

**MINUTES OF THE KANKAKEE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION  
HELD THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2011 AT  
9:30 AM CDT  
Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission Auditorium  
6100 Southport Road  
Portage, IN 46368**

Chairman Chris Knochel called the meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Secretary Jim Lambert called the roll.

*Members present*

Eric Blad	Kevin Breitzke	
Dennis Estok	Myrna Harder	Tony Hendricks
Chris Knochel	Jim Lambert	Tom Larson
John Law	Jim Pistello	Russ Pumroy
Ken Purze	Gerry Scheub	Bruce Shepherd
Vince Urbano	Jim Walstra	

*Guests Present*

Kerry Daily	Gus Ellicott	Joe Exl
Jim Fahey	Donald Lode	Nicole Messacar
Harvey Nix	Joe Skelton	Joe Toth
David Zack		

*Staff Present*

Jody Melton

## **Approval of Minutes**

Ken Purze made a motion to approve the October 13, 2011 meeting minutes. Kevin Breitzke seconded and the minutes were approved.

## **Finance Report**

Jody Melton explained the finance report. Tony Hendricks asked about the item listed as 2009 funds. It was explained that item was carryover from the previous year. *(Later I realized that is a typo. It should read 2010 funds).* Jim Lambert moved to accept the report, Kevin Breitzke seconded and the report was approved.

Chairman Knochel told the Board that he, Ken Purze and Jody Melton had traveled to Indianapolis on Wednesday, the 14<sup>th</sup>, to seek release of funds from the State Budget Committee. \$470,000 was released. Chairman of the Committee Rep. Espich asked if the Commission had ever considered trying to raise funds locally.

Ken Purze reported that the 3 County Drainage Board had worked with Starke County and KIRPC in applying for a grant from Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) to remove log jams from the Yellow River. A letter has been issued from OCRA confirming that Starke County would indeed get that grant for \$190,000.

Dennis Estok said that the 3 County Board has a contractor removing log jams in the Kankakee River and has also entered into an agreement with Christopher Burke Engineering to look at sediment management on and in the Yellow River.

The Northwest Indiana Paddlers Association held a very successful float of the Kankakee River from English Lake to Dunns Bridge on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. LaPorte County Commissioners were supportive and contributed funds toward the event from their Tourism account. The Association plans to keep this as an annual event.

With the continuing support of recreationalists and with the Illinois River initiative underway, Chairman Knochel said the landscape is changing for Kankakee projects and it may be a good time for the KRBC to review its mission and vision statements.

Vince Urbano representing Jasper County told the Board that he has met with IDNR, Army Corps, and IDEM to get permits for the work needed to be accomplished in repairing the storm damage to the levees from the June storm. With the release of state funds, he feels they can begin to look at bidding out work. Vince compiled a report outlining what needs to be accomplished with maps and details. Jody Melton thanked Vince because he used that report in answering questions from the Budget Committee about details of the work. Vince asked if the funds available for Jasper County included the \$200 permit fee. He was assured they could use the money for that. Kevin Breitzke reminded Vince that certified notices will also probably have to be sent to property owners.

Kevin Breitzke explained that the Porter County Board will be applying for permits for levee repair along about 3 miles of river levee. There will be some sediment removal involved. Russ Pumroy said that Porter County had pulled several trees out of the river downstream from US 231 and the work was funded by the Drainage Board.

Gerry Scheub said that Lake County Range Line Bridge would be re-opened soon. The KRBC used Lake County emergency money to remove logjams from the bridge. The structure will be replaced in 2013.

Jody Melton explained for the Newton County Drainage Board that there has been discussion concerning breaking the rip rap concrete into smaller pieces at Sumava as required by the Corps after-the-fact permit. The original contractors thought that the task was too cumbersome and expensive. The Newton County Attorney reached an agreement with Mark Wunderink who will break the concrete per the permit and he will be paid from Newton County emergency fund. Jim Pistello said that he is concerned that the breaking of riprap will cause problems for the residents along the river. He will work with Mark Wunderink to ensure that the landowners are not inconvenienced.

Vince Urbano and Chris Knochel discussed the bi-county drainage board for the DeHaan Ditch between Jasper and Newton Counties. That area of the DeHaan where it enters the river will be privately cleaned and a maintenance assessment will be set up for the rest of the watershed.

## **New Business**

Joe Exl, Senior Watershed Planner for NIRPC, asked to make a presentation to the Board.

NIRPC is currently updating the 2005 Watershed Management Framework Plan for Lake, Porter, and LaPorte Counties. Based on input from local stakeholders experienced in watershed planning, significant enhancements will be included in the update to make it a more valuable watershed planning tool. The update builds upon the 2005 Framework by incorporating new information at both the sub-basin and watershed scale. Watersheds that extend beyond NIRPC's political boundaries are also included to reflect the fact that water flows across state and county lines. Land cover data for the watersheds that Indiana shares with Illinois will be included for the Chicago sub-basin as some of these areas drain into Indiana. A threshold/exceedance analysis of several water quality, habitat, and biological parameters has been included based upon target values from IDEM. Information on soils, topography, and land cover is being greatly expanded upon. Finally, all of this information will be zoomed-in and incorporated into "watershed templates".

The watershed templates are being specifically developed to assist groups and communities that are interested in pursuing the development of watershed management plans that meet IDEM's 2009 Watershed Management Plan Checklist. Information within these templates may also be of benefit for those wishing to pursue other grant program opportunities such as the DNR's Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Program or are just interested in finding out what water quality issues may exist within their watershed or community.

The framework is posted on the NIRPC website. If anyone has any comments, please contact Joe at [jexl@nirpc.org](mailto:jexl@nirpc.org).

Chairman Knochel paused the meeting to allow the audience to introduce themselves.

Tony Hendricks, Vince Urbano, and Kevin Breitzke are working as a committee to get a mileage marker program underway. They reported that the IDNR has been extremely helpful and have forwarded info on to the Corps of Engineers. The mileage will start at the confluence in Illinois and work back upstream. The county commissioners of the various counties

will be asked to help with the project. It is important that the project and signs are consistent from county to county.

### **Other Business**

Tom Larson, Russ Pumroy, and Jim Lambert reported that the nominating committee was prepared to nominate Chris Knochel as Chairman, Ken Purze as Vice Chairman, and Jim Lambert as Secretary. They passed out paper ballots to elect either Kevin Breitzke or Tony Hendricks as Treasurer.

The next meeting of the KRBC will be January 19, 2012 at the Kankakee Fish and Wildlife headquarters in North Judson. That date conflicts with the Licensed Surveyors' conference. There was discussion concerning moving the meeting or rescheduling. At the last meeting it was decided to hold meetings in January, March, May, July, September, and November. The announced meeting date of January 19<sup>th</sup> will stand. If a quorum is not going to be present and Jody knows soon enough, the meeting can be cancelled or a meeting could be held with a special presentation if one is available.

At the State Budget Committee hearing, Rep. Espich, Chairman of the Committee asked if local funds could be used for these projects in the future instead of asking for Indiana tax dollars? Jody Melton responded that the Kankakee needs maintenance and there is no source at this time. Discussion of the Board led to ideas about assessments, levee status, private funds spent without fanfare, regulations, and other problems. There was consensus that the KRBC is needed for coordination of the shared problems but also a new entity with larger powers should again be studied. State legislators will need to be brought into the conversation. Tony Hendricks and Chris Knochel will discuss the approach further. Jody Melton will try to contact the legislators to let them know of this discussion.

The nominating committee reported that Kevin Breitzke had been elected Treasurer and Russ Pumroy made a motion that the slate of Knochel, Purze, Lambert, and Breitzke be elected. Tom Larsen seconded and the slate was elected unanimously.

There being no further business, meeting was adjourned.