

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HELD AT 6:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 2024
Location: Munster Town Hall, Munster, IN

Chairman Baker presided and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. There were nine (9) Commission members present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

Commissioners Present:

William Baker, Chairman
Tom Wichlinski, Vice-Chairman
Levon Whittaker, Secretary
Tom Gozdecki, Treasurer
Dave Castellanos (via zoom)
Robert Ochi
Derek Nimetz
Anthony Broadnax (via zoom)
Ron Ware

Commissioners Absent:

None

Visitors:

Gary Lee – Gary
Nathan Lee – Valparaiso
Paul Daniels – CCxPD LLC
Vicki Williams – Munster
Linda Cook – Griffith
Michael Novotney – Wessler Engineering
Isabella Foster (via zoom)
Jen Grawcock (via zoom)
Jeff Huet – Town of Schererville (via zoom)
Paul Glotzbach (via zoom)
Thomas Burke – CBBEL (via zoom)
Sivash Beik – CBBEL (via Zoom)

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

David Wickland

Staff:

Jodi Lambert

Approval of Minutes -

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to approve the minutes from July 17, 2024, as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Ware. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 9-0.

Chairman's Report –

Chairman Baker welcomed all to the meeting. He stated that the Commission is tasked with the continued maintenance of a \$275 million man-made federal flood control project. He added that the yellowing pictures that are shown at every meeting are a true reminder of why we are here and an example of what happens when you don't maintain a system that was designed to control mother nature. If we get 10 gallons of water for our 5-gallon bucket, we are going to have some issues. But we are far better prepared today than we were before the flood of 2008. It is important, however, that we do not lose sight of that history as we keep moving forward and have new issues come up. We have a continued collaboration with all the communities within the watershed to make sure the events of 2008 are something only history knows about.

Finance –

Chairman Baker referred to the August 2024 claims in the amount of \$865,085.02. Commissioner Wichlinski made a motion to approve the claims as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Nimetz.

Commissioner Gozdecki stated he noticed a discrepancy in one of the invoices listed on the claim sheet and would like to make a motion to amend the Austgen Equipment invoice, changing the amount due from \$313,840.00 to \$266,764.00, reducing the total claims to \$818,009.02. Motion seconded by Commissioner Wichlinski.

Mr. Repay explained a few of the claims, starting with a claim from Austgen Equipment in the amount of \$266,764.00 for continued work on the Hart Ditch Stabilization Project. Most of the major work on this phase of the project is complete with tree and shrub planting taking place later this fall. There were some field changes that were made to secure the stabilization with the existing walls that were built prior to our work in the area. \$254,728.21 was paid to F.H. Paschen, S.N. Nielson & Associates for final payment on the Cady Marsh Screen Raker Project. The Raker was inspected and accepted by the USACE earlier this month. The U.S. Geological Survey was paid \$29,106.00 for quarterly operation and maintenance of the 16 streamgages throughout the system. \$42,500.00 was paid to Wiltjer Excavating for work clearing Deep River. Trees and debris have been removed, with many residents saying that the area has never been cleared for as long as they lived along the river. Finally, Encap Incorporated submitted a claim in the amount of \$29,400.00 for maintenance at the Chase Street and Black Oak Mitigation sites.

Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote on the motion to amend the claims. Motion passed 9-0.

Chairman Baker further called for a roll-call vote on the claims as amended. Motion passed 9-0.

Executive Director's Report –

Mr. Repay gave an update on several of the projects:

- Most of the major work is complete for the current phase of the Hart Ditch Bank Stabilization Project. We did make some field changes to shore up a few places as it transitioned into existing gabion baskets. The last phase is the tree and shrub plantings that will occur later this fall. The next phases will be a bit trickier because of access and the steepness of the bank.
- We recently met with several USACE officials regarding the outstanding issues on the Kennedy Avenue Sandbar permit. USACE believes that they can have the permit issued in 30 days.
- USACE is currently reviewing their district policy that would require a licensed engineer and geologist to be present for each boring in the levee. This policy would substantially increase the cost of the Levee Evaluation Project and something we did not budget for in the contract with Christopher Burke Engineering.

- We were not successful on our Readi 2 grant application for the Kennedy Avenue Bridge. We will look to move forward with the project ourselves. The next step will be to update the plans to meet new INDOT policies.
- Wolverine will begin work on fixing their pipelines along our river corridor within the next couple of weeks. I should have a rough schedule of which problem areas they plan on addressing and an approximate time by weeks end.
- Just as a reminder we will not allow hunters on our property or access the river through our property to hunt. In addition, Gary is looking into approving an ordinance that does not allow the discharge of a firearm within city limits soon.
- We have an agreement with WJOB on the agenda for later in the meeting. They will put together a historical video of the 2008 flood event.
- All USACE inspections for this year are now complete. We will take some of their findings and try and correct them before the next inspections begin in April 2025.
- I am happy to report that Deep River has been cleared of major blockages from Lake George to the Rock Riffle. The last phase of the clearing was finished late last week when we opened several spans underneath an abandoned railroad track. Residents of the area stated that they have not seen any clearing in over 20 years.
- The Cady Marsh Screen Raker Project is finally complete. USACE has signed off on it during the inspection we had in late July. The final payment is on the claim list for this month's meeting.
- The PLC replacements at Burr North and Grant East and West are expected to start the week of September 9th.
- NIPSCO has hung the transformer needed for the Natural Spring. We are waiting on a green tag from the City of Gary to move forward with the lights and security cameras at the location.
- I received a report from the Wetlands Initiative indicating that they will be out spraying phragmites starting next week.
- NIPSCO will also be out spaying their right-of-way throughout the area in the upcoming weeks.

Commissioner Wichlinski asked for an update on the LOMR in Gary. Mr. Repay stated that we are working with the USACE on the permitting for the borings additionally our engineer has been flying drones over the area as part of the survey work. The City of Gary will submit the LOMR, but we will provide them the information we receive from our geotechnical and survey work.

Commissioner Ware requested a status update on the Sauerman Woods Project. Mr. Repay stated that they are currently laying infrastructure and slowly progressing. The City of Crown Point is currently working through some right-of-way issues with the State.

Other Issues/New Business –

Commissioner Whittaker made a motion to open bids on Gary, Hammond and Highland segments of the Little Calumet River Levee Maintenance Project and award each segment to the lowest and most responsive bidder; pending review by attorney, engineer, and staff; motion seconded by Commissioner Ochi. Mr. Repay stated that

this project is for sealcoating and crack sealing the asphalt on top of the earthen levees used for maintenance and recreation. Each segment will be awarded separately. We received sealed bids from 2 contractors. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 9-0. The bids results announced at the meeting are as follows:

Gary Segment: Site Services - \$149,240.00; Day's Asphalt Paving - \$155,800.00

Hammond Segment: Site Services - \$30,200.00

Highland Segment: Site Services - \$83,485.00

Commissioner Wichlinski made a motion to open bids on the Hobart Parking Lot Asphalt Paving Project and award to the lowest and most responsive bidder; pending review by attorney, engineer and staff; motion seconded by Commissioner Ochi. Mr. Repay stated that this project is for 3 parking lots needed for the Hobart Marsh Mitigation site. The LCRBDC currently has an agreement with the IDNR for maintenance of the site. Commissioner Nimetz stated that as an employee of IDNR, he will recuse himself from this vote. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 8-0 (Commissioner Nimetz – recused). The bids results announced at the meeting are as follows:

Rieth-Riley Construction - \$123,550.00; Site Services - \$88,670.00

Commissioner Ochi made a motion to approve an Agreement with WJOB for the production of a historical documentary of the Little Calumet River flood of 2008 in an amount not to exceed \$85,000.00, pending legal review; motion seconded by Commissioner Ware. Mr. Repay stated that it is coming up on 16 years since the historic flood of 2008 affected our area. It has been a goal of the Commission to document the event. The same production company that assisted with the Close-Out Ceremony will produce this documentary. Commissioner Broadnax had a few questions on the contract regarding closed captioning and who will be allowed to utilize the final product. He requested those issues be evaluated during legal review. Chairman Baker asked if there were any further questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 8-1. (Commissioner Gozdecki votes nay).

Commissioner Broadnax made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-10 and an Interlocal Agreement with the Town of Merrillville for the Storm Sewer Network Improvement Plan Watershed Project in an amount not to exceed \$239,747.00. Subject to final draft and approval by Attorney, Executive Director and Chairman; motion seconded by Commissioner Nimetz. Mr. Repay indicated that Merrillville gave an overview of the project at our last meeting. They intend to eliminate an aging Pump Station and convert to gravity flow system. This project will help eliminate flooding issues for several homeowners and reduce maintenance costs. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 7-1-1. (Commissioner Broadnax votes nay, Commissioner Gozdecki abstained).

Commissioner Ware made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-11 and an Interlocal Agreement with the Town of Dyer for the Hart Ditch Floodplain Storage at Briar Ridge Watershed Project in an amount not to exceed \$100,000.00. Subject to final draft and approval by Attorney, Executive Director and Chairman; motion seconded by Commissioner Nimetz. Mr. Repay stated that the Town of Dyer also presented this application at last month's meeting. This is part of a larger plan to improve or create storage and the Town has the cooperation of the property owner. He further added that the Commission asked them to extend the project a little further north to complete the regulated drain portion of the ditch. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 9-0.

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-12 and an Interlocal Agreement with the Town of Dyer for the Hart Ditch Floodplain Storage at U.S. Route 30 in an amount not to exceed \$59,650.00. Subject to final draft and approval by Attorney, Executive Director and Chairman; motion seconded by Commissioner Broadnax. Mr. Repay stated, as with the Briar Ridge Project in the previous motion, this is another place to create additional storage, although this is a smaller area. Further discussion was held regarding the amount of storage to be gained and the opportunity for similar projects in the future. This project is for engineering and design work only. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 7-1. (Commissioner Gozdecki votes nay, Commissioner Castellanos was absent for the vote).

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to approve a Joint-Funding Agreement with the U.S. Geological Survey for the operation and maintenance of multiple streamgages throughout the watershed during the period October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025. The combined agreement amount is \$135,465.00, with the LCRBDC contributing \$120,100.00 and USGS contributing \$15,365.00 pending legal review; motion seconded by Commissioner Wichlinski. Mr. Repay stated that we have 16 streamgages throughout the system. We rely on the data to help us manage emergency situations. The gage data is available on our website for anyone to utilize. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 9-0.

Commissioner Whittaker made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to advertise for bids on the CCTV and Sonar Inspection of pipes penetrating the levee within the Gary North, Gary South, Gary Burr and Forest Avenue segments of the system; motion seconded by Commissioner Nimetz. Mr. Repay stated that we are required by the USACE to inspect and video these culverts every five years. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 9-0.

Statements to the Board –

No Statements to the Board

Statements from the Board –

Commissioner Broadnax thanked his fellow commissioners for their ongoing robust review and attention to detail with paying the bills and making motions.

Commissioner Castellanos stated that Congressman Mrvan was a guest on the Commission's last WLTH AM 1370 radio show. He also requested that as we move forward with watershed projects, we get a report from the municipalities to see if they are reaching out to or using minority owned companies.

Commissioner Gozdecki thanked the public for taking the time to attend our meetings and understand the work of the Commission.

Commissioner Whittaker thanked the public for attending our meeting. He also stated that he would like to see reports from municipalities regarding minority participation, adding that the information would help us improve as a Commission.

There being no further business, the next regular meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, September 18, 2024.