

Wixom Lake Improvement Board (WLIB)
Meeting Minutes
August 29, 2023

Meeting called to order at Billings Township Hall by Chairman Sova at 6:00 pm

Pledge of allegiance recited.

Roll call of board members. Board members present: Joe Sova, Carol Ayers, Jeanette Snyder, Larry Woodard, Ray Drumright, Robert Kelley, Don Zakett, Terry Walters, Tami O'Donnell

Board Members Absent: none

Others in Attendance: Norma Stuart from Midland County Drain Commission, Lucy Zeestraten from Gladwin County Drain Commission, Paul Hausler from Progressive AE, Casey Shoaff from PLM Lake & Land Management Corp., and approximately 50 members of the public.

Approval of agenda. Agenda was presented with an opportunity to add items. Jeanette Snyder made a motion to limit public comment to 3 minutes per person wishing to speak. The motion was seconded by Robert Kelley. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously. Tami O'Donnell made a motion to accept the revised agenda with further addition of discussion of the Progressive AE proposal for treatment of woody vegetation in canals to the agenda. The motion was seconded by Robert Kelley. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of minutes from 8/3/23 WLIB meeting. Larry Woodard made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Carol Ayers. Voice vote. Motion carried with Chairman Sova abstaining due to his absence from the 8/3 meeting.

Financial Matters. Chairman Sova presented the financial statement showing a balance of \$181,780.96. Tami O'Donnell made a motion to receive and file the financial report which was seconded by Terry Walters. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously. An invoice for \$12,580.41 from Progressive AE (#00193702) dated 7/10/23 for professional consulting services was presented. Terry Walters made a motion to pay the invoice and the motion was seconded by Carol Ayers. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously. An invoice for \$457 from Fahey Shultz Burzych Rhodes PLC (#13472) dated 8/1/23 for legal services related to the upcoming public hearing was presented. Larry Woodard made a motion to pay the invoice which was seconded by Don Zakett. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

Don Zakett provided an update on recently completed forestry mulching of woody vegetation that was aerially sprayed earlier this year. Mulching/mowing was done between August 7 and August 18. Focus was on shallow areas with continuous dead brush. A total of approximately 185 acres was completed across 5 sites. ~24 acres near Edenville dam; ~47 acres around pontoon alley; ~45 acres around Venice subdivision; ~35 acres in Muddy Bay area; ~34 acres on east side of lake near Whitney Beach Road. Estimates of acres / hr completed were overly optimistic. Wet spots in the aforementioned areas were common which slowed progress. Mulching machines were frequently stuck but able to winch themselves out without bringing in heavy equipment for extraction. Several wet areas in the mulched zones were skipped and will need to be addressed when the lake bed is drier or frozen. The nature of the stubble left behind is dependent on the equipment being used and the firmness of the area being mulched. For example, where it is muddy the stubble bends over and then bounces back after the machine passes. In firm areas where swimming is expected (e.g. pontoon alley) mulched areas are smooth with little to no stubble. Much more mowing / mulching will be needed.

Don Zakett and Paul Hausler indicated that they have received an invoice from Kappen Tree Service for the forestry mulching described above that totals \$49,000. Before formally presenting this invoice to the board they are seeking itemization of charges. Terry Walter made a motion to authorize payment of up to \$49,000 to Kappen Tree Service for the completed work once Don and Paul are satisfied with the itemization of the charges. The motion was seconded by Larry Woodard. Voice Vote. Motion carried unanimously.

Casey Shoaff indicated that the spraying of areas in Venice subdivision is scheduled for Aug 30.

A public hearing on the topic of assessment reinstatement will be held on Saturday September 9, 2023, at 10AM at Beaverton High School.

Paul Hausler spoke about his analysis of aerial drone mapping of canals in the WLIB district. The drone photography gave good resolution between woody vegetation and cattails / weeds. Paul also did on-site verifications, which resulted in small adjustments to the proposed plan. Paul recommends treating approximately 50 acres in the canals for woody vegetation with a combination of triclopyr and glyphosate (8:3). This is a different herbicide mix than used for aerial spraying and has no required buffer from the shoreline. Paul's initial assessment is that there are approximately 50 acres to treat in the canals at an estimated cost of \$750/acre for a total cost of about \$37,000. This cost estimate includes both the herbicide and the labor. This treatment needs to be done ASAP to give several weeks for the herbicides to work before the first frost. Assuming that treatment is applied by mid-September Paul is confident that we could expect at least 80% kill. Then if hard winter with ground frozen, the dead woody vegetation in the canals could be mowed/mulched. The next window for treatment would be June of 2024. Discussion of the pluses/minuses/risks of treating now vs. later was had amongst board members. A motion to proceed with treatment of woody vegetation in the canals as soon as possible this season was made by Tami O'Donnell and seconded by Carol Ayers. Voice Vote. Motion carried with Carol Ayers, Jeanette Snyder, Larry Woodard, Ray Drumright, Joe Sova, Tami O'Donnell, Don Zakett and Terry Walters in favor and Robert Kelley opposed.

Don Zakett made a case advocating for authorization of more mulching/mowing. He would like to get on the calendars of mowing/mulching contractors for the winter when the lakebed has highest likelihood of being frozen or dry. There was discussion about how much money will be left in the WLIB coffer after accounting for the cost of actions that the board has already authorized and how far the board would be willing to draw down WLIB funds in the near term prior to knowing the outcome of the public hearing on special assessment reinstatement. Don made a motion contingent upon the reinstatement of special assessment authorizing scheduling of a second campaign of mulching/mowing for early in 2024 that will not exceed a cost of \$60,000. Jeanette Snyder seconded the motion. Voice Vote. Motion carried unanimously. Tami O'Donnell volunteered to coordinate the preparation of the bid package for the proposed work.

Public Comment:

Doug Hill – Wixom Lake Association (WLA) president. WLA is using three contractors for mowing: Shoreline (Scott Sepanski); John Marsh; Britt Heinz Tree Service and Landscaping. Approximately 200 acres have been mowed. They are mowing up the west side of the lake to the northern border and then will come back down the east side. WLA is coordinating with WLIB and townships.

Frank Legacy, 535 Pine St. - Venice subdivision. Wants to know timing of upcoming herbicide treatment in area of Venice subdivision.

Brian Bentley, 4379 Hill Drive. - Questioning of choice of contractor for mulching.

Brian Matthias, 5163 Ostlund Dr. - Problems with tall cattails. Wants to know when non-woody vegetation will be addressed.

Tami Yorks, 5344 Grouse Ct. - Longtime resident with county government experience. Suggests formation of subcommittee with members from different bodies (WLIB, WLA, and townships) and members of public to help with public relations and explain what has been done, what needs to be done, plans, etc.

Orlando Zuniga, 527 Paradise Dr. - From his house he can clearly tell where treatments have occurred and where they have not. The treatments are effective. The area by his property has not been treated. He has purchased blades for weed whacker to cut down cattails.

Joanne Anweller. - Has concerns about herbicides and negative impacts on health.

Gordon Drennan, 5335 Grouse Ct. - Wixom Lake was a great bass fishery. What are the restocking plans.

End Public Comment

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Larry Woodard, seconded by Jeanette Snyder. Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously. 7:47 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ray Drumright