

**DRAFT MINUTES**  
**Buffalo Lake Protection and Rehabilitation Board Meeting**  
**Saturday May 11, 2024 - 8:30 a.m.**  
**PACKWAUKEE TOWN HALL**

**1. Call meeting to order.**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30am by chairperson Bernie Sosinsky

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

No flag - not done

**3. Roll Call**

Commissioners present: Bernie Sosinsky, Darrel Unsinn, Dustin Esselman, Karyn Niin Kitigade, Dwight Federson, Judi Nigbor - Absent: Jon Vote

Judi informed the board that Jon Vote is no longer on the county board.

**4. Accept minutes from March 2, 2024 meeting**

Dwight motioned - Darrel seconded.  
Accepted

**5. Changes or Additions to Agenda**

None

**6. Treasury Report**

Darrel gave the treasure's report. As of April 30, 2024 - \$19376.92 in the checking account - \$268417.92 in the operating fund - \$50910.85 in the equipment fund. Total of all accounts \$338705.69

We received the grant money for the new harvesters, but those funds are not reported here because they came in after this report. It will be included in the next report.

Darrel motion to accept report - Karyn seconded.

**7. Lake Level Report**

Bernie reported that there is forward movement and there have been meetings with politicians. Dustin reported that a consultant was hired to do the required studies. It is Cason and Associates. We paid them \$75,000.000 from the grant we received and the other \$25,000.00 will be paid when the study is completed. The study will take all this year to complete.

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Some of the studies are studying water temperature and studying the effects of raising the water level at the dam and further upriver.

Dustin and Bernie will be meeting with the DNR to coordinate the studies.

We should have the results of the studies in November or December. After that we will make our proposal to move forward with making changes.

Alex Dallman had been very supportive. He wants to see the lake level change. He has been talking to the other representatives.

Bernie said we all should still be documenting any issues we are having.

Bernie reported that meetings are taking place regarding the channel that was filled with silt after the dam broke off county road C.

Bernie has talked with the DNR about the gates that the farmers use to release or hold back water.

A lake district member brought up concerns about the fish not being able to spawn because of the low water level.

Darrel reported that the DNR will not allow us to cut the laterals and navigational lanes until June 2nd. He did receive permission to allow the new employees to be on the water to train starting May 20th. They can only cut in the main channel.

A member asked why they don't start cutting at the dam in Montello instead of starting on the west end and moving east. Bob Fohey said that they tried this, and it did not work.

Karyn asked what the H&H study is. Dustin said it is a study that simulates water levels. If they set the dam level at a certain height it will show how that will affect landowners both up and down stream of the dam. The H & H study is being done by a subcontractor under Cason & Associates.

Bernie said that the grant will cover the cost of the studies.

A member asked if the consultants were informed of what we want regarding the water levels. Dustin said that they were.

A member asked if the lake management plan is part of the study. Bernie said no, the DNR would not allow it. The lake management plan is due to be done this year. Bernie said, it hasn't been decided as to who will do the lake management plan.

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A member asked about silt entering the lake. Karyn said that she will explain what is being done when she gives her report.

A member asked where the money is coming from for the study. It is from a grant. Alex Dallman is working with Bernie and Dustin on the lake level issues. Alex said that he has met with other legislatures about the issues on Buffalo Lake. They've met with the DNR. He said that the DNR said that they don't have any records from before 2018. Alex said that the DNR officials said that if we turn in good studies, this issue will be resolved by spring of 2025.

Karyn thanked Alex and said that members are reporting that they are getting responses from all the legislatures but the DNR never responds.

### **8. Harvest Committee**

Bob Fohey, reported that the harvesting machines are ready to be used for training. The new machine comes May 22nd.

Bernie asked about the forklift - what's the status? The emergency brake has been fixed. Darrel looked into the price for leasing a skid steer. It would be \$9,100.00 for our season. They are looking to purchase a used one.

Bob asked if it would be okay to keep a district truck parked at a worker's home while the causeway is closed. Bernie said yes.

Darrel said that all the new people for harvesting are ready to start training.

Darrel said the herbicide treatment was approved by the DNR. It is scheduled for May 20th. He has volunteers who will put the signs on the properties of the people who paid for the treatment.

Darrel reported that a woman hit the fence by the harvest yard when her car slid off the road during a snowstorm. A quote to repair it is \$4200.00. The woman does not have insurance. There was a discussion about what we should do. It was decided that Darrel would get another quote for repairing the fence and then we will discuss it at the next meeting.

### **9. County - Township Reports**

Judi reported that the daily fee has increased to \$5.00 and it is now an access fee not a launch fee. Non-motorized boats must now pay. The annual fee will remain at \$25.00.

The causeway will close on June 17th. They are hoping to have it open by Labor Day but that is weather dependent.

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The town is asking the lake district if they will allow them to have a dumpster on the harvest yard property while the causeway is closed. Judi said that the lake district can decide on the days and hours. Bernie said he is in favor of it because we are providing a service for our lake district members on the south side of the lake. Karyn suggested that people would only be able to use that dumpster on Saturday and not Wednesdays so that they are not interfering with the harvesting operation. Judi agreed with Saturday's only. Bernie asked that the town check with Bob Fohey about placement of the dumpster so that it doesn't impede on the harvesting operation. Darrel said that he does not want the dumpster on lake district property because Lance will not give the lake district a dump sticker. Karyn made a motion to allow the town to have a dumpster at the harvest yard to be used only on Saturdays and it has to be manned by the town and properly maintained. Dustin second. The lake district board voted 4 in favor - one opposed.

Bob Fohey brought up that the launch at Freedom road Launch is a problem. Judi will take the concern back to the town.

**10. Ecology Committee** - Karyn reported that the sub committee Water Quality & Silt Control had met twice. They will be meeting again with Dave Bolha and Pat Kilbey to discuss ways to cut down on the amount of silt entering the lake. She said that we can raise the water level all we want but if we don't do something to slow down the amount of silt entering the lake the water level will never be higher because the riverbed is rising. The committee is also looking into the amount of phosphorus and nitrogen in the water. It is not an overnight fix but the committee feels that we need to take some steps to control the silt. They will look at the creeks and ditches feeding the lake. Gary Kershaw said that we will be learning what is being done on other lakes and rivers. Karyn asked Dustin if they could meet and talk about how the lake level committee and this committee can work together. Dustin agreed to meeting.

**11. Fish Committee** - Paul Ratzberg reported that the fish committee is trying to do some fundraising to raise money for more fish. Some businesses are not supporting the fish restocking fund because their business is suffering. The fish stocking this year will take place sometime in May.

**12. Petition to leave lake district** - A lake district member is asking to leave the district because he sold and divided his property. The member's lawyer presented the case. After discussing the petition it was decided that the board needs to look into this further before making a decision. It is tabled until the next meeting. Karyn made a motion that we look into this matter further and that we table the vote until the next meeting. Dustin seconded.

**13. Unfinished business** - Dustin asked if Lake Puckaway came to pick up the equipment they bought from us. Dustin asked who is insuring it - us or Puckaway. Bernie said that we need to tell them that it needs to be off the property by June 1st. Bob Fohey said that it isn't in his way. It was decided that the equipment does not have to be moved off the property yet. Dustin will tell

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them and also let them know that we are not responsible if there is any damage. Bob reminded Bernie that Emery parks their equipment at the yard during the winter.

**14. New Business** - nothing

**15. Set the date for the next meeting** - Bernie suggested July 13th at 8:30. Board agreed.

**Meeting adjourned** - 9:45am

Minutes submitted by Karyn Niin Kitigade