



BALSAM LAKE PROTECTION & REHABILITATION DISTRICT

Annual Meeting Minutes August 3, 2024 8:30 AM Unity PAC

1) CALL TO ORDER:

- Commissioner Kelly called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM

2) COMMISSIONERS AND GUESTS PRESENT

- Commissioners Tom Kelly, Bill Mork, Jack Weix, Dave Mariani, Dale Ulbrich, Gary Schneider, Terry Palmberg, BLPRD Commissioners
- Marisa Wieder, Lake Manager
- Patty Kabus, Recorder

3) APPROVE AGENDA

- Jan Kreminski motioned to approve the agenda, Jean O'Connell seconded, all approved, motion carried

4) APPROVE MINUTES OF July 15, 2023 ANNUAL MEETING

- Mike Schade motioned to approve the 2023 minutes, Jan Kreminski seconded, all approved, motion carried

5) REPORTS

• **Opening Comments – Tom Kelly**

- i) Commissioner Kelly thanked those who work with the BLPRD and introduced the members of the board, the new Lake Manager and the Administrative Assistant. He presented a brief overview of the items to be discussed during this meeting.
- **East Balsam 2022/2024 Alum Treatment/2024 Alum Borrowing Resolution– Tom Kelly**
- i) Commissioner Kelly provided information about water quality monitoring and presented results.
 - ii) One resident asked a question as to whether wake boats impair alum's ability to work. Commissioner Kelly explained that once phosphorous has bound to aluminum sulfate, it will not release even though wake boats can disturb the water at that depth.

- iii) Another resident asked if there is an impact on fishing in the lake. Commissioner Kelly responded that there is little to no impact. Also, we are returning the water quality to what it should have been had humans not added all the phosphorous over the years.
- **Water Safety Patrol – Gary Schneider**
 - i) Commissioner Schneider noted we are down one deputy, and we are looking for another person.
 - ii) We are trying to improve on the ‘See something, say something’ campaign. There are QR codes on the boat landing and on our brochures. He asked for help in reporting violations. Please take a picture and file a report on the website, including the boat registration numbers if possible. The water patrol will follow up when they come to the lake the next time.
 - iii) Enforcement has been on the lake 84 hours so far this year.
 - iv) We are working on the wake boat issues, there are still some issues but it has improved a lot.
 - v) We had a boater safety class over Memorial Day weekend.
 - vi) Enhanced signage has been installed at Little Balsam, including where the slow/no wake zones are and where enhanced wake boats are discouraged.
 - vii) A question was asked about missing buoys, particularly near the East Balsam narrows. Jeff Reed at Sunnyside is in charge of them. Another resident indicated he has one of the buoys, it washed up, and he will place it in the next week.
 - viii) We did get a new boat this year.
- **Large Wave Watercraft – Gary Schneider**
 - i) We have been following the state and the DNR bills regarding wake boats but nothing has been implemented yet.
 - ii) In the next week or so, there will be new signage added and toppers on the buoys with guidelines, particularly at the entrance to Little Balsam.
 - iii) A question was asked about getting the brochures out to the rental properties on the lake.
 - iv) One person mentioned toppers on buoys may not be aesthetically pleasing. Another person who lives in the Little Balsam narrows, mentioned they would like to have a buoy with a sign in front of their lakeshore.
 - v) Someone asked if there is a way to get jet skis away from the wake boaters. Commissioner Schneider noted that there were 2 incidences last years, but that we currently do not have signage. A reckless endangerment citation can be issued for this. This is covered in the training class. Commissioner Kelly noted that jet skis are supposed to stay 200 feet away from other boats, and this is a good time to use the ‘See something, say something’ process to report it.
 - vi) Someone asked if we could add a jet ski section to one or more of our brochures.
 - vii) Someone else noted that they observed someone harassing loons. This can be followed up on by the DNR or by the water patrol. Please submit pictures and a report on the website using ‘See something, say something’.

- **Aquatic Plan Management/Aquatic Invasive Species – Dale Ulbrich**
 - i) We continue to monitor zebra mussels, but they are now in every bay. A good tip is to raise the boat motor up when not in use. There isn't a lot we can do about it.
 - ii) The DNR also suggests putting cinderblocks in the water, and take them out every month and scrape them off and clean them. Immature zebra mussels can be removed in this way before they start to breed. Breeding doesn't occur until after they are a year old.
- **Nannobubble System presentation and Vote**
 - i) Commissioner Ulbrich presented information about nannobubble technology and how it works. He noted how muck forms in bays, explained that we explored dredging in the past, and this is the newest technology to combat the muck in the bays.
 - ii) This new technology is a type of aerator, but with very small bubbles that do not float to the surface, that eat up the muck at the bottom of the water. When they are done doing their job, what is left is the sand or clay bottom.
 - iii) Commissioner Ulbrich explained how monitoring would occur, and presented information about another lake that used this technology in a test last year. Results were very promising.
 - iv) The equipment fits inside a 4x8 trailer. We would put it next to the water. A treatment period would be 3-4 months per bay, and may need to be moved around the bay during that period in the larger bays.
 - v) A question was asked whether this is a generator and if it is self sufficient. Commissioner Ulbrich said in our case, we would plug it in. It has it's own electric meter, and we would then pay the property owner. We expect this would cost around \$500.00 a year.
 - vi) A question was asked about how much noise it puts out. Commissioner Ulbrich noted he tested this out and had no trouble talking right next to it. He said it puts out a hum, but no louder than an air conditioner.
 - vii) The unit would be moved from one place to another. In our case, we would be using it in the bay. One person noted we are really looking to solve a problem that has taken over 60 years to develop.
 - viii) Someone asked if a permit is required. Commissioner Ulbrich noted that a permit is not required in our case because we are not installing permanent pipes.
 - ix) Commissioner Ulbrich reviewed initial and ongoing costs.
 - x) A question was asked about labor costs to move the system. Commissioner Ulbrich noted the commissioners will move it.
 - xi) A question was asked about expected life. Chad Olson from Molear, the company that sells the equipment (who was present in the audience) noted it can easily last 5+ years. He also noted that the system is very quiet once it is started up. The unit needs to be as close to the water as possible. Molear has been running this type of system for about 7 years.

xii) We took a vote today as to whether to purchase this system. Commissioner Kelly asked if anyone else has any ballots they want to submit. Ballots were collected.

xiii) With the vote completed, 100% voted to approve purchasing the nanobubble technology

- **Clean Boats Clean Waters – Bill Mork**

- i) Commissioner Mork noted there are no significant changes in the program, all 8 landing monitors returned this year. There have been no big issues this year.
- ii) The number of boats is down this year by about 30%, primarily due to the weather. Hours are posted in the dockside, and Commissioner Mork reviewed the monitor schedule.
- iii) A person asked if we have any data about how many people are using the cleaning stations. Commissioner Mork noted about 50% of boaters use it (it is actually closer to 60%, which commissioner Ulbrich noted based on data from the stations themselves.) A question was asked whether citations are being issued. Commissioner Mork noted that a report is filed only if someone becomes abusive. The sheriff speaks to the person. But no citations have been issued as of yet. In one case, a guy who refused to use it and had lots of weeds, the CBCW person cleaned it for him. He did come back later and apologized to the monitor, after being spoken to.
- iv) Someone asked the cost of the CBCW program and asked if there are options to use cameras, etc instead. Commissioner Mork noted we are looking at cameras to help but this would not impact the CBCW program, but that could be considered in the future.
- v) A resident asked what we are still trying to prevent at this point by having CBCW monitors. Commissioner Mork noted we are still trying to prevent Eurasian milfoil from entering the lake.
- vi) Another resident asked if there is some type of sticker for people who only use Balsam Lake, as they don't tend to use the cleaning stations. Commissioner Kelly noted that since this is the law, we cannot do that.
- vii) Commissioner Mork explained that tournaments typically don't use the cleaning stations, but they are very good at cleaning their boats before they come. There is no way to officially exempt Balsam Lake residents from the county ordinance.
- viii) Marisa, our lake manager, explain the law and noted that since this is not a statewide requirement, the county has not yet issued any citations.
- ix) Commissioner Kelly noted that we did not purchase the cleaning stations until the county put in the ordinance. We do track the cleaning station use. Commissioner Ulbrich noted that we correlated the usage against the launches, and we are seeing about a 60% usage.
- x) Commissioner Weix noted that if we move to using cameras, citation issuance may start to occur.

- **Herbicide / Harvesting Curley Pond Weeds and Navigation – Jack Weix**

- i) Commissioner Weix and Marisa Wieder presented a history of the small-scale herbicide treatment that occurred this spring. The use of herbicide is indicated by objective, pre-determined criteria.
- ii) We worked with Tigress to accomplish the treatment. There were about 30 acres treated this year. The DNR issues permits for both herbicide treatment as well as harvester locations.
- iii) The first 6 weeks is critical to remove the CLP, and then navigation is the second priority. We are not permitted to just go wherever we want to go.
- iv) The harvesting program targets the rest of the lake throughout the summer.
- v) We have about 350 labor hours on the harvester so far this summer. Don Cottingham is retiring this year, and we have a team from Apple River who will be running it moving forward.
- vi) A question was asked about whether herbicide treatment is an option for stumps bay. Harvesting does very little to improve navigation. Commissioner Weix noted the DNR has not recommended herbicide in that bay, but Harvesting is an option. Herbicide is used only in extreme cases, but we can ask.
- vii) Someone asked about whether the harvester can target lily pads. No, unless this is a navigation issue. Commissioner Mork noted that shoreline owners are allowed to hand pull weeds and lily pads.

6) TREASURER REPORT

- **2023 Annual Report and 2024 YTD / 2025 Budget – Gary Schneider**

- i) Commissioner Schneider presented the Treasurers report for 2023. We ended up with a surplus of about \$13,000.00.
- ii) He then presented the year-to-date Treasurer's report for 2024. We currently have a larger surplus, but is expected to be on track with the budget for this year.
- iii) The budget for 2025 was then presented, at about \$478,571.00. He went over the proposed numbers in the budget, with an explanation of the larger costs.
- iv) He reviewed the Protection Fund. The nannobubbler system, if approved, would be paid for with some of the protection fund since we never bought a dredger.
- v) A question was asked about whether we are reserving enough for things in the future that we will need to do. Commissioner Kelly noted that we are actively managing this as we go. We are funding things out of the protection fund as we have excess funds, while maintaining the required funding.
 - (1) \$50k of this is reserved for a future rice creek sediment project, which is not yet needed.
 - (2) \$30k is reserved for rapid response if and when needed.
 - (3) The previously approved dredger funds would be repurposed for the nannobubbler system. Commissioner Mork noted that dredging was considered for the same bays the nannobubbler would be used to clean up. So it makes sense to use these funds.

(4) We try to keep the fund at around \$100,000.00, and after the nannobubbler is purchased, we will still have that in reserve. We have nothing significant coming up that we are aware of.

(5) Additional, specific questions regarding funds were asked and answered.

(6) A question was asked whether the dam ever needs maintenance. Commissioner Kelly noted that a dam study was completed. The Village owns and maintains the dam and we contribute about \$5,000.00 each year for maintenance. The dam does need repair and will be done at some point in the near future. Commissioner Kelly explained that adding and removing boards is how they manage the dam. 92 feet above sea level is mandated by law for dam height.

vi) Dave Kerr motioned to approve the 2025 budget, Pam Scheiller seconded, all approved, motion carried.

7) Registered commissioner candidates eligible for 2024 election - vote for Two

- Gary Schneider
- Dale Ulbrich

8) OLD BUSINESS

- Lake Manager Position – Tom Kelly

9) ELECTION RESULTS

- Gary Schneider
 - The majority of votes were in favor of electing Gary Schneider as Commissioner, so he has been elected for another 3-year term
- Dale Ulbrich
 - The majority of votes were in favor of electing Dale Ulbrich as Commissioner, so he has been elected for another 3-year term.

10) NEW BUSINESS

- Someone noted it would be nice to get information about the fishery in the lake and where we are headed.

11) ADJOURN

- Jean O'Connell motioned to adjourn, Dave Kerr seconded, all approved, meeting adjourned at 10:40 AM