

**MINUTES OF THE LITTLE CALUMET RIVER BASIN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

**HELD AT 6:00 p.m., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2020**

**Location: MUNSTER TOWN HALL, MUNSTER, IN**

Chairman Baker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited. There were seven (7) Commission members present at roll call. Quorum was declared.

**Commissioners:**

William Baker, Chairman  
Tom Wichlinski, Vice-Chairman  
Tom Gozdecki, Treasurer  
Derek Nimetz  
Ron Ware  
Dave Castellanos  
Robert Ochi

**Visitors:**

John Garcia – Garcia Consulting Engineers  
Alva Muhammad – Gary Food Council, Inc.  
Tom Silich – Hobart Township Trustee  
Tom Regalado – Office of Hobart Township Trustee  
Tim Werner – Ciorba Group, Inc.  
Jayson Reeves –Hurn Foundation  
Rich Underkofler – Highland Tree Board

**Executive Director:**

Dan Repay

**Staff:**

Jodi Lambert

**Election of Officers –**

The floor was opened for nominations. Commissioner Ware made a motion to nominate William Baker as Chairman; motion seconded by Commissioner Gozdecki. Commissioner Castellanos made a motion to nominate Ron Ware as Chairman; motion died for lack of a second. There being no further nominations, motion for William Baker as Chairman passed 6-1 by roll call vote. (Commissioner Castellanos nay).

Commissioner Castellanos made a motion to nominate Robert Ochi as Vice-Chairman; motion died for lack of a second. Commissioner Ware made a motion to nominate Tom Wichlinski as Vice-Chairman; motion seconded by Commissioner Ochi. There being no further nominations, motion for Tom Wichlinski as Vice-Chairman passed 7-0 by roll call vote.

Commissioner Ware made a motion to nominate Tom Gozdecki as Treasurer; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. There being no further nominations, motion for Tom Gozdecki as Treasurer passed 7-0 by roll call vote.

Commissioner Wichlinski made a motion to nominate Levon Whittaker as Secretary; motion seconded by Commissioner Ware. There being no further nominations, motion for Levon Whittaker as Secretary passed 7-0 by roll call vote.

**Approval of Minutes -**

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to approve the minutes from January 22, 2020 as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Ochi; motion passed with 7 aye votes.

**Chairman's Report –**

Chairman Baker referred to the yellowing pictures of the 2008 flood event, reminding everyone that we are here to ensure that something like that flood event does not happen again. The Commission is tasked with the on-going and deferred maintenance of this \$275 million man-made flood control project and while we cannot control Mother Nature, we are far better prepared now that we have been in the past. We have been able to remove over 1,400 properties from the mandatory flood insurance requirement and put over \$4 million dollars back into the economy, making this a true economic development project.

**Finance –**

Chairman Baker referred to the February claims in the amount of \$608959.35. Commissioner Ware made a motion to approve the claims as presented; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Mr. Repay explained a few of the claims starting with payment to Patrick Engineering in the amount of \$63,328.50 for continued work on the Lake Station Levee Project. Ellas Construction submitted a claim in the amount of \$116,404.68 which represents half of their retainage. This project is substantially complete, with a few minor punch list items pending. We cleared several blockages along the system since the beginning of the year. Northern Indiana Mechanical submitted claims in the amounts of \$2,904.90 and \$5,451.02 to clear blockages near 35<sup>th</sup> Street in Gary and Kennedy Avenue in Highland. R.A. Oros was paid \$8,200.00 to clear blockages along the Northcote Bridge. We purchased 2 properties in Lake Station that were needed for the Lake Station Levee Project in the amounts of \$88,900.00 and \$134,910.00. Finally the City of Crown Point was reimbursed \$18,696.00 for their Sauerman Woods Watershed Project.

Commissioner Castellanos requested information on the amount of minority participation from Patrick Engineering, Ellas Construction, Inc., and Barnes & Thornburg. Discussion was held on the responsibility of the various contractors with regards to minority participation.

Chairman Baker asked if there were any further questions and called for a roll call vote. Motion passed 7-0.

**Executive Director's Report –**

Mr. Repay gave updates on some of the projects:

- We continue to work with Patrick Engineering on finalizing plans for Lake Station Levee Project, including fixing the dam, improving access for fishing and water activities as well as implementing the pedestrian bridge over Deep River. We will meet with the City of Lake Station to inform them on the plan moving forward.
- We attended the pre-bid meeting for information to acquire the School City of Gary property. We are working in partnership with Lake County Parks to acquire and develop property for use during high flow times as well as for recreational and educational use.

- Both the In-Project and Hobart Marsh Mitigation projects are still on schedule, with work slowing during the winter months.
- A Security System is being installed at various Pump Stations and should be up and running by next month.
- We have made progress in acquiring property easement that are required by the USACE. There are several Pump Station Easements in fee acquisitions that need to be completed. We hope to have the majority of the acquisitions completed by the end of the first quarter.
- The Hart Ditch repairs are on track to start next month if the weather cooperates. We have partnered with the Town of Munster and the Lake County Surveyor's Office on these repairs.
- The Advisory Board is meeting later this month to review and discuss 8 applications from 5 different communities. The applications will be presented at our public meeting within the next few months.
- We received 4 bids on the 80/94 Culvert Inspection Project that will be opened later during the meeting. This is part of the normal maintenance cycle that was last completed in 2016.
- We are still working to find alternative funding for the Kennedy Avenue Bridge Project. It was determined that we would not qualify for the Community Crossings Grant, so we are looking at other avenues.

**Other Issues/New Business –**

Commissioner Nimetz made a motion to open bids for the 80/94 Culvert Inspection Project and award to the lowest and most responsive bidder, pending review by attorney and staff; motion seconded by Commissioner Castellanos. Mr. Repay stated that this project is part of the normal maintenance cycle, the project was last completed in 2016. For reference, the culvert is approximately 8 feet in diameter and over 520 feet long. The video of the completed project will be shared with the USACE. Chairman Baker asked if there were any questions and called for a roll call vote. Motion passed 7-0. The bid openings were as follows: Gariup Construction - \$379,900.00; Hasse Construction - \$282,165.00; LGS Plumbing - \$462,945.00; and Grimmer Construction - \$573,362.00.

**Statements from the Board –**

Commissioner Castellanos reminded everyone about the Commission Radio show that is held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month on WLTH AM 1370. The past show featured two trappers from the Wildlife Education Exhibit of NWI. They also discussed possible tours of the Little Calumet River.

**Statements to the Board from the Public -**

Jayson Reeves, Gary, discussed the several concerns with Little Calumet River flooding park land and areas in Black Oak and also how we monitor the depth of the river in Gary.

Alva Mohammed, Gary, stated that she has been a resident of Gary since 2015 and is a member of the Gary Food Council. She would like to work with the Commission on improving the artesian well on Chase Street as well as opportunities to improve access to fresh food in Gary by having community farms or gardens.

There being no further business, the next meeting was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, March 18, 2020 at Bulldog Park, Crown Point, Indiana.