.

The total of the accounts payable is \$1,767.40 plus the additional invoice to be submitted by McMahon.

**MOTION:**

**Motion by Board Member Pfankuch**

**Second by Board Member Romberg**

**Motion to approve and pay the accounts payable as presented.**

**Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

E. Meeting Schedule and Board Member Requests for Agenda Items

The Board discussed how they have been trying to rotate locations for meetings among the three Towns which the Larsen Drainage District serves. However, the Town of Clayton, has limited the availability of their facility between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Considering the Board member schedules, this limitation prohibits the scheduling of a future meeting at the Town of Clayton. The Board determined the next meeting would be held at the Town of Winchester on Thursday, September 29, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. It was noted this will be the Annual Meeting and as such, noticing will have to go out to all landowners.

V. Adjournment:

**MOTION:**

**Motion by Board Member Pfankuch**

**Second by Board Member Kunde**

**Motion to adjourn at 8:07 p.m.**

**Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**

Respectfully submitted, Holly Stevens, Clerical Support