

Marshall County Regional Sewer District Board Meeting Minutes

Marshall County Building – 112 W. Jefferson Street, Room 203, Plymouth, IN 46563

The Marshall County Regional Sewer District Board met in a regular session on Wednesday, April 9, 2025, at 9:00 AM at the Marshall County Building located at 112 W. Jefferson Street, Room 203, 2nd Floor, Plymouth, IN 46563.

MEETING ATTENDANCE: The meeting was called to order at 9:06 AM by Jay Stone.

1. ROLL CALL:

MCRSD Board: Brenda Meyers, Diann Parsons, Debbie Palmer, Jay Stone, and Christopher Spier

Baker Tilly:

Carson, LLP: Christopher Nusbaum, Esq.

JPR: Kenneth Jones, Jr., and Jennifer Ransbottom

2. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Statement: Anyone wishing to speak needs to state their Name and Address for the record and will have 3 minutes to speak. Your comments will be made as a part of the public meeting.

Janine Clemons – 15938 Cook Lake Trail – Question where placements of the tanks will be. Will they be 100% along the road along the 15-foot easement or are they going to be down lower to the home since our homes are lower? Will we be required to have a lift pump to get it up to the tanks? Christopher Nusbaum stated there will be an easement workshop with stations to look at specific property looking at your infrastructure. Legal Counsel will be in attendance, and Notaries will be available to answer questions. Jennifer Ransbottom stated that personal site visits can be scheduled that focus specifically on their personal property.

Dean Colvin – 12539 Nataka Trail – I appreciate all the work the Board has done thus far with regards to the sewer district. I am not one particularly objecting to the sewer district itself but have great concerns about the financial aspects of the sewer district as I looked through the minutes of the meetings. It seems to me that in 2024, you identified that in order for this to be financially sustainable and result in a reasonable and affordable fee and it is your objective to go forward with this project. But this project relies on a grant from the State of Indiana. We are dealing with \$21M, and the grant you applied for in 2024 was \$15M and at that time it was a competitive bid, and the competitive bid resulted in more than 105 individual projects that applied for that grant with 11 grants given out that year and our project was identified as 22nd. If I understand how grants work, you must reapply this year, and the pool can be greater or smaller; it could have other projects ahead of our project with higher priority for the project. So, the idea of getting the grant to help this project fluctuates, but it plays a great deal in the outcome of the property owners that are affected by this project in terms of what it is going to cost on a monthly basis. The sad part about the project that concerns me a bit is over a period that is a substantial amount of money for a person to pay. Is it reasonable to continue in the pattern that you are in the construction of this without first knowing the real raw numbers of what it is going to cost the individual property owners. You suggested in your three scenarios in the range of \$206.00 to \$211.00 without the grant money and with the grant money range it would be \$106.00 to \$111.00. Mr. Vice President, you had indicated you'd like

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to keep it to around \$100.00. Thinking and hoping that you can keep it around that is not a solid number for the residents around the lake to rely upon. Real numbers are in terms of the grant. In summary, break the project up to be more competitive for the grant. Identify be more specific instead of generalities and the individual costs for the residents, so they have a better idea. It won't be only the monthly costs that are incurred, but the cost to each of the individual landowners. I will probably have more costs to incur in order to push the waste to the grinder and if my outlet is down the hill that means I have to have some kind of pump. Jay Stone indicated that is where the engineers can answer your questions. Dean Colvin stated he meets with the engineers at noon on Friday. So, I met with the engineers, and they told me I have to have all this equipment. When I can call the Stone Boys and ask them what the heck is this going to cost me and they are going to tell me an astronomical amount. So, moving my poop is going to be pretty expensive and I assume there are others in the room with the same thing. To summarize, be caution and mindful as you're talking about other folks' ability to pay these fees in the future and also the fees in order to hook up to the sewer system and to kind enough to take a look at that. Don't always rely on what the engineers are telling you without questioning them substantially as they are trying to move the project forward as well. Jay Stone stated we appreciate your comments and one thing we cannot think about is that until the engineering work is complete and it goes out to bids, we don't know what kind of dollars we are talking about. We have a ballpark, possibly, but you the way the ballpark is changing these days with inflation and tariffs.

Connie Abels – 15086 Happy Acres I have several questions; I am on a dead end, and when will this project start, and will my access be blocked? Jay Stone indicated no. Will my yard get destroyed as they are routing the stuff through? Jay Stone stated that everything will be restored. Most of this is going to be in the right-of-way and directionally boring. I don't know what that means. Jay Stone stated directional bored is a tool that goes down and bores the line through. There will be some entrance and exit pits, but for the most part it is non-invasive. Okay because I have two giant trees in the front of my yard, and I did not know if they would have to go and if they were, I cannot afford to move them. Ms. Abel asked when the project will start. Kenny Jones stated there is probably about a calendar year design permitting, and easement acquisition. Ms. Abels asked where it would start. Kenny Jones stated that it is known for sure at this time. That will be up to the contractor, generally they will start at the downstream end and work their way upstream so where you're at will probably be at the end. Jennifer Ransbottom stated the site visit with an engineer would figure out about your trees and where to put the grinder. Ms. Abels stated she will call to arrange the site visit. Ms. Abels stated her neighbor had told her that his parents had this project happen at their lake, don't know what lake it was, but what they did was allow property owners to pay through their tax bill on the county part of the bill over 10 years and made it affordable. As you look around this room, most of us are seniors and on Social Security. The big chunk is going to be difficult. I read to get a loan, but then you have interest and payments and most of us get to this point where we don't want a mortgage, we don't want a loan. If there could be some sort of no interest financing or very low financing that could be added to our tax bill over 10 years or monthly over 10 years that would make it affordable for most people and a lot less anxiety of trying to figure it out. The \$100 a month for people on Social Security could be a big chunk. But it is that big chunk and if you don't have any income or your income can barely substantiate what you already have to cover, getting a loan is not an option. Appealing to all to make it affordable to the seniors that don't have an income and on Social Security and feel it can be done if it is spread over time.

Phil Milton – Menominee Dr. – I have the opposite concern; I am not a senior and everything in there is for 60 years and older. Right now, what you are trying to sell me on, and I am going

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to use you as an example as your sitting there, let's say the city shows up at your shop tomorrow. They tell you that Braun Roofing has some really bad trucks, they are leaking all over the driveway. I am going to need you to purchase brand new trucks in order to make them fix their problem. So not only am I not only going to make you buy brand new trucks to fix this guy's problem, I want you to make payment on those trucks for the next 2-3 years and maybe it will be \$300 a month or maybe \$1,000. Does that sound like a strong financial decision for you to say absolutely? Jay Stone stated it is not apples to apples you're discounting the fact that you have a benefit to have a sewer there. Mr. Milton stated I know I have a benefit there; all I am getting is a bill. I have a new septic. Now in order to do that, I have to have someone come in re-inspect, go to the health department, I believe you said last time, have them come out and re-inspect. Well, if you guys have all these plans and you already know what is leaking and here is the problem, then why am I re-instating that if I don't have a problem. Why does that fall back on me also? You would not do that; you would not replace all your trucks if Braun's Roofing trucks were leaking. Right, that is what you're asking us to do. You're asking us to fix our trucks, so that the next guy's truck doesn't leak. How does that make any sense for any of us? That is all we get; we get no answers or answer last time. You want us to do something you would not be willing to do. Mr. Stone stated you say you have a new septic, when was your septic put in? Mr. Milton, 8 years probably. Mr. Stone asked how old is your house. Mr. Milton stated he would have to go back and look, it was rebuilt so. Someone in the seating area asked what does age of the house have to do with it. Mr. Nusbaum stated if there is septic on a property now and one was put in 8 years ago, then there was one there previously and the water table around lakes is much higher. The ability to place a septic on a lake property or around lakes where there is very dynamic soil conditions (this is all information I have heard millions of millions of times, the engineers can speak to this as well), but the ability for that septic to accept affluent from the house and for it not to enter your water table (enter the water that your drink) is nearly impossible. Part of the preliminary engineering study that is done and what IDEM has ordered and organized this regional sewer district for the purposes of eliminating septic because there are septic's failing and contaminating your water shed. Mr. Milton stated if you drive down my road from me to Mr. Stone, I have a farmer spraying and I can reach out and grab his chemicals that are only 15 feet from my well. That is a bigger concern than what my septic is. Mr. Nusbaum stated that it would be a great thing to call the legislature and the state chemist. Mr. Milton stated it would end up like this again, no one can give answers. Mr. Nusbaum stated the state chemist is the one that controls those sprays and whether or not those sprays can occur within a particular radius of your well. Mr. Milton, then again here, what nobody can answer is would you be willing to pay for your neighbor's vehicle if it is leaking oil and force you to buy a new one. Mr. Nusbaum stated if it was contaminating the water my children were drinking, then 100%. Mr., Milton stated, so you're going to buy a brand-new car to fix your neighbor's problem. Mr. Nusbaum stated if that car is putting chemicals into the watershed, then yes. Mr. Milton, I don't believe that for a minute.

Chester Borys – 12337 Peach Road – To start with an easement on a property where is it going to be. I had gone up to South Bend and yeah, I want someone to come out and show me exactly where it is going to be, because I am not gone sign easements on an open thing where they can do anything across my whole property. Mr. Nusbaum stated there are two options with regard to that; you can set an onsite visit to shown were we preliminarily anticipate the grinder pump to be, but given the ability to design the project and for it to be affordable, we need to have the option to place it in a reasonable area. I can tell you from experience that when the ultimate design criteria says we should put it in one area and then when construction comes through and the contractor is physically on the property and they have looked found utilities in a place that we did not find them to actually be, it means that we need to move it.

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Every effort in every project we have ever made, when we have the information, we need to contact you then that contact is made and inform you of the change. For some people that is not sufficient enough and they indicate they want to know exactly where it is, and I don't want you to have the right to put it anywhere else. We have accommodated that in the past, you can image the cost of surveying 600+ properties is just to going to continue to add to the cost of the project so to keep the project affordable and efficient we ask for an easement based on the ultimate location of the facilities as well. We work with the property owner to put it in a reasonable spot. In order to limit the easement to a specific area in order to do that we'd need a survey and that would be at the cost of the homeowner. If the District has to go out and pay \$600-\$800 for every single person, then that is just an additional cost that everyone will have to bear through their monthly bill. If that is something that a property owner wants to do then we are happy to accommodate that, but it does make an issue that if we go out that and when time to construct and it cannot be located in that area then we have to go back to square one to find a new location.

Something that does not make any sense to me is your talking about our septic getting into our drinking water, but then you have sewage plant a farmer down the road putting silage on thicker than ever. Mr. Nusbaum stated your talking about manure. Mr. Borys stated this is not an animal, this is coming from the sewage plant. Mr. Nusbaum stated those are biosolids and they have been treated. That is not raw sewage, it is treated affluent. Mr. Jones stated that is a permitted and monitored activity between IDEM and the owner of the treatment plant and the landowner, which is called land application of the leftover biosolids after the treatment process. That is done all the time.

Mr. Borys asked if you are going to mail out notices for the meetings to show where it is going. Mr. Nusbaum stated that the permitting process. Plymouth sends out the notice for any biosolids that came from here will go to the Town of Plymouth and they have biosolids program. Mr. Borys stated the meeting to show where going on property. Mr. Jones stated we've talked about having easement workshop sessions in a couple of months after we've had a good sense of how many people, we've been able to actually meet with. Mr. Borys stated I am not signing any easement rights until I know exactly where it is going through my property. Mr. Jones stated after we meet and go over the best location is for both the district's O&M perspective and the use of functionality and land perspective, which is where it is going to go and stays on the plan. The only thing that will change if there is some unknown land item that is found during construction. Mr. Borys asked if the septic tank was going to be filled or removed? Mr. Jones stated it depends on what the landowner wants to do, either abandon in place, crack the lid, fill it in with dirt, make it unusable, some people prefer to have them removed entirely, because maybe they want to do so something else in that location. Most the time it is abandoned in place.

Tony Soria – 17336 Tomahawk Trail - Two things I kind of want to know, I gave up retirement from work last year and my boss asked me to give another year. Now you're asking me to pay another \$200 a month. But on retirement I don't have. It is easy for you guys to ask us all this because you're not paying. All I hear is on the customer's account, so I have to make another \$200 a month, which means I have to go and get another job. Alright, now I have lived my whole life and have worked my whole life to retire, and now, because someone wants a septic tank. I have lived out there for close to 50 years and never had a problem with the lake, never had a problem with my septic tank. Now I have had manure shoved all over the place by the farmers, but I don't want to put this on the farmers because they have been doing that for longer than I have been alive. But now you guys are saying oh wait there is something wrong with the lake now. So we are going to have to put the cost on all of you guys. I don't have that

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cost; I want to retire. I can't retire now, because someone decided that my water was not good enough to drink, but yet most of you guys live in town. My mom pays \$70 a month for her water bill and her garbage pick-up. Now why can't we have that? Mr. Stone stated that everyone on this board other than Don Ecker lives on the lakes and we will be paying the same rate. Mr. Soria stated I understand that, but what I am saying is that if you live in town, they are not paying \$200 a month for a septic system, on sewer. They pay about \$70 a month, which is what my mom pays. But you guys are asking us to pay \$200-\$210 a month, which we don't have and you're also asking us to pay a fee to install our grinder, which we don't want, you know. Where are we supposed to get the money for that? I don't want to go to the bank and pull out a loan for something I don't want. So, I am asking you guys where am I supposed to get the money? Mr. Stone stated yours saying to install the grinder, but the grinder will be installed by the District. Mr. Soria stated but I am paying for some of it. Yes or no, it is a simple question. Mr. Stone stated it is part of your monthly pay it is part of your repayment. Mr. Soria stated, yeah yeah, but if I lived in town, I would not be paying a startup fee. If I bought a house right now, would I be paying for start-up fees? Mr. Jones stated if you are thinking about doing that, I would suggest you carefully investigate the town you are planning to buy in. Mr. Soria stated I am not looking to buy it right now. Mr. Jones stated I can answer your question. Right now we are working on three different municipalities water systems, 2 in Northern Indiana and 1 in Michigan who are all having to wrestle with pretty significant rate increases because their water system is 50-60 years old and many of it needs to be replaced, there is old lead pipes and service lines, so the discussion we've heard about these kinds of project meetings for these rural utilities about the comparison between rural monthly bills and municipal monthly bills that conversation that use to happen all the time about the dramatic difference because they have this older system that all the capital has been paid for and are just paying for O&M. All those older systems are now coming due or hitting their design life or they are becoming no compliant with current drinking water regulation. It is forcing these towns and villages to make decisions that are really unpopular and probably less painful than doing a little bit at a time, so that maybe true for a minute, I been in public meetings where people are just as upset about their water bill. I think the one in Michigan that we are working on is going to triple because they have not had an adjustment in over 20 years. So, I would encourage you look into a town's water system. Mr. Soria said, but I am not moving. Mr. Jones, I am just answering your question. Mr. Soria, said I want to retire, but I can't retire and have to get another job if I do retire and that is the American dream right there bud. Right there. Another thing is why are we not having these meetings at night. Mr. Stone stated we did for a year's time, but no one showed up. Several people in the room stated no one knew about them. Mr. Soria, stated I had to take a day off today to come to this meeting. I work for the Plymouth School Corporation they don't close down during the day because you guys have a meeting. So, you know it is something to think about.

Jason Large – 14675 12B Road – I had more questions, but I think they will get answered through the course here with the comment section here in the front does not make sense, but any how. I come from the perspective that the cost obviously concerns anyone but I am all for it. It makes common sense to protect our well and water and everything of that nature. It is going to be a burden on some, but not on all. It is something that has to be done, so I will reserve my questions for a later time. I just wanted to come at it from a totally different perspective from what we've heard all this time. Thank you.

Annett Preatt – 17235 Tomahawk – Hi neighbors, you know we need the sewer, we do. The lakes need improvement, no doubt from the beginning to the end. The biggest thing for me and my neighbors is the cost. I mean, you're only saying maybe \$200, but you know, working 30 years in the nursing business, that is only an estimate and only having a feeling, it is only

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going to go higher, it is not going to go lower, come on people, the economy goes up. So, it is going to cost more. I just retired or I want to retire so badly, but I cannot do it if I have to pay another \$200 a month plus get a loan, oh my do you know what interest rates these days are, even low interest rates on Social Security. I can't afford it, so what do you want me to do. I have to get my sewer grandfathered in because I cannot afford your new one. I think your new one is a great idea, but I don't have the money for it. So ok, I want to solve the problem. How about if you rent an easement from me. I will rent it to you for \$1,000 a month, which should cover my costs. Applause from the crowd. Hey, let's do it. I can't afford it so I have to find another way, or I have to go back to work and excuse my language, but that sucks. That's all thank you guys. Mr. Nusbaum stated one of the things, and our financial advisor is not here today, but there are a lot of different funding options. Ms. Preatt stated those are options you have to pay back. I don't have money to pay anything back. Mr. Nusbaum stated everything costs money and God forbid your septic completely fails and you have to put a new one in that is the same thing we are really hoping to hedge against that for everybody. There are options that we have used in other districts where, hopefully, but we cannot definitely say until we have an offer in front of us that we have funding at 1% or funding at 1.5%. Ms. Preatt asked so why are we talking about it before we have definite answers. I need to know, I am worried. Mr. Nusbaum stated before we apply for financing, just like when you apply for one for your house you have to submit all your plans, so that is what we are doing, so we can get those answers, and it is competitive. Everybody else is going out there and they are asking for the same funds, but one of the things that we have done in similar situations has been able to offer an ability for you to buy your rate down to pay a little more up front and have a lower bill in the future. We have also had scenarios where there are costs that can be spread over time and take advantage of the same rates that the district. Again, those are all things that once we know numbers we will be able to give definitive and we will be able to talk with the Board about this makes sense. Ms. Preatt stated it does not make sense right now, look at us, most of us are retired, it does not make sense. The cost is too much. And I really want my lake to be better. I love being retired and fishing and having a good time on the lake. I can't afford it. I don't know what my husband and I will be doing. It won't be good if we have to incur this large cost. It costs too much, that's all. It's a good idea, but it just costs too much.

Bill Woodward – 12094 Peach Road – Some of the questions I had have already been answered, but I have a couple more. When are you going to start charging the monthly fee? Are you going to start charging when the contracts are let and construction starts? Are we going to be paying for our service before we get service? How is that going to work? Mr. Nusbaum stated generally when the contract is let, then service debt payments will begin. This is when the rate is finally adjusted and adopted, but to be able to service the debt to begin paying it is usually around half of the rate that begins while the project is being constructed. That allows us to finance the debt while it is being installed. Mr. Woodward stated some of these things that people have asked need to be put on the website and I would recommend that the sewer district have your own website instead of JPR running it because it appears they run everything, and you guys are a checkbook. We would like to see it be independent instead of dealing with you. You are supposed to be representing us. You're supposed to be trying to find a good solution for us. Most of the people are saying the same thing I am going to say it is too expensive, and you are expecting us to pay two years before we get service. I dug into the Preliminary Engineering Report and the project is about \$21M as it has been stated, so you are looking at \$16M in grants. We were on the list the last time submitted, and you missed it. If you miss it this time, you're still looking at roughly \$200 or so per month. So you are saying if you are going to charge us 2 years before we get service, that is \$100 a month and when we get service we will be charge \$200 a month and these are figures based on two years ago, and as the lady just said they are just going to go up. So, if

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someone wants an exemption, the site still does not tell us all the specifics to get an exemption for our septic system. You know if you go to IDEM, your system has to be less than 10 years old, you have to have it inspected, you can't be part of a subdivision, so my particular deed says I am on a subdivision. It says Lot # whatever, out of subdivision whatever. I know people, their deeds say they are part of a subdivision, are we going to be exempt, or be able to get an exemption, or not? Is that particular word, "subdivision," in our deeds disqualify us? Mr. Nusbaum stated that the information on IDEM is outdated. Mr. Woodward stated okay so we need to have good information on the website, and it needs to be specific. It also says on there that if your septic system was not permitted, then you do not qualify. So that needs to be on there because your information, you say in your years, only 396 were not permitted, yet your records only go back 20 years. The gentleman I talked to recently he had my permit for my house from 1978, and that is more than 20 years old, so does the 20 years go back from the paper, and it is combined, is it electronic record and what records are going to be used to disqualify people from the exemption. We need to know all this stuff specifically. Jennifer Ransbottom stated it depends on what the health department has. Mr. Woodward stated I don't know what they have back from 1978. Jennifer Ransbottom stated it depends on what the health department has. Mr. Nusbaum asked Jennifer Ransbottom if the new Frequently Asked Questions are up on the website. Jennifer Ransbottom stated it depends on when he looked at them and when he last looked at them. Mr. Woodward stated he looked at them yesterday. Mr. Woodward stated that it also references IDEM, and it also references other requirements. We need all the requirements and not to reference codes, put it all there so we can see if we are going to qualify or not. Mr. Nusbaum stated it is there, and we did update it. Mr. Woodward stated, any how we need to know these things; we need to know exactly what things disqualify us for an exemption, so some of these people do not want to go out and spend the money to get their systems inspected and approved and then find out that their deed says you're in subdivision and you do not qualify or we did not have an original permit for that even though their system might function properly. Give us all the stuff not just this and that or go look here or look there. The biggest bitch we all have is that we don't have all the information, and you want to start charging us a number we can't afford, and you want to charge us 2 years before we get service. I have already talked to 2 people who are selling out because they can't afford it and I have talked to 2 more and they are on the fence because they cannot afford it. How many people in this room do think are going to be on that fence that cannot afford it, can't get loans, can't afford to pay the loan and the \$200 a month? It is getting ridiculous you know I mean need more consideration from the board, we need to know how this thing is going to get financed. You don't get the grant which Judge Colvin said you missed the last time, does that mean that our monthly numbers will be increasing. Your right some people need it some don't, but it is not up to all of us to pay for it, but it is up to us to help figure out something equitable for everybody. Thank you.

Jay Stone asked Faith, from the Health Department, to shed any light on Mr. Woodward's comments. Jay Stone stated that the question is what does the Health Department have on file. Faith stated she wanted to first address the permit on file issue. Yes, we have paper and electronic, but unfortunately, from the late 1960s to the late 1990's it is hit or miss if we had those records because not all records were submitted to the department. We try our best to find everybody's records. Second, we need an inspection done before we can tell you if you have a passing septic or not. Unfortunately, I have not been made aware that just because you're in a subdivision, you can't get an exemption or have the original permit on file. I had not heard that. I am still learning too, along with everyone else. Hope to work together with people so we can get this all figured out. I don't want to tell someone that they cannot live in their house.

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Kaylee Vendola, 16362 12 B Road – Obviously I am one of the few members representing the non-retired class and still working class. What I am hearing, but forgive me, but it feels like a blatant cash grab. I mean understand the lakes and everything, but again, people have made the points that we are surrounded by farm land, so that to say that most of our, I would venture to a lot of our septic systems are just fine and not necessarily causing these environmental issues. But we are again, we are surrounded by farmland that is spraying and all these things. To me it seems like a blatant cash grab. I do not think I speak for myself when I say that. With that said my question if this is already set in stone, like you're hearing a bunch of decent right now from a lot of the neighbors and that you guys have put these meetings at a time when a lot of working class people can get the time to be at these meetings, but I am sure a lot of working class people have a lot of decent to this. Is there anywhere that descent is heard, and you guys do overturn this because people are saying they can't afford it? Are the options buy-in or sell your home and move? I am a first-time home buyer. I love the lakes, I love living on the lakes, but that feels like it is the position that you are putting many of us in. So, I would like to hear you guys' thoughts on that. Mr. Stone stated that the mandate was given by IDEM to the District, when the District was formed. We are obligated to at least pursue this. Mr. Nusbaum stated it is ultimately up to the Board to decide when we have all the information about whether to proceed with the project. The goal, again, is to make it affordable and I know there is disagreement and differing opinions on what is affordable and is ultimately the decision of the Board when they have all the information. Debbie Palmer stated I am taken aback when you say this is cash grab. I am not sure who you think is grabbing cash. Ms. Vendola stated okay our hands are being forced and a lot of us don't want to do this. Ms. Palmer stated all our meetings that we've had up until now, we have, when no one has shown up. I get frustrated when I hear people say your having these meetings at 9:00 in the morning, like we said over and over again, we had them for a year at night and no one showed up. Ms. Vendola said this and Ms. Palmer replied yes. Ms. Vendola stated we weren't notified. Ms. Palmer stated from our point of view we had these meetings for a year no one came so that is why we made that decision. We can revisit it. All through this process, we as a Board have always asked the question and even at one of the meetings may two or three times ago, I asked our experts the question, if we don't get these grants do we have the option of not moving forward. Already as a Board we have been concerned about what this is going to cost people and the answer was no, we do not have to move forward. If we decide that the project is too expensive and we don't get any grants, we as a Board can make that decision that we don't think this is the right time. Ms. Vendola stated that it is really good to know. Ms. Palmer stated we are very concerned and have always kept it a topic of what is this going to cost ourselves and our neighbors. There is no cash grab, we have always had what it is going to cost. Someone in the crowd stated that one thing we wanted is to hear it from the Board. Ms. Palmer stated a lot of times the questions are very technical, and I don't have the technical answers.

Ernie Young, 15954 Cook Lake Trail – I actually live in Mishawaka. I have a couple comments for the Board. First off, I am a dinosaur you started about scheduling meetings and how do you do it. Jennifer Ransbottom stated in your letter there was a name, Cara Anderson, along with a phone number, you need to just call her and schedule the meeting. Mr. Young stated not everyone is a computer tech. Back when I was young, someone started putting sewers down the street or water the municipality paid for it. Now the users have to pay for it. I understand that is just the way it is done. This undertaking is not cheap, and I understand that. How far out are these one on one meetings if we schedule one. Jennifer Ransbottom stated we are already scheduling them, and it depends on your schedule and the engineers. We are trying to do them on Friday when it is most convenient for everyone. Mr. Young stated he thinks that is a good answer to a lot of the confusion and concerns, especially for me. I

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don't know how many years ago it was, there was something in the South Bend Tribune about a housing project that was proposed North of Meyers Lake on the farm ground and according to my memory the local people complained quite a bit because it would pollute the extra number of houses. It seems like it started at about 170 sites and got whittled down to 120 sites and the main concern was pollution of the groundwater with all those septic systems. If this project goes through and that project goes through, are they going to be part of this system? Ken Jones stated we are not aware of any large scale projects being planned within the projects area at this point, so assuming that project no longer exists. I would have thought if there was a developer cooking up a plan, they would have tracked us down once or twice already. Mr. Young stated not being a resident that for us it is a summer home and at the current rates every time I sit on the toilet it is going to cost me about \$20.00. I want to say the project is a good thing, not for me, but for my grandkids.

Mark Borys, 16184 12 B - So one of my concerns is I have been here for over 50 years and did everyone that owns a piece of property get this letter even if they don't have a house on it now? Jennifer Ransbottom stated some probably won't. Mr. Borys stated his concern is there were a lot of mobile homes when he came and now, they have been taken away and people have brought in campers, and they have hooked into the system, and they are on the lake. I think they should be included. Jennifer Ransbottom stated if there is a septic on the project then yes, they have been included. If we don't know about it, we would want to know about it. We would hope someone would tell us. Mr. Stone stated that between the Health Department and the Board it will happen. Mr. Borys stated another concern is will other people have moved their buildings and they have built them over with maybe a garage that nobody knows about in and around the lake. So, if they had a septic system and you knew about it would they have gotten the letter to. Mr. Jones stated if the property produces wastewater yes, they should have received a letter. Mr. Borys stated there is a property that had a mobile home on it, it was moved, a house was built with its own septic field. A garage was built over where the mobile home was, and it uses the mobile home's septic tank with its own leach field. I guarantee you guys don't know this. Mr. Jones stated they would have received the letter. Mr. Borys stated we want to be equal to everyone, how do we know they go that letter? Mr. Nusbaum stated we went through all the property record cards. He stated if there is a garage and there is not a record of it, I am sure the County would be very interested to know that. Mr. Jones stated you'll hear the term house count, but what it is our staff driving around the entire project area and documenting what looks like a habitual structure or a waste water producing structure whether camper sitting on the ground or a concrete slab, home or apartment, look at arial views for vents. Jennifer Ransbottom stated the JPR staff is pretty familiar with garages that look like they are sewage producing. It does not mean that we miss some, but we rely on other information.

Corey Dennie – 18318 Chickasaw Trail – I live at Lake Latonka, I have a couple concerns some of them have been addressed today. Specifically, what are we getting for this spending of over \$20M and there is going to be maintenance issues down the road. They are already having grinder issues at Pretty Lake with baby wipes, not toilet paper. When grandkids come to town they use baby wipes. One of my friends had this issue recently. Mr. Jones stated O&M anticipated costs built into the preliminary rate analysis. Anyway, non-flushable baby wipes non flushable adult wipes are also becoming an issue. Mr. Dennie stated this could cause a backup or major issue from Lake Latonka to the town which is 10 miles. Mr. Jones stated an about this project and most pressure sewer projects is everyone getting their own grinder. If you were the one to flush something that should not have been flushed you are the one that is going to pay the price for the backup and not your neighbors. Mr. Dennie asked what the life expectance of these grinders is. Mr. Jones stated 20-30 years, and it is built into the

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monthly cost. Jennifer Ransbottom stated the District owns the grinder, so if there is a repair, the District repairs. Mr. Dennie stated for the \$20M, what are we getting in improved water quality? I have done some triathlons, and I have swam across Pretty Lake with my friends and in July or August it looks like coffee and you tell me it is going to improve the water that much. They have had it in place, and we have not had any bans on Lake Latonka. I have lived there since 1996 because we have 20 systems leaking in and concerned with ecoli or whatever the concerns are. There have never been swim bans there. Debbie Palmer asked if anyone is testing the water. Mr. Dennie stated we are testing the water and never had an issue, so what are we getting for this \$20+M. As we said Marshall County, and I get it my family owns farmland, I own some farmland in addition to living on a lake, Marshall County is very agricultural friendly. We are complaining about the farmers, but we like their food, but that is not going away, and the agricultural runoff is terrible for lakes, but we can't get away from that. So, what are we getting for \$20+M and a lot of retired people that are never going to retire. These people in the room have helped with that. I am really concerned about down the road costs. Initial costs I get that but there is maintenance and lots of other things for what is the end result. You are telling me that the water in Lake Latonka which is a dirt bottom lake, manmade, it is not going to look like one of the lakes in Northern Michigan. Is it worth inconveniencing all these people and in addition to the construction project and the road damage and all these other things. That is for the board to determine if it is worth it.

Lady in Back of Room – If you are asking for a grant, why not ask for a bigger grant. It seems to me that it would help everybody. Mr. Stone stated it is one of those things you can ask all you want, but we won't know until that is determined what that will be, it is all a process.

Bill Woodward – 12094 Peach Road – Jay, I have to ask, on the grant thing, is there a limit to the percentage of the grant money for the project? Like originally, the PER talked about 75% grant money \$16M vs \$21M grant project. Is it limit to how much grant money we can get? Mr. Nusbaum stated that it depends on the funding cycle. We had a project that we did not anticipate getting any grant money, and a call came informing funding cycle ends tomorrow, and we have \$10M of grant money – you want it. In Indiana, you have to give notice of a meeting and post it 48 hours in advance. We determined it was an emergency and called a meeting. That is an example of there being a limited amount of money and a lot of the dollars we are applying for come from Federal funding and are then administered at the State level through the Indiana Finance Agency in the State Revolving Fund. That is the pool of money we are targeting as well as the USDA. There is no limit to the amount of the grant, but is it is the IFA's goal is to see as many as possible project happen. The IFA scores every project, like a rubric, so you want to score high to be in the fundable range and that is how they fund these projects. Mr. Jones stated that they knew last year we were waiting for funds and one of the things that factors into the IFA's scoring process. I can say for whatever reason that JPR developed these rural utility projects as one of our engineering specialties. during the course, it is impossible to know all the final expenses until the project goes out to bid. It is impossible to put the project out to bid until everything is designed. Mr. Woodward inquired at what point to do you submit for funding, and whether you have so much engineering done to submit for funding per contract. Mr. Jones, in order to get the District created, a county-wide analysis had to be completed and then do a PER specific to PSA 1 and presented to IFA and USDA. Have preliminary funding approval from IFA to proceed.

Debbie Palmer stated there has been a lot of talk about people saying my septic system is not failing it has been there for 50 years and it is fine. My question have you had it inspected anytime lately? There is part of the discussion there are a lot of very old septic systems in this area and we don't know if any of them are failing or have failed. The county had no

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requirement for inspections when they have to be pumped, so it is up to the individual homeowner. That is part of something that we are addressing for septic systems that we don't know anything about. The other thing is the very small lot sizes. So, if a septic system fails what does that homeowner do? What happens if all these old septic systems start failing. Mr. Woodward stated that there are a number of potential septic systems and there are a number of different ways that you don't have to have a tank and leach field. Mr. Jones stated that the information collected with the help of the Health of Department for the PER indicates that there are a total of 601 home sites, 205 documented systems, and 396 undocumented systems. Mr. Woodward stated that he challenges that the records go back 20 years, and I got my permit from 1978, so I don't think those numbers are correct and are skewed.

The Public Hearing was closed at 11:05 AM.

3. MEETING MINUTES:

The minutes of the March 12, 2025, Monthly Board meeting were presented and reviewed by the board members. Brenda Meyers stated on Page 17 under Any Other Business Brought Before the Board, 4th Paragraph, LGF should be DLGF. Debbie Palmer made a motion to approve the minutes of March 12, 2025, with the correction as noted. The motion was seconded by Christopher Spier. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. FINANCIAL REPORT and CLAIM APPROVALS:

a. Financials – March 2025

Jennifer Ransbottom reported on behalf of Brenda Meyers the balance ending March 31, 2025, was \$2,370,528.05. There were disbursements last month of \$69,250.76.

Brenda Meyers made a motion to approve the minutes of Financials ending March 31, 2025 as presented. The motion was seconded by Christopher Spier. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

b. Claims – March 2025

Jennifer Ransbottom stated there were 2 claims totaling \$52,257.23, one for Baker Tilly and one for Jones Petrie Rafinski.

Christopher Spier made a motion to approve Monthly Claims for \$52,257.23. The motion was seconded by Debbie Palmer. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

5. LEGAL COUNSEL UPDATE:

a.) Don Ecker, Jr. Appointed by Plymouth Mayor and Deborah K Palmer appointed by Commissioners Terms Expire 5-1-2025

Christopher Nusbaum stated he received from the Town of Plymouth's attorney Don Ecker's appointment for the new term that will expire in 2029. Deborah Palmer's appointment is on the slate to be taken up by the commissioners.

6. INSURANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

No update

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7. ENGINEERING COMMITTEE UPDATE

a. Engineering Committee Meeting

The meeting was held on March 17, 2025. Christopher Nusbaum stated that the main discussion at this meeting was a review of the vacant lot agreement. He stated the committee would like the Board to consider that when a project is put out and there is a vacant lot, there is no requirement for someone to connect. From time to time, we have had people who want to pay right now because they plan to build a house in the future and don't want to join the project later, but right now. Because there is no ability for them to connect but the vacant lot agreement, even though no obligation to pay the debt service costs because there is no sewage producing structure, we generally don't charge the operating rate cost. There is no action at this time and but perhaps at the next meeting, the agreement can be reviewed and approved.

Christopher Spier made a motion to approve the Engineering Committee minutes of March 17, 2025 as presented. Brenda Meyers seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

8. ENGINEERING UPDATE

Kenny Jones stated we are in the middle of taking phones calls, getting site visits scheduled. There was an internal team meeting with the engineers who are working on the refined hydraulic model for the preliminary system. One item we need to decide right now is how to get the dead end at Happy Trail connected. The lead engineer will be making a site visit to this area in the future, along with the driller to provide opinions.

Kenny Jones reported he is planning to meet with a landowner in the coming weeks regarding Pump Station #2 site.

a. Project Tracking Tool

The Project Tracking Tool was included in the Board's packet for their information.

b. AMP/FSP Certification

c. SRF Memo Update

9. PRE-DESIGN

Christopher Nusbaum reported that a response has been received from the City of Plymouth. Currently, Baker Tilly is working on integrating what that will look like in their rate study. We continue those discussions. He stated he had asked their attorney for additional information and is comparing their Ordinances and what was put in the agreement.

10. FINANCIAL CONSULTANT UPDATE

No one was in attendance.

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11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS BROUGHT BEFORE THE BOARD

Christopher Nusbaum stated it would be a good idea for the Board to discuss meeting structure and times. Brenda Meyers suggested that one month a meeting could be held in the morning and evening. Debbie Palmer inquired how are we going to address the issue of the time of the meeting. Issues noted about changing the meeting is that one Board member works evenings, when meetings were held in the evening, the building was locked, and they had to call to get the building unlocked. Kenny Jones reminded the Board that there has been only a small portion of the population that had been attending. Debbie Palmer would like to be able to respond and let the public know they were heard regarding the meeting time, which we discussed, and the reasons why the meeting is not being moved.

Christopher Nusbaum to have easement workshops and secure a location. This is generally done on Saturday mornings to have financial, legal, engineering, and a few Board members present. The best location is a gym. Pretty Lake has an auxiliary building. Pretty Lake Church. Kenny Jones stated there is a contact at Ancilla College. Jay Stone stated that Washington Elementary School would be an option. Christopher Nusbaum will identify dates and present options and present date options at the next meeting.

Debbie Palmer stated it might be worthwhile at the beginning of our meeting to discuss public meeting etiquette. As in today's event, with the gentleman who came up and wanted to have a private conversation with a Board member at a public meeting. It was evident that the person was very frustrated with that. Debbie Palmer suggested a short reiteration that private conversations with Board members cannot be held. Christopher Nusbaum stated there are two ways of having public comment, either at the beginning of the meeting or at the end of the meeting. He stated a brief explanation could be provided. Debbie Palmer stated she hears from the public that they don't hear the Board talk enough. She stated when she did try to address some comments during the meeting, then it opened it up to public comments. Christopher Nusbaum suggested adding another agenda item after Public Comment, for Board Member Comments, making it clear that Public Comments are closed. Jay Stone stated the Board is still learning as this is their first time. Where the legal counsel, engineering and finance consultants have been through this before; therefore, the Board looks to them for assistance. Christopher Nusbaum stated in another District they have the public complete a public comment card that allows the public to submit their question. Debbie Palmer suggested at the next meeting, after Public Comments are closed, to give time to clear the room. This discussion will continue at the next meeting when all Board members.

Debbie Palmer stated the comment on having own website may be beneficial and more helpful for the public to find information. She asked what the Board needs to do. Kenny Jones stated there are enough funds in the budget for their own domain. JPR will assist the District in creating its own domain.

Meeting structure and time will be further discussed at the meeting.

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12. ADJOURNMENT:

Diann Parsons made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Christopher Spier. All were in favor. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:14 AM.

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