

MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HELD AT 6:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2025
Location: LCRBDC OFFICE, Munster, IN

Chairman Baker presided and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. There were seven (7) 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

Visitors:

Gary Lee – Gary
Dave Taborski – Gary
Phil Gralik – BF&S
Luke Sherry – CBBEL
Paul Daniels – CCxPD LLC
Lori Lathan – Wessler Engineering

Commissioners Absent:

Anthony Broadnax
Ron Ware

Zoom Participants:

Siavash Beik – CBBEL
Bob Fulton – City of Hobart
Bella - DNR
Laurie Czulno - Hammond

Executive Director:

Dan Repay

Attorney:

Nicole Bennett

Staff:

Jodi Lambert

Approval of Minutes -

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to approve the minutes from December 18, 2024, as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Ochi. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a vote. Motion passed with 7 aye votes.

Chairman's Report –

Chairman Baker welcomed all to the first meeting of 2025. He reminded everyone that past minutes and meeting recordings are available on our website at www.littlecalriverbasin.org. Chairman Baker 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. He added that this is a true economic development project by getting the levee completed and having it certified every year. There are at least 4,000 properties that no longer must pay mandatory flood insurance. This saves about \$4 million dollars every year that goes back into the community.

Finance –

Chairman Baker addressed the January 2025 claims totaling \$297,980.03. Commissioner Gozdecki moved to approve the claims as presented, and Commissioner Nimetz seconded the motion.

Mr. Repay provided an explanation of several claims, beginning with claims amounting to \$34,375.00 from VVP Enterprises LLC for ongoing work on Cady Marsh Ditch. The contractor anticipates approximately two more weeks to complete the clearing, contingent upon favorable weather conditions. Wiltjer Excavating submitted claims totaling \$69,300.00 for the rental and operation of a burn box. As an alternative to hauling away trees, we tested the use of a burn box, which is intended to be a cleaner and more efficient method. Several communities also utilized the burn box. Ultimately, this method appears to be equally costly, with additional safety measures presenting challenges. Our electrical contractor, Great Lakes Electrical Maintenance (GLEM) submitted a claim in the amount of \$17,300.00. In addition to conducting our monthly Pump Station inspections, GLEM is rewiring the stations for the new PLC's. Finally, the Town of Munster was reimbursed \$12,000.00 for participation in our tree program.

Commissioner Ochi inquired if American StructurePoint had any remaining work on the Sauerman Woods Project. Mr. Repay confirmed this is their final invoice as our part of the project is complete.

Chairman Baker requested additional details regarding the clearing of Cady Marsh Ditch. Mr. Repay indicated that while the County has performed spot clearing in the past, to his knowledge, this is the first instance of the entire ditch being cleared.

Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 7-0.

Executive Director's Report –

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

- We continue to clear Cady Marsh Ditch of any leaning or dying trees. We started clearing last year and steadily worked our way east to Chase Street. Weather dependent, there are about two more weeks left until it is complete.
- The PLCs at the Grant East and Burr North Pump Stations have been completed. The Grant West installation will resume when weather conditions improve. Marshalltown is scheduled to be the final station for installation.
- We are still awaiting a response from the USACE regarding the 408 permits for the Sandbar Modification, Bank Stabilization/Highland Access Ramp, Sluice Gate Modification Projects, as well as the required soil borings along the levee

necessary for the City of Gary's LOMR application. It has been over a year since any of our 408 permits were approved by the USACE.

- We received permission from the USACE to move forward with the next phase of the Hart Ditch Bank Stabilization Project. As with past segments, Lake County will bid out the project and we will then pay the contractor.
- At our Operation & Maintenance meeting held this afternoon, we spent time updating our emergency plan to make sure all the resources, traffic plans and contact information is accurate.
- Annual USACE inspections are scheduled to start at the beginning of April. The first phase of inspections will cover the Gary, Griffith and INDOT segments.
- We have two beaver dam removals to make in Hobart. One is off of an unnamed lateral about a quarter mile from the county line. The dam is about three feet high and over a hundred feet long. The other dam is on Duck Creek just east of downtown Hobart. We expect the removal of the dams in the coming weeks.
- We have submitted our annual report to the State of Indiana as required by our statute. The report gives an overview of our accomplishments throughout the past year.
- Christopher B. Burke Engineering completed the initial drone elevation survey of the system from State Line Road to Martin Luther King Drive. A few additional layers will be added to show additional information, but the initial survey is critical for the City of Gary's LOMR application.

Other Issues/New Business –

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to defer entering into an agreement with the City of Hammond and South Shore Visitors and Convection Bureau for engineering and design along the east side of Optimist Lake; motion seconded by Commissioner Wichlinski. Mr. Repay stated that the Commission would like to get some additional information on the project before we move forward with an Interlocal Agreement. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Ochi made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to advertise for Request for Proposals to develop a Comprehensive Watershed Master Plan; motion seconded by Commissioner Nimetz. Mr. Repay stated this will be our third update to our watershed plan with the last update occurring in 2021. We can take advantage of the different studies we've done over the past four years and identify what projects are important throughout the entire watershed. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Wichlinski made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to seek proposals for the design and engineering of the Lake Station Dam in Hobart; motion seconded by Commissioner Gozdecki. Mr. Repay stated we have modeled the area as part of our Deep River study and hope to develop a plan that will alleviate upstream flooding while maintaining the established legal lake level and incorporating

recreational components. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Gozdecki made a motion to approve an agreement with United Consulting for design and engineering of lift station improvements at the US 41 Stormwater Lift Station in an amount not to exceed \$228,000.00 pending legal review; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Mr. Repay stated that this project will lower the inlet to take more water in and allow us to retire two sluice gates as well as improve safety by installing a mechanical trash rack. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Motion passed 7-0.

Statements to the Board –

No Statements to the Board

Statements from the Board –

Chairman Baker welcomed Nicole Bennett as the new attorney for the Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission stating that our previous attorney David Wickland retired at the end of 2024 after fifteen years with the Commission.

Commissioner Ochi wished everyone a Happy New Year and thanked the public for attending our meetings.

Commissioner Nimetz welcomed Attorney Bennett to the Commission and thanked the public for attending our meeting.

Commissioner Gozdecki thanked the those who continue to attend our meetings and welcomed Attorney Bennett to the team.

Commissioner Wichlinski welcomed Nicole Bennett to the Commission and thanked the public for their continued support in attending our meetings.

Commissioner Whittaker welcomed Attorney Bennett on board. He thanked the public for coming out despite the adverse weather. He looked forward to a productive 2025 and hoped that we can get more minority participation as part of our metric for the new year.

Chairman Baker ended the meeting by stating Mr. Nimetz might be departing the Commission. He wanted to take the opportunity to thank him for all that he has contributed to the Commission and that we are all better for his involvement.

There being no further business, the next regular meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, February 19, 2025.