

**MINUTES OF THE KANKAKEE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION  
HELD THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 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 | Larry Fisher   | Myrna Harder |
| Tony Hendricks | Chris Knochel  | Jim Lambert  |
| Kim Peterson   | Russ Pumroy    | Ken Purze    |
| Gerry Scheub   | Bruce Shepherd | Vince Urbano |
| James Walstra  |                |              |

*Guests Present*

|                     |                |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Michael Aylesworth  | Bob Barr       |
| Siavash Beik        | Alan Cameron   |
| Alan Cameron Jr.    | Jim Carter     |
| St. Rep. Tim Harman | Christine Keil |
| Don Lode            | Jim Sweeney    |
| David Zack          |                |

*Staff Present*

Jody Melton

Ken Purze asked that an agenda item concerning the Northwest Indiana paddlers Association be added to the agenda. He also recognized Bob Barr from IUPUI.

Chairman Knochel asked for self-introductions from all guests. He also introduced State Rep. Tim Harman from the 17<sup>th</sup> District.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Ken Purze made a motion to approve the April 10, 2014 meeting minutes. Kevin Breitzke seconded. The minutes were approved.

### **Finance Report**

The finance report is divided into administration and county work money. There have been a few items paid through the work accounts and the 2009 appropriation is almost gone. Ken Purze asked about the status of the NIRPC office and the KRBC remaining with NIRPC. Construction is to start soon and the offices will be converted into cubicles. The KRBC will have a separate cubicle. There was discussion about relocating the office but Jody Melton said that he felt a loyalty to NIRPC and the KRBC and would prefer to remain as a part of the NIRPC staff. The situation can be reviewed after a trial period.

The current budget of the KRBC does not include a line item for continuing education for officers. Many of the officers have their own elective budgets to cover these expenses through the Drainage Boards but not all. After considerable discussion Myrna Harder made a motion seconded by Russ Pumroy that the KRBC cover continuing education costs for any KRBC officer not able to be reimbursed through their county. This will be on a case by case basis. \$2,000 will be added in a line item in the administrative account. Russ Pumroy seconded and the motion was approved.

Jody Melton also told the board he was having some trouble with the Explorer and thought it might be a good time to trade it in for a new one. Kevin Breitzke made a motion seconded by Jim Walstra that he get quotes on a new SUV. Motion was approved.

### **Old Business**

Jasper County Surveyor Vince Urbano reported that Jasper County had cleaned the river downstream of Baums Bridge where several trees fell into

the river. This is an area identified for work but permits have not been issued. The bank suffered erosion damage from the fallen trees.

Lake County is preparing to replace the Range Line Bridge over the Kankakee River. July 9, 2014 will be the bid letting and the construction is to be \$1.7 million. The State Line Bridge over the Kankakee is scheduled to be rehabbed for preservation within 5 years of replacing the Range Line Bridge.

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. He took a trip to Michigan and saw a river which had a reconstructed meander in it and took observations of how it worked. The NW IN Paddlers completed their campsite and stair steps along the bank of the Kankakee in LaPorte County.

Newton County is still working to identify wetlands near the DeHaan Ditch where it joins the Kankakee. The 8 vacant lots in Sumava Resorts were donated to the KRBC and the titles have been turned over. There are 70 plus lots in Sumava up for tax sale. Newton County would be interested in giving them to the KRBC to get them off tax sale. Chris and Jody are going to discuss with other Newton County officials. Ken Purze thanked Bruce Shepherd for the initial contact for the first 8 parcels. Ken Purze made a motion that the Director work with Newton County officials to develop a memorandum of understanding on possession of the lots in Sumava. Kevin Breitzke seconded and the motion was approved.

Kevin Breitzke said that the county crossover culvert on the Phillips Ditch was blocked by debris and the high water washed out the levee of the Phillips, which is the access to the Kankakee River levee. He asked the KRBC to provide funds to replace the two smaller culverts with one large culvert where the ditch meets the river. There was discussion about private culverts and county culverts. Jim Lambert and Russ Pumroy felt that a larger culvert at the mouth is in the best interest of the county and access to the river levee. Ken Purze made a motion that the KRBC approve an amount not to exceed \$50,000 for this project. Myrna Harder seconded. The motion was approved.

The D.W. Place Ditch in St. Joseph County has been cleaned for six miles. The sloping of the levees which John law talked about at the last meeting has been repaired by the Drainage Board.

Tony Hendricks has revised the reference guide for working on levees. He presented a copy of his proposal. There is a great deal of information to be gained and discussion to be had with landowners, environmentalists, Farm Bureau and Drainage Board members. The discussion centered on the fact that it is good to have a reference guide but that individual sites will have individual specifications. This might be a good guide for contractors. It does give the KRBC a solid picture of the future vision of the Kankakee levees. Discussion led to decision that further work and consultation needs to be done. On a motion by Ken Purze, seconded by Vince Urbano, the acceptance of the reference guide was tabled.

The Indiana Drainage Code handbook was discussed. It probably should be updated. Bob Barr was asked if his work is factored into the Drainage Handbook. Bob Barr explained how different drainage problems are in each watershed and expounded on the Yellow River Watershed and the uniqueness of it. Siavash Beik talked about the cross sections of the Yellow River and the stability and instability of various sites. Chris Knochel said that he felt that the Drainage Code should be reviewed as it pertains to the Kankakee and Yellow River. Ken Purze made a motion seconded by Kevin Breitzke that a relook at the Drainage Code as it pertains to the Kankakee watershed be discussed at the next meeting and the KRBC will listen to proposals by CBBEL and Bob Barr in this effort. Motion was approved with Vince Urbano voting no. Vince explained that he feels another study will just slow things down and he has projects to finish in Jasper County.

Tony Hendricks said that he continues to work on the meander project but has not been able to work with acquiring property near the site. He asked that the Director contact the landowner and see if progress can be made toward acquiring the rights to the property. Ken Purze made a motion, seconded by Bruce Shepherd that Director Jody Melton explore the opportunity to acquire the rights to the parcel.

Jody Melton said that Dick Welsh at the last meeting was unhappy with water management at Kankakee Fish and Wildlife Area and the board asked Jody to contact IDNR. The day following the meeting Jody was contacted

and told that Dick and Justin Lynton, Property Manager at Kankakee F&W, had talked and the situation was resolved to Dick's satisfaction.

### **New Business**

There are proposed changes to the Clean Water Act to permit the Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA greater authority over waters and permitting activities. Many organizations are unhappy about the proposed changes, especially Farm Bureau. Jody Melton will draft a resolution for the KRBC opposing the changes. Jim Sweeney spoke in favor of the changes and said it was the opinion of many that this proposed language clarifies jurisdiction.

The Northwest Indiana Paddlers Association asked that the KRBC send a letter to the National Park Service (NPS) recommending that the NPS work with the Paddlers on the east branch of the Little Calumet River to make the channel suitable for paddling. The Paddlers have worked with the KRBC and it would be good if the KRBC told the NPS that they can be a good partner. Jim Lambert said that he thought the Little Calumet River is not well used but could be if the NPS would work with potential users. Kevin Breitzke made a motion that the letter be sent on behalf of the Paddlers, Ken Purze seconded and the motion was approved.

### **Other Comments**

Alan Cameron asked that the KRBC take a look at the lower region of the basin. The levees are defending from higher and longer flood durations. It is time to address the levee maintenance. He is concerned about the levee on the south side of the Kankakee west of I 65.

Jim Sweeney said he thought a vision statement is a great idea.

Jimmy Carter said there is a log jam at the State Line Bridge.

The next meeting of the KRBC will be September 4, 2014 at the Kankakee Fish and Wildlife Headquarters.