

BLPRD Harvest Committee Meeting Minutes  
Saturday, August 7, 2021 – 8:00 AM  
Packwaukee Town Hall

Meeting was called to order by Gary Kershaw at 8:00 am

Roll Call

Present: Gary Kershaw, Bob Fohey, Ed Schams, Cindi Blumreich, Joe Dion

Absent: Sara Scheel, Bernie Sosinsky, Larry Haygood, Don Klecz

Topics of discussion

A. Season-to-date Weed Cutting

1. Accomplishments

Bob reported that the crew is currently at the Hwy C landing on the East side. Each segment has been cut three times in ten weeks. The paddle wheels are breaking up the weeds more due to the density of the weeds. This results in weeds floating to the shorelines because of the direction the crew is cutting. A request was made to start at the Montello Dredge Bank this year instead of Hwy C Landing. Earlier in the season, the weeds are not so dense but as the season progresses, there is more of an issue with the weeds floating. 640 harvester loads have been hauled on the East side and 350 harvester loads in segments 5, 6, 7 down to Call of the Wild on the West side. Updated weekly reports are posted on Facebook and the website with the segments listed on the website.

All equipment is running pretty decent with minor downtime. Repairs were hydraulics, belting, and operator error. The crew should be able to cut one more time before labor day. The new used blue machine #7 was put in the water last Tuesday. Minor adjustments need to be completed. The controls are different and Gary has been working on them and is in conversation with the manufacturers. Bob will try it out next Monday or Tuesday.

Ed asked how many truck loads. Bob stated that two cutter loads are loaded onto the dump truck. There is roughly 350 dump truck loads. Ed asked how does this compare with last year. Cindi has recorded the truck loads from the 2020 season and will compare last year to this year. Ed also asked how many complaints compared to last year. Gary stated they are down from last year with fewer complaints. Complaints do vary from year to year depending on weed growth and the season.

B. Current Challenges

1. Pay Scale

Low pay scale has affected our progress of cutting weeds. Pay scale does not warrant quality employees. In 2018 starting pay was \$13.50/hr set up by the Dues and Finance Committee. This season new employees start at \$12.00/hr and after the probationary period, pay increases to \$13.00/hr. A competitive wage needs to be offered. Twelve new employees were hired and trained this year with six resigning. We are having a difficult time to hire anyone and keep them. Gary is donating his time and assists in repairs, weed hauling, parts pickups, etc. Current budget shows \$64,000 gross and \$57,000 net for labor. A discussion is needed with the Dues and Finance Committee for labor costs on the

budget in 2022. Other expenses may need to be reduced to increase the payroll to balance. Cindi made a motion to increase 2022 wages and present to the board at the next board meeting. Seconded by Gary. All in favor.

## 2. Equipment

At the last harvest meeting, a motion was made and approved to buy a new conveyor. This will be presented to the board at the next board meeting. Joe stated that the grant is currently at 50% and he is working on requesting the grant.

## 3. Site Improvements

### a. Wifi Update

Wifi will be set up at the lake site in approximately two weeks. Price is \$49.95 per month during the harvest season and \$10.00 per month on offseason.

### b. Proposed Building Upgrades

The equipment sets out in the snowbank during the winter weather. This spring one machine had a leak in the top causing considerable barge repair. Tires on the trailers are dry rotted from sitting outside in the weather. If the machines were under a roof, it would be a savings benefit to the district for depreciation, repairs, etc. Four machines could be stored under a roof. The quote from Metal Concepts is \$16,000 for two 16 x 56 lean-tos. The price of lumber is going down and estimate could be requoted when the lumber price decreases.

The office trailer should be replaced as it leaks and is infested with rodents. A replacement was approved back in 2014 for \$5,000 to \$6,000 and was not completed. A recent quote from Metal Concepts for a 12 x 24 ft prebuilt building delivered to our site was for \$5,300. Motion was made to move forward by Brad Brandsma and seconded by Bob Fohey to present to the board. Bob stated there may be grant money available for the buildings.

## C. Applying for DNR Cutting Permit 2022

Possible minor changes on the lake cutting permit may be needed. The current permit will expire December 31, 2021, and can be seen on the Buffalo Lake website. The current one was done by a board member. Joe recommended scheduling a meeting just for the subject on the cutting permit. The cutting permit will need to be done by January 2022 to submit to DNR for approval.

Adding flags at the shorelines for laterals would make it obvious for cutting crew and district members. Bob stated it would eliminate any question where to cut.

## D. Haul Trucks

### 1. Tire Replacement

The district's two haul trucks need to have the tires replaced. Out of 12 tires, 10 need to be replaced for safety factors. A quote for recap tires is \$3,420. A price for used tires will be obtained. Brad Brandsma made a motion to present quotes for replacement tires at the next board meeting, seconded by Bob

Fohey. All in favor.

## E. Personnel

### 1. Create Pay Scale for 2022 Season and Beyond

A proposed 2022 updated pay scale with bonus suggestions will be forwarded to the board. It was difficult to hire help this year. Increasing the wage may help, but there is no guarantee. Bill stated that wages could be changed every month if you wanted to. The board can change salaries with a vote. Each employee works approximately 560 hours a year. Offering an incentive will help employees perform better and they will stay. Bob stated the machines are not easy to run and we need to be careful who is hired. Employees need to know how to watch the belting, etc on the machine. Cindi made a motion to present the proposed wages to the board. Gary seconded. All in favor.

### 2. Adjust Employee Handbook

Minor modifications are needed in the employee handbook. Cindi stated if employees are off work three days or more, it will be considered an excessive absence. Employees will be allowed one 10-minute break. The supervisor will be responsible for daily time cards. For employees to report to the lake site would cause time lost at the beginning of the day for startup time as well as quitting earlier. General work period is approximately the first of April to the middle of September. Exit interviews will be conducted and is a good way to get a sound feeling of employees. More documentation will give the employee, supervisor, and lake district a better feel of how things are going.

### 3. Adjust Job Applications

SS # will be removed from the job application.

## F. Committee Member Attendance

Discussion on attendance of committee members on whether they should show up to at least 60% of the meetings.

Establish next meeting

Sat, September 11, 2021 8:00 am

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:22 am