

**MINUTES OF THE KANKAKEE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION  
HELD THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2014 AT  
9:30 AM CDT  
KANKAKEE FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA HEADQUARTERS  
4320 W. TOTO ROAD  
NORTH JUDSON, IN 46366**

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

Secretary Jim Lambert called the roll.

*Members present*

Kevin Breitzke	Dennis Estok	Larry Fisher
Tony Hendricks	Chris Knochel	Jim Lambert
Tom Larson	John Law	Kim Peterson
Russ Pumroy	Ken Purze	Gerry Scheub
Bruce Shepherd	Vince Urbano	James Walstra

*Guests Present*

Bob Barr	Siavash Beik	Alan Cameron Jr.
Harvey Nix	Joe Skelton	Joe Toth
Christine Keil		

*Staff Present*

Jody Melton

Chairman Knochel asked for self-introductions from all guests.

**Approval of Minutes**

Kevin Breitzke made a motion to approve the June 26, 2014 meeting minutes. Ken Purze seconded. The minutes were approved.

## **Finance Report**

The finance report is divided into administration and county work money. There was discussion about county amounts and funding not yet released from the state. Ken Purze made a motion to accept the finance report, Kevin Breitzke seconded and the motion was approved. The members reviewed the contract with NIRPC for staff and offices, i.e. Jody Melton's salary and office space. Due to the downsizing of the physical office, the rent is going down from last year for the office. On a motion by Ken Purze, seconded by Vince Urbano, the contract with NIRPC and the KRBC was approved unanimously.

## **Old Business**

Jasper County Surveyor Vince Urbano reported that Jasper County has received its permits for levee work from US 231 to SR 49 to begin in the fall.

Lake County is preparing to replace the Range Line Bridge over the Kankakee River. First bid was rejected. Hopefully progress can start in the fall. The State Line Bridge over the Kankakee is scheduled to be rehabbed for preservation within 5 years of replacing the Range Line Bridge. There is a quarry being designed next to the Singleton Ditch in Lake County. There is concern by residents about the effects of water pumping.

Tony Hendricks, LaPorte County Surveyor, told the board that LaPorte County Drainage Board continues to pursue the 319 grant for the Mill Creek watershed in LaPorte County. The Bancroft property is still being discussed but no action is being taken.

Larry Fisher, Marshall County Surveyor, said that a July storm dropped a lot of trees into the Yellow River in Plymouth. Those are being removed. The house along the river in Plymouth has been removed with the funds received from the KRBC.

Newton County is receiving a delineation report on identifying wetlands near the DeHaan Ditch where it joins the Kankakee.

Kevin Breitzke, Porter County Surveyor, said the Heimberg pipe was completed and the Phillips Ditch project is being discussed with the landowner for the easements. The Pleasant Township Ditch near Baum's Bridge is being reconstructed at the junction of the Kankakee River.

John Law from St. Joseph County asked about maintaining levees that are really earthen embankments. Does the county have a responsibility to maintain an embankment that is not a public ditch? General response was to follow attorney's advice. Unless a levee has been certified by the Corps, it remains an embankment and liability lies with the owner.

Tony Hendricks has revised the reference guide for working on levees. John Law said that we should change the guide to working on earthen embankments. Tony also said he is looking at the old master plan of the KRBC from 1989 and trying to create an update. Local plans and assessments will be a big part of this work. Discussion concerned individual plans and one comprehensive master plan and which is best? Jim Walstra discussed the growth and development in the basin in the last 50 years. A future agenda of the KRBC should include any discussions conducted locally following this meeting and discussion. A check of local drainage ordinances would also be a good idea, both county and municipal. Ken Purze made a motion, seconded by Tony Hendricks that the members begin collection of county and municipal plans and forward to Tony. The motion was approved.

Director Jody Melton reported that the Bancroft property is overpriced according to appraisals and the KRBC must negotiate with appraisals. There is no wetland mitigation taking place on the property according to WRP. He also said that the Lomax Station property has been reappraised and negotiations are occurring. This property is being considered under the Bicentennial Nature Trust funds. Ken Purze made a motion, seconded by Jim Lambert that the KRBC remains interested in the property. The motion was approved.

The Director also sent a letter of support to the United States Geological Survey in a bid for a grant to do research in the Illinois River Basin.

The Indiana Drainage Code handbook discussion was tabled.

## **New Business**

Dennis Estok, Starke County Surveyor, has asked CBBEL to conduct a system assessment of the Yellow River to try to understand sediment erosion and transport within the Basin. CBBEL would be assisted by Bob Barr of IUPUI. It is known that portions of the Yellow act differently in separate sections but it all contributes to the sediment load of the Kankakee. Starke County has tried sediment traps and found those to not work. A serious look at hydrogeology of the Yellow Basin may provide answers. Gerry Scheub made a motion to table the contract, seconded by Vince Urbano until the members can review the contract. After considerable discussion and explanation that this contract is between the Starke County Drainage Board and CBBEL using appropriated and authorized KRBC money, Ken Purze noted that this money would be attracting additional funds through Bob Barr's office and the Silver Jackets. The motion was called and a roll call vote defeated the motion to table. This assessment is a further look at the Yellow which began with an earlier study by the Three County Drainage Board. The assessment will cost \$50,000, a timeline will be developed, and direct action will be recommended.

Jody Melton informed the Board that this is the appropriation year for the Indiana General Assembly. A funding request is being assembled. He needs lists from the counties on spending requests. Ken Purze is liaison with the legislature for the request.

The Kankakee River levee (embankment) between I 65 and the Norfolk and Southern railroad lacks good access on the south side in Newton County. The embankment is very narrow and the hoped access under a newly constructed I 65 bridges will not happen because the bridge is not going to be replaced. Working with the Jasper/Newton Joint Drainage Board as they progress on the DeHaan Ditch project, it may be possible to gain access with some temporary structures. Ken Purze made a motion, seconded by Gerry Scheub that the KRBC authorize up to \$100,000 to be spent to fix this problem before it gets any worse. The lead will be Chris Knochel, Newton County Surveyor for this project.

The Indiana Trails Advisory Board will meet tonight in Michigan City. Ken Purze asked for permission to speak to the trail group on behalf of the KRBC during public comments. He wants to assure the trails board that the

KRBC would be open to discussion about recreational trails along the Kankakee.

Jody Melton said that the Duneland/Kankakee Trail is envisioned to stretch from the Indiana Dunes to the Kankakee River at Dunns Bridge. Ideally the trail would run from Dunns Bridge County Park at 400 E and then east along the Kankakee to 625W and then north to Hebron. The Jasper County side would be suitable for this trail and there is going to be discussion among governmental, trail, and private groups.

The KRBC will hold a special meeting on October 1, 2014 at 4:30 pm to hear a presentation on the Waters of the United State (WOTUS) by Indiana Farm Bureau. The meeting will be held at NIRPC in Portage. The Corps of Engineers and the EPA are proposing changes to the Clean Water Act that have created controversy.

The next regular meeting of the KRBC will be November 13, 2014 at 9:30 am CST at the Kankakee Fish and Wildlife Headquarters.