



BALSAM LAKE PROTECTION & REHABILITATION DISTRICT

Board Meeting March 15, 2025 8:30 AM Central Time

To join via phone: Call +1 (312) 626-6799, enter the Meeting ID (822 8725 8252) followed by #, then press # again to skip Participant ID step

Online at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82287258252>

1) CALL TO ORDER:

- Commissioner Kelly called the meeting to order at 8:33 AM

2) COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

- Tom Kelly, Dave Wagner, Jack Weix, Bill Mork (Teleconference), Terry Palmberg

3) OTHERS PRESENT:

- Marisa Wieder, Lake District Manager
- Patty Kabus, Recorder

4) APPROVE AGENDA:

- Commissioner Weix motioned to approve the agenda, Commissioner Palmberg seconded, all approved. Motion carried.

5) APPROVE MINUTES: February 2025

- Commissioner Kelly motioned to approve the February Meeting Minutes, Commissioner Weix seconded, all approved. Motion carried.

6) PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- None

7) TREASURER REPORT:

- Financials / Kelly & Wagner

- i) Commissioner Wagner presented the February Financials. A partial 1st payment has been received from Milltown, the rest of the villages have been paid.
- ii) Commissioner Palmberg motioned to approve the February financials, Commissioner Kelly seconded, all approved. Motion carried.

8) Water Quality

- Alum / Wieder & Kelly
 - i) Commissioner Kelly and Marisa had a conference call with Bill James from the UW-Stout and Cheryl Clemmons from Harmony Environmental, and have identified some improvement opportunities for the 2026 Alum application grant request, which will be submitted by November. Grant approval is in March of 2026.
 - ii) Another item discussed was the algae bloom in non-treatment years. We will be watching this closely this year. The blooms are not significant, but we do need to pay attention to, and possibly schedule a 5th Alum treatment in 2027 or 2028, or we may need to increase the Alum treatment for 2026. Bill James will make a recommendation depending on how it looks this spring. Bill James said they are finding that when treatments are spaced out, they see rebounds at the end of the treatment. They are seeing that the treatments are more effective when done every year instead of every other year. A possible additional treatment may be added based on 2025 monitoring results.
 - iii) Commissioner Wagner asked if the grants are for one year only, or for multiple years. Marisa stated that the grant category is maxed at \$200,000 annually, so asking for multiple years at once would cap at \$200,000. There is another grant that can also be used for Alum treatments, called the Surface Water Runoff Program. We can apply for this as well. Commissioner Kelly noted this allows smaller lakes to treat with Alum. If we can use this, we will pursue it. The cap on this additional grant is \$85,000. We will try to leverage this.

9) Aquatic Plant Management and Invasive species

- CBCW / Mork
 - i) Commissioner Mork has not spoken to Terry Morton directly, but has been exchanging messages regarding this year's CBCW program. Terry has said he has his team all lined up and ready to go.
- Herbicide / Harvesting CLP & Navigation / Weix
 - i) We will make a decision about whether we will treat chemically based on the ERS survey results in May of this year, but will go ahead and apply for a grant. We believe we can get a refund of the permit fee if we end up not treating. We also need to apply for a permit.
 - ii) We have a contract with Apple River to do an aggressive harvest early in the season to make early headway. Rob will also help and possibly Don at some points. The harvesting permit will be applied for soon.
 - iii) Marisa noted that we can apply based on last year's surveys.

- iv) Commissioner Kelly noted that applying for the permits for both should be a priority. Marisa will handle this and will let people know when it has been done. Commissioner Kelly noted that we should be ready for an early spring.
- v) Commissioner Kelly asked about how to get the harvester ready to put in the water.
- vi) Commissioner Weix noted that residents don't want the harvester stored by the landings, so we need to find a spot to haul it to. Apparently, Rob doesn't want to drive the truck, so this causes some issues.
- vii) Commissioner Wagner noted that we may want to consider having a barge. Commissioner Weix noted that we only really have 2 people to run it and this can be an issue when moving things around.
- viii) Commissioner Wagner asked if moving the harvester around causes turions to be dropped around the lake. Commissioner Weix noted that no, they are up on the harvester, but it can take 45 minutes to drive the harvester across the lake. A barge could hold 4 or 5 loads, as opposed to just what the harvester can hold.
- ix) Commissioner Kelly noted that if we need more people, let us know and we can try to recruit people. Commissioner Weix noted there are only 2 launches, Idlewild and Forest Circle, that are good spots to dump harvester loads, since they do not have boat launch capabilities on those landings.

10) Water Patrol

- 2024/2025 water patrol / Kelly
 - i) We have submitted the expenses for 2024 and are waiting to hear back from the state regarding grant funds.
 - ii) The county recreational deputy has assigned a full-time deputy to the project but has not hired a new person yet. He reached out to us and said he is going to start to put a schedule together based on our discussions, but that the rate originally quoted was incorrect. In reality, the cost is \$125 for the first hour, and \$100 per hour after that, rather than the \$40-\$50 we were initially quoted. At least one deputy on the water from 7AM to 9AM every weekend, and 2 on holidays. He asked for additional needs for tournaments, etc. We are not planning to staff on weekdays.
 - iii) We initially said we wanted 120 hours, hoping to lock in at 100 hours. At the additional rate, we are probably looking at more like 40 or 50 hours. Commissioner Kelly noted that we may be able to submit the employment expense into our grant request. He will follow up on that.
 - iv) Commissioner Weix asked what the difference in cost is between one or 2 deputies. Marisa stated she will clarify how this is charged based on whether there are one or two people in a single boat. Commissioner Wagner has asked if there are expectations as to what the people are doing – educational focus or writing tickets, etc. We need to have a written understanding of the expectations. Commissioner Kelly asked Marisa to get a written letter explaining what will be done and what the focus will be. Commissioner Wagner noted we should have educational programs done using publications, etc, and have the current program do more tickets. Commissioner Palmberg asked whether most stops are visitors or residents.

- v) Commissioner Kelly will have Tommy Thompson attend our next meeting to explain how the program works. Marisa said he was on last month's agenda but then was unable to attend. Commissioner Kelly will reach out to Tommy.
- vi) Marisa asked if there are any weekends in particular that we want covered. Commissioner Mork noted that the 4th of July, the week after the 4th, and July and August are particularly busy and should be covered.
- vii) Marisa noted that the deputy creates reports of how many hours, contacts, and citations are issued. We can request these as often as needed.

11) OLD BUSINESS

- Water Runoff / Wieder
 - i) Nothing new to report at this time
- County recreation deputy / Wieder
 - i) Already covered
- Polk County Shoreland zoning updates / Wieder
 - i) The updates to the zoning language has gone back to zoning, is in progress, and has been reviewed about 4 times now. They have just a few items left to clarify. Once the updates have been approved, they will go to the DNR for approval. Once the DNR approves, it will go back to the public for review and then approval.
 - ii) Commissioner Palmberg asked what is happening regarding boathouses. The current version allows flat roofs. Marisa read part of the current version regarding the boathouse regulations.
 - iii) Bunkhouses are still limited to 1000 square feet.
 - iv) The county is going to revisit the property with 4 structures. Logan replied that not all existing structures were included in the initial permit. Enforcement action is being pursued by the county.
- Nanobubble DNR permitting / Wagner & Wieder
 - i) Marisa had a meeting on Monday with the DNR to discuss the requirements for water quality monitoring. Marisa is working on additional monitoring requirements. We will have to get 2 permits, a 109 permit, which is the same type of permit as the harvesting permit. A second permit is needed, which requires a detailed monitoring plan for the nanobubble project. This needs to be an additional plan or incorporated into an existing plan. There needs to be a 30-day public comment period. Biweekly monitoring and identifying specific locations, needs to be part of the plan. Several additional items need to be monitored. The difficulty will be the cost, which will be around \$20,000-\$25,000 (in addition to what we are currently doing). Both the project site and a control site need to be identified. Commissioner Wagner noted that they are requiring this to make sure that this new technology will not cause other detrimental effects to the lake, since this is new technology. Over time, the requirements may be reduced. The \$20,000-\$25,000 would be for Marisa's time and for lab costs.

- ii) Marisa noted that Tri-Lakes is interested in helping with this monitoring. They have interest in our project as well as they are vested in getting requirements reduced in the future.
- iii) Commissioner Kelly asked if the DNR will pick up part of the cost for monitoring. Marisa noted that we could potentially get a permit for this summer, but we have to have a plan in place and be through the public comment period before we apply for a permit.
- iv) Commissioner Mork noted that spending \$25,000 this year would require us to go back to the constituents for approval.
- v) Commissioner Wagner noted that the assumptions made when we purchased the equipment, no longer apply because the DNR is identifying requirements as they go due to it being new technology. Both the DNR and the BLPRD are learning.
- vi) Commissioner Mork said that in order to go forward, we need to get constituents approval. Commissioner Kelly noted that yes, this is true because it exceeds \$10,000. Commissioner Kelly asked if we need to update our aquatic plant management plan. Marisa noted we could just have an addendum to the plan and send that out for public comment. Our goals are really not limited to the plant community so it doesn't need to be embedded in the plan.
- vii) Commissioner Wagner shares in the concern about the cost. He shared with the DNR that we are concerned about the costs. We see people blowing their motors out in the lake, we see 4 wheelers and pumps being used, which does not help anyone. No one wants to see these things being taken into individual hands, but we need to be reasonable and patient. Commissioner Weix noted we may want to ask the company to help pay for the testing since it will also be helpful for them.
- viii) Commissioner Kelly noted that we will have the opportunity to present this at the annual meeting. He noted the timing and said it would possibly gain us no more than a month to have a special meeting and we would be better served to be ready to provide a more comprehensive reporting at the annual meeting. And the Dockside from the end of June can go into some of this.
- ix) Commissioner Kelly asked Marisa if we have a one-page summary of everything required and the costs. Marisa said we have the information but not in a one-page summary at this time.
- x) Commissioner Wagner noted the annual meeting is good but asked if Marisa can move ahead with creating the plan so we can move forward. Marisa noted she has everything she needs to create an amendment to the plan for the nano bubbler, it can be presented at the annual meeting and then the public comment period can commence. Commissioner Kelly agreed. Commissioner Wagner asked if the plan can be ready before the agenda goes out.
- xi) Commissioner Wagner noted that our goal will be to fully cooperate with the DNR and provide them with everything they need.
- xii) A grant could cover up to 75% of the cost for next year. Commissioner Kelly will contact the manufacturer.

- Stumps Bay Conservancy / Wagner
 - i) Marisa noted that we need to contact an appraisal service as the original contact has not responded back.
- Landing cameras – Weix & Mork
 - i) There has been discussion on cameras. Commissioner Weix looked at some cameras. He concluded that Eyelids cameras seem to be the camera that is used at other lakes and has been successfully used there. A 90 second recording explains the use of the cleaning stations and that they are being recorded. Recordings are reviewed and are sent to law enforcement. This takes it out of the hands of CBCW. The cost is roughly \$22,000 per launch for the camera and the install. Annual cost of monitoring for about 6 months costs about \$2800 per camera. This provides about 500 videos per launch. This also provides a complete and accurate 24/7 count of who is using the launches. Dozens of lakes are using these cameras.
 - ii) In order to use the cameras, you have to have an order in by Feb 26 for the following year.
 - iii) Commissioner Mork noted we would need to get permission from the village boards to install the cameras. Commissioner Weix also noted that we would need permitting from the DNR. Commissioner Kelly asked Marisa if there is grant money available for this. Marisa noted that there is grant money for cameras and installation but not for ongoing monitoring.
 - iv) Commissioner Kelly noted that 90% of the launches come out of Town Bay and 46 store landings. Milltown has already approved cameras for Little Balsam. We would need to figure out a plan for how to present this to other villages. The pushback from the Village of Balsam Lake on the cleaning stations indicates there may be some pushback on cameras as well. A full plan would need to be developed.
 - v) Commissioner Kelly asked if we want to pursue this to see if we should bring this to the constituency for 2026. Commissioner Mork noted he would like to see this as a replacement for CBCW monitors. He asked if it is a potential for this year. This will likely take more time than this. Commissioners Weix and Mork should work together to approach the Village of Balsam Lake Commissioner to see how he responds. Commissioner Kelly noted that reporting of violators was a concern due to concern for safety of our employees. This should be part of the conversation. Commissioner Weix will follow up on this.
- CBCW employee status – Mork
 - i) Commissioner Mork noted that the determination of contractor vs employee, leans towards employees. Initially, the CBCW workers qualified as contractors, but at this time, they are considered as employees. So as far as employees claiming unemployment, there is nothing we can do. This expense has gone way up as a result. Commissioner Kelly noted that previously, employees had another form of income so did not file for unemployment, but at this time, we have one person

collecting unemployment. This expense needs to be included in the budget, as well as the fees for the payroll taxes.

- ii) Commissioner Kelly noted that the program used to run based on high school kids. He said we used to do this but had a lot of issues with them not showing up, so moved to not using them.
- iii) Commissioner Wagner asked how much of the payroll costs are reimbursed through grants. The cost is about \$80,000, the max is \$4000 per landing. Marisa noted we could reduce the number of hours at the landings. Commissioner Mork noted that we could revisit the hours at East and Little Balsam particularly, and adjust those hours more. Commissioner Wagner noted that with milfoil nearby, that is really the main reason we should have milfoil. Commissioner Palmberg noted that most people in the community state they don't feel we are monitoring enough. Commissioner Kelly noted he has never had pushback regarding CBCW funding, and Matt Berg has stated that we have the gold standard for CBCW.
- iv) We are currently going to run the program as we have, including unemployment.

12) NEW BUSINESS

- 2026 survey contracts for AIS grant / Wieder
 - i) Marisa noted that we have a contract with Matt Berg for plant surveys but it only runs for 2 years. We need to enter into a contract for 2026 with Matt Berg, and the costs have increased. Marisa shared the increases. Previously, our grant covered 75% of the costs, but with the new costs will be about an additional \$6000. We could consider removing some of the services that are not required by the grant. The new prices are based on the DNR cost elevator standardized costs. Commissioner Weix said he would be interested in seeing a second bid. Commissioner Kelly asked if there are other lake biologists, but noted that Matt has been working with Balsam Lake and has a lot of extensive knowledge of the lake.
 - ii) Commissioner Weix noted that if the budget is impacted by this extent, he would be in favor of removing some of the optional surveys. Commissioner noted that Matt also goes along the shorelines looking for invasive species, but the Town Bay turion survey is a bit in question. This survey measures turions harvested vs herbicide treatment. Commissioner Weix feels that since we don't even know if we will treat chemically, this may be a mott survey.
 - iii) Commissioner Kelly noted that the DNR water quality monitoring went up but it is because the grant money also went up. So it's not as large as it sounds.
 - iv) Marisa noted these costs are not until 2026 so we have time to work on this.

13) OTHER REPORTS:

- Milltown / Palmberg
 - i) No update recently. Commissioner Palmberg had given them an update on the DNR but nothing else.
- County / Mariani
 - i) No update

14) FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

- Board Vacancy
 - i) Commissioner Kelly sent out a biography on an individual who is interested in joining the board. He has expressed some interest in taking over the treasury responsibilities. Dean Truitt acquired a property in 2021 and has an industrial engineer degree. He is currently the Treasurer of the Landings HOA in Minneapolis and has a high level of experience and was a former partner of Ernst and Young in addition to many other qualifications. He also has a desire to work for the sake of the lake.
 - ii) Commissioner Palmberg has known Dean for 30 years and has worked with him extensively. He thinks Dean would do a good job. All other commissioners agreed. Commissioner Kelly made a motion to nominate Dean Truitt to fill the position, Commissioner Palmberg seconded, all approved, motion carried.

15) ADJOURN:

- Commissioner Palmberg motioned to adjourn, Commissioner Mork seconded, all approved, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:49 AM.