

BLPRD Harvest Committee Meeting Minutes
Saturday, December 5, 2020 – 9:00 AM
Packwaukee Town Hall

Roll Call -

Present: Gary Kershaw, Joe Dion, Larry Haygood, Bill Lewis, Cindi Blumreich, Don Klecz

Absent: Linda Huggett, Ed Scham, Bernie Sosinsky, Sara and Robert Scheel

Topics of discussion

- A. Approval of job descriptions, work hours, work rules, pay scale, employee handbook, etc
- B. Preliminary discussion on harvest cutting plan

Discussion on catch basins and dredging. Larry brought up the catch basins for the silt. Gary will check out one in Indiana and one in Michigan. Buffalo Lake District Facebook shows information on the catch basin. The catch basins will contain silt mostly as it enters into the lake from the creeks.

Larry mentioned dredging. Yahara River in Madison is doing dredging. They have a barge that has a big tube on it that pumps the silt from the bottom of the river. We would need to possibly pump the silt into a gravel pit or somewhere that was somewhat close. Gary stated he has seen it done with a liquid manure storage. One of the issues would be to find a property owner to accept the silt. We would need to find what is the most effective and if the soil would be considered contaminated with heavy metals and would need to be tested. It would need to be done at the end of the season. This would save headaches on harvest. Bill feels we would not be allowed to disturb the lake.

Discussion on job descriptions, work hours, work rules, pay scale, employee handbook, etc for approval to forward to board. Joe stated a change was made on the supervisor's job description. The supervisor would share end of season duties. Bill would like the harvesting committee to have a walk through at the end of the season. Joe motion made to approve job descriptions. Larry seconded. All in favor.

Discussion on work wages. Joe stated we had general job descriptions and now has been broken down to each position. Bill stated an operator was paid \$19 an hour in 2020. Joe thought it was listed as an exception. With the new season, things will be corrected on paper. Joe made motion to accept work wages. Gary seconded. All in favor.

Discussion on Employee Handbook and Work Rules. Joe stated we had different rules on different sheets. Have one or two documents only with one listed on revised job descriptions. Changes were discussed to the employee handbook. A motion was made by Joe and seconded by Larry to accept the presented changes to the employee handbook. All in favor.

Discussion on labor hours. Tentative early start will be May 20th if DNR approves. Post inspection in 2020 indicated a significant amount of work to be done on machinery. 2020 post season was done in three days.

Discussion on overtime. Bill stated overtime should be paid over 40 hours which is a state law. Employees have not worked over 40 hours per pay period. Language will be written in to the employee handbook for overtime. Joe stated work hours are Monday thru Thurs for a total of 32 hours. Gary stated that in 2020 employees worked a portion of the season for a total of 36 hours per week with 9-hour days.

Joe stated that the problem is we always have a preseason and postseason. The start date was always the same and the postseason was always the same. The payroll is required to be wrapped up by Sept. 30.

Discussion on work hours. Bill stated the assumption was to work from 7 am-3 pm for the 2020 season, yet many days the crew started at 8 on the east side. There is nothing in there about start time, lunch, or breaks. Joe stated hours were 7 am-3 pm and is already there in the employee handbook. Bill stated that last season employees were literally taking 30 to 45 mins lunch off the boat. Joe will put in statement to correct the verbiage. Cindi stated that the state requires two 10 min breaks per shift of work. Time for necessities and lunch. Joe stated that from what was observed, lunch was taken by the crew. Gary stated it appeared crew would eat lunch while waiting for transporter on the east side. Joe stated the east side crew was not going back into shore which is a little bit of a difference. Cindi suggested 30 min lunch with two 10 min breaks and put in writing per state requirements.

Discussion on time cards. The time card process is in the job descriptions. Employees arrived at the district site in the morning to fill in their time card. After the work week, supervisor handed to bookkeeper. Could the time cards be kept all week and returned after week work hours. It is the supervisor's job to review and approve time cards. Time cards will be filled out by each employee and falsification of filling out time cards is cause for disciplinary action. By not having to report each morning to fill out time card would result in earlier start of the day. It is critical for each employee to fill out their own time card and will be a requirement added to the employee handbook.

Discussion on safety rules. Steel toe shoes are not required. A fire extinguisher is required. Those are on the trucks. The fire extinguisher can't just be sitting under the seat. If a government agency sees them rolling around, we will be shut down.

Discussion on rehiring. All past employees will be required to reapply for their job each season. No employee will be automatically rehired. The district will require all existing employees apply each year. Last season a motion was made at a board meeting to rehire past employees. Operator and truck driver wages for the whole season was \$12 per hour, next season \$13, next season \$14. With the change for this year, the second year would be \$14 per hour. The supervisor and mechanic will be \$19 per hour. Changes to employee handbook, job descriptions, hiring process, etc. will be presented to the board. The supervisor should be hired first and work with the hiring process. The supervisor has expectations of what he has to do. Three new people were hired last season by the personnel committee. Joe stated the entire harvesting committee should be part of the hiring process. Restructure harvest and operations.

Discussion on harvest cutting plan. In the past, there has been no plan for harvest cutting in writing that could be found. One will be created for the 2021 season. There is a cutting pattern on the permit map which expires at the end of the harvest season 2021. The current plan is for navigation. For the future, we can put together a plan which is for the south shore, center cut, and all laterals more for the east side. The west side has 18 laterals. This will be subject to DNR approval. The current permit map is what was created to decide where the laterals were cut. If it is felt this is incorrect when applying for

new permit, adjust to what is needed. The current plan is to cut 100' from shoreline, laterals 50'. The future permit will be analyzed. The goal is to put something out there as a schedule to determine where we will be. It is difficult at times to know where the cutter will be. All cutters are not the same width. The oldest machine is 10' wide and is located on the west side.

Discussion on offload sites. Buffalo Lake Lodge has given permission to use the lodge boat landing. We can work with Call of the Wild landing, Hollenbeck landing, and Freedom Road landing on the west side and lake site, Hwy C landing, Buffalo Lake Lodge landing, and dredge bank landing on the east side. The sites are available and we need to use them properly. Better management and better people would help from preventing this to happen again. We need to calculate out the distance and find out where the best efficiency is. The turnaround point would need to be figured out. The water levels were lower this year. Last year we had higher water. DNR started on July 1, 2019 regulating the water at the dam.

Discussion on cutting. One truck driver was on the west side and one truck driver on the east side. If three cutters are running in the same area on the east side, there is one truck driver. There would be a need to have one machine at east of the causeway so the truck driver on the west side can easily haul weeds from the west and east side of the causeway. Two cutters, one transporter, and one truck driver would remain on the east side. This past season, the third machine was not put into water for almost two weeks. Crew was two weeks behind moving up to the east end. The efficiency is to meet in the middle. There were reports that the transporter was 50' from C landing. The cutters came and locked onto the transport. The transport is supposed to pick up cutter loads in the lake and do most of the travel distance. There were also reports that the transporter was sitting at the landing waiting for cutters to fill of weeds.

Discussion on trucks, equipment, and fuel. The supervisor is to help fuel. Service truck will be operated for equipment fueling by the supervisor. The fuel gauges need to be fixed on two cutters. Learn from the past and move forward. This is the first opportunity to change and is a new creation now. This is the reason for a need to hire the supervisor first and get them involved in the hiring process. Twelve people are needed to be available to hire so that we have replacement backups. Anyone can apply. The job descriptions have been revised to have more detail to them.

Discussion on equipment. The harvesting equipment consists of two trucks, one transport, four cutters, and three conveyors. One of the conveyors have had the wrong chain on for years and the hope is to put the right chain on. The chain has been broken many times. The sprocket does not match the chain. If the proper chain was put on 10-15 years ago, it would not break down. One cutter leaned and needed to have weights put on to level. This is the way it was when it was new. The crew did not say anything until later when repeated repairs were being done to level it. One of the trucks does needs kingpins and tires. The trouble with the equipment now is that years ago the equipment was fairly new and when the equipment becomes $\frac{3}{4}$ wore out, repairs are more prominent. One machine is 20 years old, another one is 15 years old. The principal behind no new equipment is that the district has a resolution in the past that 40% goes to capital equipment, 60% goes to operations. We buy \$19,000 of material and parts each year, not including labor, to maintain equipment. This comes out of capital funds. We work with what we have to and work to try and do better. There is a need to start somewhere upgrading our oldest cutters.

We need to try our best to make changes and improve efficiency. In the past, there was no harvesting committee. Money was in the general fund and then it was decided to put toward the equipment. The issue is the equipment is worn out and was not looked at. The last machine that was purchased was

with a stainless-steel hull. It is difficult to be putting out \$20,000 a year for repairs. The newest cutter machine is 2014 and next newest machine is 2009.

Establish next meeting

Saturday, January 16, 2021 – 9:00 am, Packwaukee Town Hall

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.

INFO: There may be a district board quorum present, however no District Board business will be discussed.