

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

**HELD AT 6:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2019**

**Location: MUNSTER TOWN HALL, MUNSTER, IN**

Chairman Baker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. An Executive Session/Work Study Session was held prior to the public meeting. There were eight (8) Commission members present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

**Commissioners:**

William Baker, Chairman  
Tom Wichlinski, Vice-Chairman  
Tom Gozdecki, Treasurer  
Levon Whittaker, Secretary  
Ron Ware  
Dave Castellanos  
Derek Nimetz  
Robert Ochi

**Executive Director:**

Dan Repay

**Attorney:**

David Wickland

**Staff:**

Jodi Lambert

**Visitors:**

Laurie & John Czulno - Hammond  
Tim Werner – Ciorba Group  
Paul Daniels – Advisory Committee  
John Beckman – Hammond  
John Garcia – Garcia Consulting Engineers  
David Nellans – Town of Munster  
Matt Lake – Merrillville Stormwater  
Bud Crist – Merrillville Stormwater  
Rob Mangus – Munster  
Lauren Varga – Commonwealth Engineers  
Frank Stewart – DLZ  
Natalie Mills – USACE  
Tony Kenning – DLZ  
Dean Button – City of Hammond  
Bob Csanyi – Robinson Engineering  
Karie Koehneke – Patrick Engineering

**Approval of Minutes -**

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to approve the minutes from September 11, 2019 as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Whittaker; motion passed with 8 aye votes.

**Chairman's Report –**

Chairman Baker welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for attending. He introduced our newest board member, Robert Ochi, City of Hammond Appointee. Chairman Baker reminded everyone that our website is a great place to find information on the Commission and the work that we do throughout the watershed ( [www.littlecalriverbasin.org](http://www.littlecalriverbasin.org) ). It has been 11 years since the devastating events of 2008. The yellowing pictures from the flood event are a great reminder of what can happen if a project such as this is neglected. There are numerous issues from the original design and decades of deferred maintenance of this \$275 million man-made project that the Commission is completing. Keep in mind, when dealing with Mother Nature, 10 gallons of water in a 5 gallon bucket will cause problems. However, we are far better prepared than in the past and the Commission continues to maintain open communication with the communities in the watershed by meeting on a monthly basis.

Commissioner Robert Ochi took the opportunity to introduce himself by stating he is a resident of Hammond and has lived 28 years in Northwest Indiana. He is a graduate of Purdue University and is currently employed as a Project Manager and Architect. He welcomed the opportunity to sit on the Board and continue the good work of the Commission.

**Finance –**

Chairman Baker referred to the October claims in the amount of \$615,673.12. Commissioner Ware made a motion to approve the claims as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Mr. Repay explained a few of the claims starting with payment to Ellis Construction Co. in the amount of \$239,903.40 for continued work on the Harrison Street Bridge Project. This project is wrapping up with an expected completion date of October 31, 2019. \$24,710.00 was paid to the U.S. Geological Survey for operation and maintenance of the 15 streamgages along the system. Pangere Corporation was paid \$15,930.81 for painting valve stems at various Pump Station locations. Merrillville Stormwater Utility submitted a claim in the amount of \$149,805.90 for Meadowdale Lateral Floodwater Storage Watershed Project. A presentation on their findings is scheduled for later this meeting. Great Lakes Electrical Maintenance submitted claims totaling \$16,092.00 for Pump Station inspections during the months of August and September. \$32,525.00 was paid to Patrick Engineering for continued work on the Lake Station Levee Project. Finally, Vail Appraisal Group submitted a claim in the amount of \$9,750.00 for appraisal work on Pump Station easements needed in Munster. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll call vote. Motion passed 8-0.

**Executive Director's Report –**

Mr. Repay gave updates on some of the projects:

- The Harrison Avenue Bridge Project is slowly coming to a completion. This project was initially delayed due to utility locations and inclement weather. It is anticipated that the bridge will open to traffic by October 31<sup>st</sup>.
- As a close-out for the CFER Bridge Project, a Hobart parking lot used for staging needed to be paved. This final piece of the project should be completed today.
- The contract for sluice gate painting is now complete. Pangere Corporation completed the work on time and for less than half the cost. This completed task checks off one more issue that was outlined in our latest USACE Inspection Report.
- Design work by Patrick Engineering continues on the Lake Station Levee Project. They have conducted initial meetings with DNR and IDEM to discuss permits and initial design. We expect to have preliminary design option available to us soon.
- We recently participated in a meeting with the Town of Munster and Lake County Surveyor's office regarding the severe erosion issues on Hart Ditch. Currently the Surveyor's office is scheduled to bid out for repairs on 3 sections in October, with construction beginning in early 2020.
- An Advisory Board meeting was held earlier this week. We discussed the Watershed Report that was conducted in 2013 and asked each community to update their portion

of the report. We additionally discussed the tree program that is available to each community.

- The system handled the September heavy rain event well. Anywhere from 6-9 inches of rain fell throughout the area. Per USACE guidelines, the Northcote Bridge was closed for a period of time due to the high water. As a reminder, flood handbooks for all communities can be found on our website.

**Update from the USACE –**

Natalie Mills, Project Manager from the USACE gave the following updates:

- The emergency repair of the leaking wall in Munster has been awarded. A pre-construction meeting will be held on October 16<sup>th</sup>. The contractor has 180 days to complete the project.
- Modeling on Hart Ditch is ongoing. Results will be shared with the Commission as soon as they are available.
- The In-Project Mitigation Project is progressing on schedule with invasive species removal continuing throughout the winter months.
- The Hobart Marsh Mitigation Project also continues on schedule with invasive species removal scheduled for the winter.

**Presentation -**

Matt Lake, Executive Director of the Merrillville Stormwater Utility and Darren Olson from Christopher B. Burke Engineering presented their findings on the Meadowdale Upper Watershed Study. This Watershed Project was approved at the July 11, 2018 meeting. This project consists of two floodwater storage basins that will add 45 acre-ft. of floodwater storage to an area that has received significant flooding in the past. This was also identified as a high priority area in the Commission's Comprehensive Watershed Plan. A complete audio of the presentation can be found on our website at [www.littlecalriverbasin.org](http://www.littlecalriverbasin.org).

**Other Issues/New Business –**

Commissioner Ware made a motion to open proposals for tree cutting along a section of Deep River in Lake Station and award to the lowest and most responsive bidder, pending review by attorney and staff; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Mr. Repay stated that 2 bids were received for tree clearing as part of the Lake Station Levee Project. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll call vote. Motion passed 8-0. The Bids received were as follows: Keilman's Tree Service - \$127,000; R.A. Oros, Inc. - \$90,644.00.

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to approve an agreement with Applied Ecological Services in the amount of \$11,650.00 for herbicide treatment at the Sandbar Modification site near Kennedy Avenue; motion seconded by Commissioner Wichlinski. Mr. Repay stated that invasive species, such as Reed Canary Grass and Purple Loosestrife, were noted at the site and will need to be removed as part of the required monitoring. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll call vote. Motion passed 7-1.

Commissioner Gozdecki made a motion to approve an agreement with Aerial Solutions in the amount of \$108,500.00 for UAS visual inspection of Hart Ditch and Deep River; motion seconded by Commissioner Whittaker. Mr. Repay noted that some areas are very remote and challenging to access. This inspection will be a great tool to help with inspection and monitoring of the system. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll call vote. Motion passed 8-0.

Commissioner Whittaker made a motion to defer action on the Merrillville Stormwater Utility Watershed Application for the Kaiser Ditch East Tributary Flood Control Improvement Project; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll call vote. Motion passed 8-0.

Commissioner Wichlinski made a motion to defer action on the Leaf Composting Agreement with the Lake County Solid Waste Management District; motion seconded by Commissioner Ware. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll call vote. Motion passed 8-0.

**Statements from the Floor –**

Robert Mangus, Munster, asked why the Northcote Bridge was closed during the recent heavy rain event even though the bridge had been designed as a siphon bridge. Mr. Repay stated that the USACE would not certify the bridge as a closure structure for the federal project and a closure would still be necessary at this site.

Dave Nellans, Munster, stated that as he has been walking through the neighborhoods recently, residents are much more comfortable with the Commission and the work we have completed. He thanked the board for their hard work and dedication.

Laurie Czulno, Hammond, stated that she walked the levee from State Line to Wicker Park during the recent heavy rain event. She said that Hart Ditch as moving fast but was overall please with what she saw.

John Beckman, Hammond, asked about the status of discussions with the Town of Dyer and Will County Illinois on the Longwood Golf Course.

**Statements from the Board -**

Commissioner Castellanos referenced a recent article regarding the City of Gary. He stated that a prosperous Gary is good for the entire region. He further invited everyone to listen to the Commission's WLTH AM 1370 radio program which is held at 9 a.m. the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month.

Commissioner Nimetz welcomed Commissioner Ochi to the Board and thanked the Merrillville Stormwater Utility for their presentation on the Meadowdale Upper Watershed Study.

Commissioner Gozdecki welcomed Commissioner Ochi to the Board. He stated that he is very proud of what the Commission has accomplished.

Commissioner Wichlinski welcomed Commission Ochi to the Board and thanked the Merrillville Stormwater Utility for their informative presentation on the Meadowdale Upper Watershed Study.

Commissioner Whittaker welcomed Commissioner Ochi to the board and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He stated that he recently visited neighborhoods in Hammond and was able to talk to the residents. He also asked when the design for the Lake Station Levee Project would be available.

Commissioner Ware welcomed Commissioner Ochi to the Board. He further stated that we've had several high water events in the past few years and hopes the public feels comforted with the work we have done.

There being no further business, the next meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, November 13, 2019 at Munster Town Hall.