

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**HELD AT 6:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2023**  
**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 eight (8) Commission members present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

**Commissioners Present:**

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

**Visitors:**

Gary Lee – Gary  
Dave Taborski – Gary  
Paul Daniels – CCxPD LLC  
Laurie Czulho – Hammond  
Vicki Williams – Munster  
Luke Sherry - CBBEL

**Commissioners Absent:**

Levon Whittaker, Secretary

**Executive Director:**

Dan Repay

**Attorney:**

David Wickland

**Staff:**

Jodi Lambert

**Approval of Minutes -**

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to approve the minutes from August 16, 2023, as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 8-0.

**Chairman's Report –**

Chairman Baker welcomed all to our meeting. He stated that September is the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of what happened in 2008. The yellowing pictures that are seen at every meeting are a true reminder of why we are here. He stated that the Commission is tasked with the continued maintenance of a \$275 million man-made flood control project. There are numerous issues with the original design and decades of deferred maintenance that we are in the process of addressing. Despite this, the project has been constructed to manage Mother Nature and at some time there will be an issue when we get 10 gallons of water for our 5-gallon bucket – but we are better prepared today for that situation than we were before the flood of 2008.

**Finance –**

Chairman Baker referred to the September 2023 claims in the amount of \$783,187.19. 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 reimbursements to the Town of Highland in the amount of \$42,000.00, the Hammond Sanitary District in the amount of \$182,000.00. These are annual reimbursements for Pump Station Maintenance. \$50,000.00 was paid to the Town of Griffith for annual maintenance on Cady Marsh Ditch. Flores Insurance Group was paid \$76,429.00 for renewal of our liability insurance policy. Wiltjer Excavating submitted a claim in the amount of \$89,560.00 for continued work on clearing Hart Ditch. \$14,400.00 was paid to Encap Inc. for annual maintenance of the Chase Street and Black Oak Mitigation Sites. Finally, Lake County Parks submitted a claim in the amount of \$25,659.24 for reimbursement on the Little Calumet Conservation Collaborative Watershed Project

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 an update on several of the projects:

- The Sauerman Woods Watershed Project keeps moving along. They are moving to the infrastructure side of the project. Some of the recent rainstorms have slowed them down.
- The Cady Marsh Screen Raker Project continues. The Raker equipment has been delivered and is being installed by our contractor, F.H. Paschen.
- Work continues to clear leaning and dead trees from Hart Ditch.
- We purchased new battery-operated drills for use by communities after we tested them during annual USACE Inspections. Drills are now with the communities of Highland, Munster, Hammond, Griffith, INDOT and with our contractor in Gary. These drills are lighter and easier to handle. During emergencies, they allow us to close the gates at a faster rate.
- Pump One at the Burr North Pump Station has been installed. We will likely need to replace Pump Two sometime over the winter.
- We continue to work with our federal partner, the USACE, on crediting needed to close out the project.
- C & H Mowing recently completed the 5<sup>th</sup> mowing of the season. As the USACE is looking to move up next year's inspection to March, it may be necessary to add in an additional mowing this season.
- Last Friday evening, I received a call from our local DNR Conservation Officer informing me that a truck had driven off the levee. According to the truck driver, his GPS directed him to drive on the levee from Chase to Grant Street. As the driver approached Grant Street, he decided to turn around and the truck slid off the levee. I was out on-site for several hours, and the truck was finally up-righted around 2:00 a.m. The USACE was notified of the incident so they could inspect the levee.
- Our area was fortunate to miss the rain that fell last Sunday. According to some reports, 9 to 10 inches fell in Burham and Dolton over a 2-hour period. 5.5 inches

of rain fell in North Hammond. The majority of those areas are still on combined sewers and the heavy rainfall overwhelmed the system.

Chairman Baker asked if the damage from the truck on the Levee had been assessed. Mr. Repay stated that there was some rutting and cracking on the Levee pavement that was evident. The truck also drove through a gate and barrier to get on the levee. The USACE was on-site to assess the damage. A police report was filed.

Commissioner Gozdecki asked about the status of several Watershed Projects listed on Project Tracker that have not had any monies spent. Mr. Repay stated that some communities choose to submit for a one-time reimbursement so we will not see any dollars spent until the project is completed.

Commissioner Broadnax asked if there were any issues with the USACE moving up inspections to March. Mr. Repay stated that it was his understanding that the inspections were being adjusted due to USACE staffing issues, but other than potential weather conditions, there were no issues with the change in the inspection schedule.

**Update from the USACE –**

Mr. Repay stated that our Project Manager, Imad Samara, sent his status report via email. The report acknowledged that our project prevented over \$107 million in flood damages in the year 2022 alone, with cumulative flood damages prevented in excess of One billion dollars.

**Other Issues/New Business –**

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-12 and an Interlocal Agreement with the Town of Merrillville for the Hickory Ridge Flood Control Improvements Watershed Project in the amount of \$932,168.00 or 50% of the total project cost, whichever is less. Subject to final draft and approval by Attorney, Executive Director and Chairman; motion seconded by Commissioner Gozdecki. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 8-0.

Commissioner Gozdecki made a motion to approve Motion to approve an Agreement with Superior Engineering in the amount of \$248,000.00 for engineering services relating to equipment upgrades at the Burr North, Grant East and Grant West Pump Stations. Subject to final draft and approval by Attorney, Executive Director and Chairman; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Mr. Repay stated that Superior Engineering has already done an assessment of the Pump Stations and with this agreement, they will provide us with the plans to upgrade the PLC's at these stations so they are more reliable and efficient. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 8-0.

**Statements to the Board –**

Laurie Czulno – Hammond, stated that she got involved in 2008 after the flood. She helped people clean-out their destroyed homes, something she never wants to see again. She is thankful for everything the Commission has done since then. While she still

has some concerns when it rains, she can check the streamgages on the Commission website. She also advised that, while she is not required to carry Federal Flood Insurance, she still has secondary flood insurance and would encourage residents living near the river to do the same.

**Statements from the Board –**

Commissioner Ware thanked those for taking time out of their scheduled to attend the meeting. He also noted that like has been mentioned a few times tonight with the anniversary of the flood, the importance of the work that is done here and the effect on the region 15 years ago. He added that everyone on the Commission is doing their best to ensure that it doesn't happen again.

Commissioner Wichlinski noted that as we come up on the anniversary of the flood, even with the deluge of rain that we had over this weekend, our system was able to handle the water. Kudos to the Executive Director and our partners along the river for keeping things clear.

Commissioner Gozdecki thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He thanked Laurie Czulno for her sound advice regarding flood insurance. He also acknowledged Mr. Lee for bringing some concerns to our attention as it relates to the river. He noted that we do our best to take care of everyone the best we can.

Commissioner Castellanos thanked everyone for attending the meeting and also said that he supported everything that the Commissioners stated this evening.

Commissioner Broadnax thanked the public for continuing to attend our meetings. He thanked Dan for showing aerial video of the 2008 flood event to remind us of what it was like. He stated after 15 years, the effects of that are still with many of us. He thanked Chairman Baker for keeping us focused on the things that matter and referring to the pictures of the 2008 flood every single month so that we all understand why we are here.

There being no further business, the next regular meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, October 18, 2023.