**LaGrange County Drainage Board Minutes**

 **Commissioner’s Room – 1st Floor County Office Building**

A regular session of the LaGrange County Drainage Board was called to order by Ben Taylor at 8:30 A.M. on Wednesday, April 9th, 2025.

**Those Present Were:**

Ben Taylor, Chair; Todd Perkins, Vice Chair; Kevin Myers, Eric Knepp, Member; Member; Zachary Young, Member; Zach Holsinger, County Surveyor; Samantha Yoder, Secretary; Cory Stewart, Deputy Surveyor; Tony Manns, County Attorney; Tharon Morgan, County Engineer; Sebastian Skordos, NIPSCO Representative; Debra Hughes, Landowner Representative; Scott Zeigler, Surveyor; Lavon Miller, Landowner; Tiffany Rolin, Landowner Representative; Erik Pearson, Landowner; Mitchell Garlock, Contractor

**Agenda:**

Myers moved to accept the agenda with flexibility. Knepp seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Minutes:**

Perkins motioned to accept the minutes from the previous meeting. Myers seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**New Business:**

Holsinger presented an application to encroach in the right-of-way for Jacob Yoder. Holsinger stated that this application is for fencing for chickens. Scott Zeigler was present for questions. Perkins made a motion to approve the application as presented. Knepp seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Holsinger presented an application to encroach in the right-of-way for NIPSCO. Holsinger stated that this is an after-the-fact permit. Sebastian Skordos was present for questions. The Board asked why a permit was not pulled prior to the work being done and Sebastian stated that it was an oversite on his part. Perkins made a motion to approve the application. Young seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Holsinger presented an application to encroach in the right-of-way for Lavon Miller. Holsinger stated that this application is for horse fencing 25’ from the top of the bank. Mr. Miller was present for questions. Knepp made a motion to approve the application as presented. Perkins seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Holsinger presented three applications for Brightspeed. Holsinger stated that all three applications are for boring in conduit for new lines and that one of the applications also includes some aerial lines on existing poles. Jason Grundy was present for questions. Young made a motion to approve all the applications as presented with the stipulation that they call the Surveyor’s Office and let them know when they will start boring. Myers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Holsinger presented an application to encroach in the right-of-way for Jadwinder Singh. Holsinger stated that this is for a new convenience store and gas station at US 20 and SR 5 that was tabled at the last meeting. Debra Hughes was present to present their findings to the Board for when they had the tile appraised. Ms. Hughes stated that after seeing the tile, it is not feasible to have the tile relined. The two options that were presented were to replace only the damaged section of approximately 40’ (est. cost $52,000) or remove/replace the entire tile of 450’ (est. cost $216,000). They are requesting to replace the 40’ because of cost and the landowner would cover the full cost. The Board discussed. Holsinger is to get a quote on the cost of opening the tile back up to an open ditch and bring those findings to the next meeting where the discussion will continue. No motions made at this time.

Holsinger presented an application to encroach in the right-of-way for Erik Pearson. Holsinger stated that this application is a continuation from the last meeting because the Board had requested Mr. Pearson to stake the house out and have either Zach or Cory come take shots to get distances to the top of the bank. The Board discussed. Mr. Pearson stated that he is willing to do whatever he needs to, to be able to build. Taylor stated that he’d like to see the structure as far away from the drain as possible and as close to the west side and south side building setback lines.

**Old Business:**

Holsinger presented a private/mutual drain for consideration to be regulated to the Board. Yoder explained that the drainage code allows Holsinger to give permission to a landowner to extend and connect a private/mutual drain to a regulated drain and the Board can vote to regulate that section as long as everyone within the watershed agrees. Yoder stated that we have a petition signed by everyone in the watershed asking for the private/mutual drain to become a regulated part of the Logan #49 drain. Young abstained from voting. Perkins made a motion to make the private/mutual drain a regulated part of the Logan #49 drain. Myers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Holsinger gave an update on the demand letters sent to Shipshewana Auction and REMC. Holsinger stated that at the time of our meeting they have 10 days left to pay and asked the Board what they’d like us to do if payment is not received. The Board discussed. In the case of the Shipshewana Auction, Tony Manns recommends that if the Board can come to an agreement, it would be more cost effective to do that than having to go to court. When discussion about REMC started Manns left the meeting. The Board decided to wait until the May meeting to see if any payment was received from either demand letter or if not, they will decide at that time on what to do.

**Other Business:**

Yoder gave an update on Ervin Bontrager’s cabin that was built in the right-of-way unpermitted. Yoder reminded the Board that he was told the structure had to be moved outside the 75’ right-of-way by a DNR letter and that the only thing permitted by us and the DNR was a foot bridge. Yoder stated that his footbridge approval and structure denial were from April 3, 2024, and he still has not complied with moving the structure outside the right-of-way. DNR will be sending a new letter of violation and Yoder wanted to know if the Board would also like a letter sent. The Board discussed. Knepp made a motion to send a new violation letter giving the landowner 6 months to move the structure (September 9, 2025) or fines will begin. Myers seconded the motion.

Next meeting date is Wednesday, May 7th at 8:45 AM for a Public Hearing and 9:00 AM for regular meeting.

**Adjourn:**

Young motioned to close the drainage board meeting for Wednesday, April 9th, 2025, at 10:15 A.M. Knepp seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Benjamin Taylor, Chair

Todd Perkins, Vice Chair

Kevin Myers, Member

Eric Knepp, Member

Zachary Young, Member