MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
HELD AT 6:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2026
Location: LCRBDC OFFICE, Munster, IN

Vice-Chairman Ochi 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.

Commissioners Present:
Robert Ochi, Vice-Chairman
Levon Whittaker, Secretary
Ron Ware, Treasurer
Anthony Broadnax
Dave Castellanos
Katie Fesko
Carly Brandenburg
Marie Forszt

Commissioners Absent:
Jenny Orsburn

Executive Director:
Dan Repay

Attorney:
Nicole Bennett

Staff:
Jodi Lambert

Visitors:
Gary Lee – Gary
Dave Taborski – Gary
Harry Kuttner – The Wetlands Initiative
Paul Daniels – CCxPD LLC
Mark Hopper – Dunnet Bay Construction
Laurie Czulno - Hammond
Matt Lake, Merrillville Stormwater Utility
John Lewis – HWC Engineering
Sandy O'Brien - Hobart
Bob Csanyi – Robinson Engineering

Zoom Participants:
Justin Sherman – American Structurepoint
Jeff Huet – Town of Schererville
John Garcia – Garcia LE & Associates
Kevin Cappo
Peter Goodspeed – The Wetlands Initiative
Tim Zorn
Victoria Wittig – Audubon Great Lakes

Vice-Chairman Ochi announced two new board members, Carly Brandenburg and Marie Forszt and welcomed them to the Commission.

Election of Treasurer -
The floor was opened for nominations. Commissioner Fesko made a motion to elect Ron Ware as Treasurer. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Whittaker. With no other nominations, Vice-Chairman Ochi called for a roll-call vote. Commissioners Ochi, Broadnax, Whittaker, Castellanos, Fesko, Brandenburg and Forszt vote in favor. None vote against. Commissioner Ware abstained. Motion passed 7-0.

Statements to the Board –
Laurie Czulno, Hammond – stated that she has been attending meetings since 2008 and wanted to introduce herself to the new members of the board. She added that she is here to ask questions and make sure that the Commission does its job, offering that in 2008 the people sitting there didn't do their job and her neighborhood had to fight to get the area out of the flood zone.

Approval of Minutes -
Commissioner Ware made a motion to approve the minutes from August 19, 2026, as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Broadnax. Vice-Chairman Ochi asked if there were any questions and called for a roll-call vote. Commissioners Ochi, Whittaker, Ware, Castellanos, Fesko, Brandenburg and Forszt vote in favor. None vote against. Commissioner Broadnax abstained. Motion passed 7-0.

Chairman's Report –
Vice-Chairman Ochi began with remembering the events of 2008 and the ramifications of that and noting the improvements and project the Commission has completed since that time.

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

- We continue to work with INDOT to address the drainage issues that caused flooding on I-94 at the Kennedy Avenue and Indianapolis Blvd. interchanges.
- Grimmer Construction is making good progress on the US 41 Lift Station Improvements Project despite the mid-August storm interruption. The project is still on schedule to be completed in November.
- The Kennedy Avenue Bridge Project is moving along slowly. There were some NIPSCO delays as their resources were prioritized to storm related repairs. We also are working through a small design delay that we hope to have resolved soon.
- Investigative work continues on the Lake George Dam project with geotechnical borings scheduled for later this week.
- The Rock Riffle Trail Extension Project in Lake Station is almost complete with only some minor punch list items remaining.
- The levee borings needed for the City of Gary's LOMR are finally scheduled to begin the week of September 28th with a final report to us in early 2027.
- We are still heavily into cleanup after the August 11th storms. There are a significant number of trees down in Hart Ditch that we are working to remove. We anticipate the cleanup of all areas to last several weeks.
- The Commission is assisting NIPSCO gain access to some of their remote sites where infrastructure is damaged and needs to be repaired.
- The USACE requested Bank Stabilization Project is more than 50% complete with only the Hammond and Highland segments remaining.
- We had a bid opening yesterday at our office for the Martin Luther King Culvert Replacement Project. Four bids were received:

Dunnet Bay Construction	$1,865,609.66
Gariup Construction	$1,699,700.00
Hasse Construction	$1,506,362.05
LGS Plumbing	$2,771,772.00

Executive Director Repay noted the passing of Arlene Colvin, a former board member of the Commission and Kola Awosika formerly of the Gary Sanitary District.

Additionally, Executive Director Repay announced that Tom Wichlinski and Tom Gozdecki were not reappointed to the Commission with their terms ending August 31, 2026, and thanked them for their many years of service.

Vice-Chairman Ochi asked if there was an estimate of when the storm related cleanup will be complete. Director Repay stated that cleanup could continue until Thanksgiving, especially in the remote areas that are difficult to access.

Finance –
Vice-Chairman Ochi addressed the September 2026 claims totaling $1,705,434.09. Commissioner Broadnax moved to approve the claims as presented, and Commissioner Castellanos seconded the motion. Executive Director Repay provided an explanation of several claims, starting with payment to Dunnet Bay Construction for $273,740.90. This represents pay application #4 for the Kennedy Avenue Bridge Project. Grimmer Construction submitted two claims for projects they are working on including $182,601.01 on the Rock Riffle Trail Extension Project in Lake Station and $310,332.10 for the first payment application on the US 41 Lift Station Improvements Project. The City of Crown Point requested reimbursement in the amount of $191,924.02 for their Edgewood Flooding Mitigation Watershed Project. Finally, several claims were paid for storm response cleanup including: $85,910.00 to Wiltjer Excavating for operating the air burner at Wicker Park and other storm cleanup, $67,250 to Keegan Bennett for tree cutting and clearing along the levee and $17,385.46 to Northern Indiana Mechanical for debris and tree removal at various locations in the watershed. Executive Director Repay noted that we have hired a consultant to assist with FEMA reimbursement for our storm-related expenses.

Discussion was held regarding USACE inspections for this year with Executive Director Repay stating that we will again be hiring an independent engineering firm to conduct certain inspections this year. As was the case last year, USACE does not have the funding to conduct their own inspections. The selected engineering firms will conduct inspections to USACE standards, and we will provide the documentation to USACE for their review.

Vice-Chairman Ochi asked if there were any questions or comments and called for a roll-call vote. Commissioners Ochi, Broadnax, Whittaker, Ware, Castellanos, Fesko, Brandenburg and Forszt vote in favor. None vote against. Motion passed 8-0.

Presentation –
The following Watershed Application was presented at the meeting. A link to the video presentation is included below.

Matt Lake, Merrillville Stormwater Utility and Bob Csanyi, Robinson Engineering presenting:

Southmoor Park Drainage Improvements Project (Phase 2)
Request Amount: $353,106.25 (50%)
Video link: https://youtu.be/pENFPzr6ljA?si=bcsXYdr8HV_Tg1eP

Other Issues/New Business –

Commissioner Castellanos made a motion to award the Martin Luther King Drive Culvert Replacement Project to Hasse Construction in the amount of $1,506,362.05. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Brandenburg. Executive Director Repay noted that the culvert is collapsing and this is the only pathway for the river to make it east into Burns Waterway. Vice-Chairman Ochi asked if there were any questions or comments and called for a roll-call vote. Commissioners Ochi, Broadnax, Whittaker, Ware, Castellanos, Fesko, Brandenburg and Forszt vote in favor. None vote against. Motion passed 8-0.

Commissioner Broadnax made a motion to approve Resolution 2026-19 authorizing the Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission to enter into Interlocal Cooperation Agreements with Cities and Towns in the Watershed allocating interim disaster recovery funds for emergency vegetation debris removal and disposal. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Forszt. Executive Director Repay stated that communities within the watershed have been financially impacted all at once due to the August storm, with reimbursement not expected for almost two years. These funds will help with some of their immediate needs. Vice-Chairman Ochi asked if there were any questions or comments and called for a roll-call vote. Commissioners Ochi, Broadnax, Whittaker, Ware, Castellanos, Fesko, Brandenburg and Forszt vote in favor. None vote against. Motion passed 8-0.

There being no further business, the next regular meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, October 21, 2026.

Appointing Authority Disclosure:
Robert Ochi, Vice-Chairman, Appointed by: Governor/City of Hammond, Term of Appointment: 05/01/2026 to 04/30/2030
Levon Whittaker, Secretary, Appointed by: Governor/City of Gary, Term of Appointment: 06/30/2014 to 06/30/2018
Ronald Ware, Jr., Treasurer, Appointed by: Governor/Lake County Commissioners, Term of Appointment: 12/01/2017 to 12/31/2021
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
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
Carly Brandenburg, Commissioner, Appointed by: Governor, Term of Appointment: 09/01/2026 to 08/31/2030
Marie Forszt, Commissioner, Appointed by: Governor, Term of Appointment: 09/01/2026 to 08/31/2030