

**MINUTES OF THE KANKAKEE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION  
HELD THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2015 AT  
9:30 AM CST  
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
Myrna Harder	Tony Hendricks	Chris Knochel
Jim Lambert	Tom Larson	John Law
Don Lode	Kim Peterson	Russ Pumroy
Gerry Scheub	Vince Urbano	James Walstra

*Guests Present*

Allen Cameron	Jason Durr	Gus Ellicott
Christine Keil	Lee Nagai	Harvey Nix
Lyle Patchett	Joe Skelton	

*Staff Present*

Jody Melton

**Approval of Minutes**

Kevin Breitzke made a motion to approve the November 13, 2014 meeting minutes. Jim Lambert seconded and the minutes were approved.

Chairman Knochel asked for self-introductions from all guests.

## **Finance Report**

Jody Melton explained the finance budget as listed for end of year 2014. The emergency funds and the allocated funds are listed on page 8. The 2013 appropriation of \$1 million was released in portion (\$605,000). The operating budget for 2015 is included with most items staying the same as 2014 and the addition of a line item for a new vehicle. The contract with NIRPC is also included and is \$71 higher than last year based upon Jody's health insurance rates. The NIRPC office building has not been remodeled and there is no news on when the remodel might happen. Tony Hendricks asked Jody if he filed an IRS 1099 on the use of the vehicle and Jody responded yes. Kevin Breitzke made a motion to approve the NIRPC contract for 2015 and Larry Fisher seconded. The contract was approved. Kevin Breitzke made a motion to approve the budget as presented for 2015. Tom Larson seconded and the budget was approved.

## **Old Business**

Jasper County Surveyor Vince Urbano reported that Jasper County completed levee work from US 231 to SR 49. A 20 foot path has been created, there are trees remaining on the levee but they can be reached if they fall. Permits are in place to complete stabilization projects around the houses west of US 231 on the levee.

Lake County Commissioner Gerry Scheub said the new Lake County Surveyor, Bill Emerson, has been doing a great job. The new Range Line Road Bridge is on schedule to reopen this fall. The Drainage Board has let a contract for the cleaning of the Niemeyer Ditch west of US 41.

Tony Hendricks, LaPorte County Surveyor, said he had put together a request for proposals for a watershed study through the LaPorte County Drainage Board. He has had a few responses. Dick Walsh and Tom Dermody have asked that the sediment trap at the mouth of the Travis Ditch be cleaned. The original trap was constructed by the 3 County Drainage Board using KRBC funds. Tony said that he has measured it and it is full. It will be cleaned again using money designated for the 3 County Drainage Board. Jim Walstra emphasized that the work is being done in the Kankakee River, not the Travis Ditch.

Larry Fisher, Marshall County Surveyor, is working with the City of Plymouth on a possible project along the Yellow River within the city limits.

Newton County Surveyor Chris Knochel said the DeHaan wetland identification project continues. He has applied for permits on the Kankakee River levee near the Cameron property and found an eagle nest in the vicinity. Work must remain 660 feet away from a nest so this has presented a new problem. He will need to coordinate with Alan Cameron to modify the permit. Norfolk and Southern Railroad will also be involved.

Kevin Breitzke, Porter County Surveyor, has found a piece of property adjacent to our Rivers Edge Farm for sale. It has been appraised and he has discussed its purchase. There is a possibility of swapping that land for land along the river. It is a deal to be put together and several things have to happen for it to succeed. Kevin and Jody will work together and report back to the KRBC.

John Law of the St. Joseph Surveyors Office was asked about the generating plant that was to be built and eventually put discharge water into the Kankakee River. John replied that the plant and its construction had gone out of the conversation for the time being. He still expects it will be built but doesn't have any particulars.

Starke County Surveyor Dennis Estok said the Yellow River still has trees being removed from the channel. CBBEL and Bob Barr continue their sediment study of the Yellow in Starke County.

### **New Business**

Bob Barr from IUPUI, working with CBBEL on the Yellow River watershed project, explained how the data coming from the USGS gages on the Yellow River were providing invaluable information as they continue to study the movement of sediment in and along the river.

Jody Melton explained that the KRBC was cost sharing with USGS for these gages and there is need for more. Bob Barr said that the gages allowed them to isolate areas to study sediment transport. This is a sand basin. It is always going to carry sand. The key is to manage the carry.

Tony Hendricks and Jody Melton said that the Kankakee Roundtable in Illinois has stopped meeting for the time being. They are struggling with funding and potential fundable projects.

Jody Melton reported that Jason Durr of CBBEL had completed the application for Bicentennial Trust funds for the purchase of Lomax Station. The application has been submitted. Mark Decker of the IBT said the application will be scored and then the KRBC will be contacted. Jody said the site will definitely need a phase 1 environmental study. He is not proceeding until he hears from the grant application.

Jody Melton passed out a list of state legislators in the Kankakee Basin and told the Board that Ken Purze would like them to contact their legislators and tell them that the Kankakee River Basin Commission needs \$1 million for the next biennium in the State Budget. The version of the budget from the House includes \$600,000. It is now being discussed in the Senate.

The attempt by the Northwest Indiana Paddlers Association to get National Water Trail Designation for the Kankakee River in Indiana and Illinois is progressing. Dan Plath has been going to individual Farm Bureau boards and seeking support. St. Joseph, LaPorte, Porter, Jasper, and Lake County Farm Bureau have endorsed the move. Most basin state legislators sent a letter endorsing the designation as well.

Kevin Breitzke and Tony Hendricks are still working on posting mileage signs along the river.

The next regular meeting of the KRBC will be determined following the adjournment of the Indiana General Assembly unless a meeting is needed before then.