MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HELD AT 6:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2026
Location: LCRBDC OFFICE, Munster, IN

Vice-Chairman Wichlinski 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.

Commissioners Present:
Tom Wichlinski, Chairman
Robert Ochi, Vice-Chairman
Levon Whittaker, Secretary
Tom Gozdecki, Treasurer
Dave Castellanos
Ron Ware
Jenny Orsburn
Katie Fesko
Anthony Broadnax

Commissioners Absent:
none

Executive Director:
Dan Repay

Attorney:
Nicole Bennett

Staff:
Jodi Lambert

Visitors:
Gary Lee – Gary
Laurie Czulno - Hammond
Doreen Carey - Gary
Peter Goodspeed – The Wetlands Initiative
Victoria Wittig - Audubon
Harry Kuttner – The Wetlands Initiative
Justin Sherman - ASI
Craig Zandstra – Lake County Parks
Mark Hopper – Dunnet Bay Construction

Zoom Participants:
Bella – DNR
DJ Fesko
Frank Stewart - DLZ
Jeff Huet – Town of Schererville
Joe Exl - DNR
Joe Wilk – CBBEL
Kevin Cappo
Kristi Johnson – DNR
Nick Bellar – Town of Winfield
Siavash Beik – CBBEL
Tim Zorn
Vera Leopold – The Wetlands Initiative

Election of Officers –
The floor was opened for nominations for Chairman. Commissioner Whittaker made a motion to elect Tom Wichlinski as Chairman. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Broadnax. With no other nominations, Vice-Chairman Wichlinski called for a roll-call vote. Commissioners Wichlinski, Gozdecki, Whittaker, Broadnax, Castellanos, Ochi, Ware, Orsburn and Fesko vote in favor. None vote against. Motion passed 9-0.

The floor was opened for nominations for Vice-Chairman. Commissioner Ware made a motion to elect Robert Ochi as Vice-Chairman. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. With no other nominations, Chairman Wichlinski called for a roll-call vote. Commissioners Wichlinski, Gozdecki, Whittaker, Broadnax, Castellanos, Ochi, Ware, Orsburn and Fesko vote in favor. None vote against. Motion passed 9-0.

Statements to the Board –
No statements to the board.

Approval of Minutes -

Commissioner Ware made a motion to approve the minutes from June 17, 2026, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Chairman Wichlinski asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Commissioners Wichlinski, Whittaker, Castellanos, Ochi, Ware, Orsburn and Fesko vote in favor. None vote against. Commissioners Gozdecki and Broadnax abstained. Motion passed 7-0.

Chairman's Report –
Chairman Wichlinski welcomed everyone to our meeting. He noted that area communities have seen a lot of rain recently and thanked our Executive Director and partners in the field for all their assistance.

Executive Director's Report –
Mr. Repay gave an update on several of the projects:

- Since the beginning of June, we have not gone more than a couple days without rain. The weather has delayed many of our projects and we have been focusing our efforts on removing blockages and getting pumps back online. Overall, the system performed well.
- The rain has slightly impacted activities on the Kennedy Avenue Bridge Project due to the increased elevation and flow of the river. NIPSCO has been onsite moving their electrical poles.
- The Rock Riffle Trail Extension is nearly complete, with slight delays because of the rain. The final walkthrough is scheduled for next week.
- The closing on our revenue bond is scheduled for the end of July.
- US 41 Pump Station Project is also delayed due to the rain. Expected start date for this project is August 3rd.
- In cooperation with INDOT and working with our contractors Superior Construction and Christopher Burke Engineering, we hope to identify the problems and propose a fix to the issues that have caused flooding at the Kennedy Avenue and Indianapolis Blvd. interchanges.
- The Little Calumet Conservation Collaborative will be giving a short presentation on their current projects later this meeting.
- I had a meeting with the City of Hobart to discuss their priorities with respect to Lake George, and their focus is on the dam. Once the borings are completed, we can determine if the proposed design will work.
- We would like to thank all our partners including INDOT, Hammond, Highland, Gary and Munster for their assistance during these rain events.

Commissioner Broadnax requested clarification on costs related to INDOT issues the Commission is assisting with. Mr. Repay stated that we are paying for the investigative side of the project and hopefully a solution can be found that will then be presented to the state. Commissioner Ware requested we track the upfront costs that the Commission is paying out for investigative engineering.

Commissioner Whittaker asked for information on the Thornton Quarry and how much water it can hold. Mr. Repay said the quarry is about 94% full, currently holding about 7.4 billion gallons of water. He noted that the quarry wasn't online during the 2008 flood event.

Finance –
Chairman Wichlinski addressed the July 2026 claims totaling $563,817.35. Commissioner Broadnax moved to approve the claims as presented, and Commissioner Castellanos seconded the motion. Mr. Repay provided an explanation of several claims, noting that several claims were for emergency response call outs after the recent heavy rains. $17,091.97 was paid to Northern Indiana Mechanical for assistance removing several blockages throughout the system. 1st Response Maintenance submitted a claim totaling $1,110.00 for emergency response with gates in Gary. $9,658.75 was paid to Garcia LE & Associates for drone flights along the river to identify potential blockages in areas that are hard to access. Finally, Dunnet Bay Construction submitted a claim in the amount of $263,310.56 for continued work on the Kennedy Avenue Bridge.

Chairman Wichlinski asked if there were any questions or comments and called for a roll-call vote. Commissioners Wichlinski, Gozdecki, Whittaker, Broadnax, Castellanos, Ochi, Ware, Orsburn and Fesko vote in favor. None vote against. Motion passed 9-0.

Presentation -
Victoria Wittig, National Audubon Society, Peter Goodspeed, The Wetlands Initiative and Craig Zandstra, Lake County Parks presented an update on the Little Calumet Conservation Collaborative. A link to the video presentation is included below:

Video Link: https://youtu.be/jBEtlkZgkaE

Other Issues/New Business –
Commissioner Ochi made a motion to award a contract to Austgen Equipment, Inc. in the amount of $2,122,014.00 for Phase 5 of the Hart Ditch Stabilization Project. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Mr. Repay stated that Stage 5 was declared an emergency at the last meeting. Bids were requested from three contractors with two contractors submitting bids:

Austgen Equipment:	$2,122,014.00
Gariup Construction:	$7,997,950.00

Austgen Equipment has completed previous phases of this project. Chairman Wichlinski asked if there were any questions or comments and called for a roll-call vote. Commissioners Wichlinski, Gozdecki, Whittaker, Broadnax, Castellanos, Ochi, Ware, Orsburn and Fesko vote in favor. None vote against. Motion passed 9-0.

Commissioner Ware made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-13 and an Interlocal Agreement with the Lake County Drainage Board in the amount of $73,000.00 for the Spring Ditch Culvert Replacement Project. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gozdecki. Mr. Repay noted we are partnering with the Lake County Drainage Board on this project. Spring Ditch drains portions of Schererville and Highland. If the culvert fully collapses, there is no other way for the water to drain. Chairman Wichlinski asked if there were any questions or comments and called for a roll-call vote. Commissioners Wichlinski, Gozdecki, Whittaker, Broadnax, Castellanos, Ochi, Ware, Orsburn and Fesko vote in favor. None vote against. Motion passed 9-0.

Commissioner Orsburn made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-14 and an interlocal agreement with the Town of Winfield in the amount of $46,800.00 for the 117th Avenue Drainage Improvements Watershed Project. The motion was seconded by Commissioner

Fesko. Mr. Repay stated this is for study and design of 117th Avenue, which is the main thoroughfare between Crown Point and Winfield. The road has had some overtopping during large rain events. Chairman Wichlinski asked if there were any questions or comments and called for a roll-call vote. Commissioners Wichlinski, Gozdecki, Whittaker, Broadnax, Castellanos, Ochi, Ware, Orsburn and Fesko vote in favor. None vote against. Motion passed 9-0.

Commissioner Gozdecki made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-15 authorizing the opening of a Debt Service Reserve Fund. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Whittaker. Mr. Repay stated that these next two motions are in reference to the bond issuance. The Commission is required at the closing of the bonds to establish and maintain a separate Debt Service Reserve Fund. Chairman Wichlinski asked if there were any questions or comments and called for a roll-call vote. Commissioners Wichlinski, Gozdecki, Whittaker, Broadnax, Castellanos, Ochi, Ware, Orsburn and Fesko vote in favor. None vote against. Motion passed 9-0.

Commissioner Castellanos made a motion authorizing the opening of a designated bank account for the Kennedy Avenue Bridge Project. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ochi. Mr. Repay stated that this resolution authorizes the Commission to open a separate construction account for the Kennedy Avenue Bridge Project using proceeds from the bond to keep separate from the General Fund. Further discussion was held questioning if the motion was sufficient as it didn't reference the Resolution number. Commissioner Castellanos amended the motion to reflect Resolution 2026-16 authorizing the opening of a designated bank account for the Kennedy Avenue Bridge Project. The amendment was seconded by Commissioner Broadnax. Chairman Wichlinski asked if there were any questions or comments on the amendment and called for a roll-call vote. Commissioners Wichlinski, Gozdecki, Whittaker, Broadnax, Castellanos, Ochi, Ware, Orsburn and Fesko vote in favor. None vote against. Motion passed 9-0. A motion was made by Commissioner Castellanos to approve the motion as amended; seconded by Commissioner Fesko. Chairman Wichlinski asked if there were any questions or comments and called for a roll-call vote. Commissioners Wichlinski, Gozdecki, Whittaker, Broadnax, Castellanos, Ochi, Ware, Orsburn and Fesko vote in favor. None vote against. Motion passed 9-0.

There being no further business, the next regular meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, August 19, 2026.

Appointing Authority Disclosure:

Thomas Wichlinski, Chairman, Appointed by: Governor, Term of Appointment: 08/01/2009 to 12/31/2021
Robert Ochi, Vice-Chairman, Appointed by: Governor/City of Hammond, Term of Appointment: 05/01/2026 to 04/30/2030
Thomas Gozdecki, III, Treasurer, Appointed by: Governor, Term of Appointment: 08/30/2012 to 12/31/2021
Levon Whittaker, Secretary, Appointed by: Governor/City of Gary, Term of Appointment: 06/30/2014 to 06/30/2018
Anthony Broadnax, Commissioner, Appointed by: Governor, Term of Appointment: 05/01/2026 to 04/30/2030
David Castellanos, Commissioner, Appointed by: Governor/ Lake County Commissioners, Term of Appointment: 06/30/2014 to 06/30/2018
Ronald Ware, Jr., Commissioner, Appointed by: Governor/Lake County Commissioners, Term of Appointment: 12/01/2017 to 12/31/2021
Jenny Orsburn, Commissioner, Appointed by: Governor/INDR, Term of Appointment: 05/01/2026 to 04/30/2030
Katie Fesko, Commissioner, Appointed by: Governor, Term of Appointment: 06/02/2026 to 04/30/2030