

BLPRD Harvest Committee Meeting Minutes  
Saturday, July 17, 2021 – 8:00 AM  
Packwaukee Town Hall

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

Roll Call

Present: Gary Kershaw, Joe Dion, Bill Lewis, Bernie Soskinsky, Sara Scheel, Cindi Blumreich, Ed Schams

Absent: Don Klecz, Linda Huggett

Recognition of Linda Huggett:

Linda has resigned from the harvest committee. Linda was recognized for all her hard work working with the harvest committee including the Employee Handbook, finding drop sites for weeds, recruiting new employees, and many other tasks involved with Buffalo Lake. Thank you Linda for your participation.

Topics of discussion

A. General Discussion on Progress of Harvest at Mid-Season

1. Report from Supervisor, Bob Fohey

We have completed seven weeks of weed cutting and submit a weekly report each Thursday to be posted on the website and Facebook. Expectations were everything we said were going to be done. Issues have been manpower struggling to keep going. There also is a need to keep training people when someone quits. This week the transporter sat for three out of the four days. All in all a decent job was completed. Complaints have been few. On the West side, they are now done by Hollenbeck's Landing. Bob and Gary worked part of the day on Friday and it looks decent. They have moved to Call of the Wild.

Cutting cannot be done around the piers per DNR regulations. After laterals and shoreline are cut, the crew will back flush the piers out. People are to clean around their own piers and cannot leave weeds float in the lake. The weeds are to be removed from the lake and brought on shore. 30' total around piers can be cut (15' on each side of your pier). The weeds will compost down to make outstanding black dirt.

DNR regulates what can be cut. The channel can be cut 50' and laterals 30'. Weed harvesting is going much better this year.

The district board is working with DNR on the low lake levels and not the harvest committee. We are operating the equipment the best we can with the help we have. We are working with regulations that DNR enforces and this is available to view on the Buffalo Lake website. The DNR 1976 regulation was not enforced until 2020 and we are now dealing with that enforcement. We cannot start cutting until June 1<sup>st</sup> per DNR regulations. Early cutting of main channels can only start May 15<sup>th</sup> with DNR approval.

## B. Equipment

### 1. Purchases

We were informed by Mitch from Inland of a used 2006 820 Aquarius cutter with trailer at Lake Noquebay near Crivitz. Joe and Gary drove to Crivitz, looked at the machine, and found it to be in good operating condition. The Lake Noquebay district offered the machine to us for \$35,000 which is about 17% of a new machine with trailer. The low price was offered to BLPRD as a district-to-district courtesy. The Buffalo Lake District Board held a special meeting to approve the purchase. The machine was delivered Friday, July 9<sup>th</sup> and the trucking cost was \$1,200. The machine was operating the morning it was picked up and there are a few things that need to be tweaked before putting it in the water.

### 2. Sales

Due to purchase of the used cutter and trailer and once we test it in the lake, our oldest cutter, a 2001 Aquamarine 820 with trailer, should be sold. The harvest committee will establish a sales price to present to the district board for approval. This could include the cutter and offload trailer, and possibly a conveyor which could be supplied next spring. Mitch from Inland felt a fair price would be 10% of a new machine which would approximately be \$22,000 to \$25,000. We are replacing the 2001 #3 mild steel hull machine with a 2006 stainless steel hull cutter. The 2001 #3 machine is rusting and a lot of maintenance was put into the machine this year. Bill made a motion to sell the 2001 machine and trailer at the \$22,000 to \$25,000 value. Bernie seconded. All in favor.

### 3. Five-Year Planning Committee Recommendations

#### a. Equipment

Bob Fohey, Bernie Sosinsky, and Darrell Unsinn met to discuss the condition, immediate needs, future needs, and recommendation of the equipment and rated each piece green (good for 5+ years), yellow (replace 3 to 5 years), and red (replace 0 to 2 years). See attached spreadsheet. We have invested quite a bit of money on yellow and red items this spring. More money will need to be invested again next spring to keep the equipment going. We had to doctor up this year to be able to use.

Belting on two of the conveyors has been on for at least 20 years and to replace is \$30 per foot. Conveyors are 30+ years old. We have received two quotes. A new conveyor can be purchased for the lowest bid of approximately \$38,000 and hopefully, grant money can be available to help in the purchase. We have three conveyors. One on the West side that is moved from the Freedom Rd boat landing to Hollenbeck's, to Call of the Wild and then back again to the Freedom Rd boat landing. On the East side, one conveyor is at the lake site and is permanent all season. Another conveyor on the East side moves from Hwy C boat landing to Buffalo Lake Lodge to the Montello Dredge Bank and then back to Buffalo Lake Lodge to Hwy C boat landing and so forth. Only three conveyors are needed. In the past, the conveyors were set to run faster than they should be and has caused issues and cost which we are dealing with now. Currently, we have two bids for a new conveyor. Gary made a motion to purchase a new conveyor and present to the board for approval with the board applying for a grant. Seconded by Bill. All in favor. Grants are currently available at 35%. Bill stated we have \$197,000 in the equipment fund after the purchase of the 2006 used cutter.

**ASSESSMENT OF EQUIPMENT**

<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>IMMEDIATE NEEDS</b>	<b>FUTURE NEEDS</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
<b>HARVESTER #6</b>	VERYGOOD	NEED TO REVIEW MIDDLE CONVEYOR FOR OFFLOAD	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE	KEEP UP ON PM'S.	SHOULD LAST FOR 20 YEARS WITH PROPER MAINTENANCE.
<b>HARVESTER #5</b>	VERYGOOD	NA	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE	KEEP UP ON PM'S.	SHOULD LAST FOR 20 YEARS WITH PROPER MAINTENANCE.
<b>HARVESTER #4</b>	POOR	KEEP AN EYE ON	KEEP AN EYE ON BARGE, HAS HAD ISSUES WITH LEAKS, SEAMS ARE IN BAD CONDITION.	CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN, KEEP CLEAN MONITOR USE.	DUE TO STEEL BARGE INVESTING MORE MONEY IN THIS IS NOT RECOMMENDED.
<b>HARVESTER #3</b>	POOR	KEEP AN EYE ON	#2 & #3 BELTING ALONG WITH NYLON STRIPS WILL NEED REPLACING. ENGINE IS GETTING TIRED, WILL NEED REBUILD OR REPLACEMENT WITHIN 24 MONTHS.	REPLACE ASAP	DUE TO STEEL BARGE INVESTING MORE MONEY IN THIS IS NOT RECOMMENDED.
<b>TRANSPORTER</b>	VERYGOOD	NA	ROUTINE MAINTENANCE	KEEP UP ON PM'S.	SHOULD LAST FOR 30 YEARS WITH PROPER MAINTENANCE.
<b>CONVEYOR 1</b>	POOR	BELTING, COST IS \$30/FT REQUIRES 66 FT/FRAME TWISTED	CONTINUE TO MONITOR	PURCHASE NEW SHORE CONVEYOR WHILE GRANT IS AT 35%. HAVE QUOTES FOR NEW.	IF NEW CONVEYOR IS PURCHASED COULD REFURBISH AND USE ONE AS BACK-UP.
<b>CONVEYOR 2</b>	POOR	BELTING, COST IS \$30/FT REQUIRES ABOUT 132 FT/FRAME TWISTED	CONTINUE TO MONITOR	SEE ABOVE	SEE ABOVE
<b>CONVEYOR 3</b>	GOOD	BELTING, COST IS \$30/FT REQUIRES ABOUT 132 FT	CONTINUE TO MONITOR	MAINTAIN	SEE ABOVE

RED=REPLACE 0 TO 2 YRS, YELLOW=REPLACE 3 TO 5 YRS, GREEN=GOOD FOR 5+ YRS.  
07/17/21

**b. Site Upgrades**

At a district meeting July of 2014, it was discussed to remove the trailer and build a storage building. October of 2014, it was discussed to purchase a 14' x 20' prefab building for \$5,000 to \$6,000. No action was taken in 2014 and that was seven years ago. We still are using the same trailer for our operations. Would recommend putting a 16' x 24' on a cement slab for work shop and supervisor operations. Also recommend two 16' x 56' lean tos for equipment cover. Hope to have information and bids to present to the board by next harvest meeting. Buildings would need to come out of the equipment fund. Subcommittee would need to put together information on site needs to present to the board with dimension of buildings and dollar amounts. Sara made a motion to investigate buildings, size and cost. Seconded by Joe. All in favor.

**ASSESSMENT OF BUILDINGS**

BUILDING	CONDITION	IMMEDIATE NEEDS	FUTURE NEEDS	RECOMMENDATION	COMMENTS
OFFICE/TRAILER	POOR	REPLACE	NEW OFFICE/PARTS STORAGE	ADD TO EXISTING SHED OR BUILD NEW.	CURRENT ONE IS INFESTED WITH RODENTS, WORN OUT ITS USE.
EQUIPMENT STORAGE	POOR	BUILD	LEAN-TO FOR EQUIPMENT STORAGE	ADD TO EXISTING SHED	EQUIPMENT IS CURRENTLY STORED IN OUTSIDE WEATHER CONDITIONS DURING OFFSEASON CAUSING LEAKS, HOSE BREAKDOWNS, MORE MAINTENANCE, FASTER DEPRECIATION

RED=REPLACE 0 TO 2 YRS, YELLOW=REPLACE 3 TO 5 YRS, GREEN=GOOD FOR 5+ YRS  
07/17/21

Cindi presented a cost for internet service at the lake site from April to September at \$75 a month with a vacation hold of \$10 a month from October to March. Wifi motion made by Joe, seconded by Sara. All in favor.

4. Action on Recommendations

Motions were made as each subject was discussed.

C. Personnel Report

Need more employees and encourage them to apply. Postings are at convenient locations around the area. Need to look at job descriptions and check if everything is accurate. Transporter operator sets the pace on the east end of the lake. Expectations are higher and should be higher on pay scale compared to weed cutters. Operators next year should start at \$13.50 per hour. Want to go with \$.50 COLA next year.

D. Employee Payscale

1. Comparison to Other Districts Wages

Lake Emery starts at \$13.50 per hour. Bob and Gary attended an Aquarius seminar and asked other lake districts what starting wage was. \$15.00 and up per hour for starting wage. Lake Noquebay starts at \$17.00 per hour, experienced employee \$20.00 per hour. Employees come back year after year once trained with very minimum turnover. Supervisor makes \$25.00 per hour. Lake Noquebay is 2,500 acre lake and members pay \$160 per year. Unknown number of homes that pay the lake fee.

2. Incentives for Returning Trained Employees

Discussed bonus at year's end for riding out the year for 2022. Hours work is approximately 450 hours per year. Money, time, maintenance is saved by returning employees.

### 3. Pay Scale to Attract Qualified Employees

Discussed increasing wages for next year 2022. Subcommittee will present 2022 wages to the harvest committee and then the board. Supervisor approval and paper trail of communication is required for hiring, raises, etc.

#### E. Employee Handbook

Written forms are needed for hiring, letting go, etc for 2022. Revise Employee Handbook to help enforce sick day returns and actions on poor attendance and performance.

#### Establish next meeting

Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 am, Packwaukee Town Hall

#### Adjournment

Note: The Buffalo Lake Harvest Committee will require 6' social distancing and mandatory face coverings and asking anyone attending the meeting to bring their own face covering as none will be provided. Please do not attend if you have had a cough or fever in the last two weeks.