

BUFFALO LAKE P&R DISTRICT SPECIAL MEETING
SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2022
PACKWAUKEE TOWN HALL
8:00 a.m.

1. *Meeting was called to order:* Chairperson Joe Dion called the special meeting to order at 8:01am.
2. *Roll Call of Board Member:* Vikki Trimble, Ro Klecz , Joe Dion, Judi Nigbor Town of Packwaukee Representative and Al Rosenthal. Absent: Jon Sheller, Marquette County Representative and Larry Haygood
3. *Roll Call of Lake Level Committee Members:* *Bernie Sosinsky, Scott Kempley, Ed Schams, Jim Felt*
4. *Lake Level Petition*

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the letter that was received from the DNR regarding the District's petition for a lake level change. DNR came back with a request for additional information in the form of studies that would have to be performed on the lake including up and down stream of the lake as well. The study includes the affects to property owners, the affects to the fisheries, the affects to wildlife, water quality, property values, weed growth and everything in between. The district needs to figure out how the studies are going to be conducted, who is going to conduct it and how much the study is going to cost.

Vikki asked Joe if he had contacted Onterra the company that did the District's Lake Management Plan. Joe stated that he hadn't contacted them. Vikki stated that hopefully Onterra will have most of the information that DNR is requesting and maybe it just has to be updated. Jim thought that there should be some type of statute of limitations since 1976 the level of the lake hasn't been monitored and now DNR has decided to control the level. Jim stated that DNR doesn't seem concerned on what has happened to the lake over the last 20 plus years meaning that the lake has been at a certain level and DNR wants to reduce the lake level without conducting any studies or caring what affects the lower levels have on the property owners.

Joe stated that the District's lawyer did get involved when all this started 3 years ago, and lawyer stated that the DNR is acting within the jurisdiction of the law. Just because the DNR hasn't enforced the lake level doesn't mean that the DNR can't come in and start monitoring the lake level 20 years later. Statutorily the order is in effect until it legally changed no matter if DNR has been enforcing the level or not. Right now, the district has a balanced budget. The studies that the DNR is requesting have not been budgeted for this year. We do not know what this is going to cost. Hopefully, Onterra has a good portion of the information. The cost when the Lake Management Plan Study was conducted, although the district obtained a grant, was \$28,000.

Bernie stated that he had been in touch with Senator Ballweg's office regarding the DNR's response. He is awaiting a response. Bernie mentioned that maybe the district needs to file a class action suit against DNR. Joe stated that our attorney did not recommend the Board, to proceed with any legal action.

Judy mentioned that we have made some progress; One, there was a Lake Committee created. Two, partners were brought in from all the different avenues which we are getting feed back from them. Judy also stated that the district should send a brief letter to DNR stating that we are working on gathering the information requested. In the meantime, however it gets organized, we should contact some other groups that have challenged like Lake Koshikonong, in Rock County, and reach out to them and ask them what the cost was when they went through the same situation. Judy stated that we need to explore our options in addition to sending the letter to DNR.

Scott mentioned again that he would like to try a test area in the lake for herbal application.

Al mentioned he contacted Onterra, and they are aware of what we are doing and stated that they would be willing to meet with the Lake Level Committee. Al's recommendation was to find out what Onterra would cost to do the work that the DNR is requesting. Al also spoke to Onterra about dredging. The District would have to call a special meeting of the Lake District to approve any costs. Those are the steps Al feels we need to take to get the ball rolling.

Montello Lake is looking to do some dredging and has done all the research and costs. Bernie was going to contact Meme Pierson from Montello Lake to get that information. Carol mentioned that there could be added costs from people who don't want any changes by them suing the district.

Al stated that he would contact Onterra to find out based on the letter from DNR, what it would cost to do the study. Cambria and Bellville Lakes conducted dredging about 10 years ago. Maybe we could get information on the dredging and the pellets, there was a company that spoke to Marquette County Lakes Association last fall about using pellets.

Scott was going to be with Plumber and Joan that evening and will talk to them about grants and dredging. Judy mentioned to Scott to ask about what type of grants are out there, how do we apply and when do we apply. We have to be very specific. We may even need a grant writer.

Joe mentioned that a dredging grant pays about 50%, the district would still have to come up with 50%. The permit process for dredging is quite extensive. The DNR may only approve the channel dredging.

Ro mentioned that about 5 years when she was getting numbers for dredging it was about a million dollars a mile. We would have to look at what the cost would be to membership.

Motioned made by Bernie to have Joe reply to the letter from DNR and to continue with gathering information that we need to help the district make the decision on how to go forward. Seconded by Ed, Discussion none, None opposed, Approved. Al Rosenthal was on the phone from Arizona, Absent Jon Sheller, Marquette County Representative and Larry Haygood

Al suggested to have someone go to the State Lakes Convention in Stevens Point and talk to some of the vendors. Vikki stated that Larry was planning on going.

Bernie asked for volunteers to talk to some of the mentioned lakes to see how they did things. Redstone, Cambria, Bellville and Montello Lakes were named.

Joe mentioned, that by the dam, the wall the behind the gates were collapsing, there was a temporary emergency order put in place by the DNR to raise the water on the lake so that there wouldn't be any water going through the small channel. Now that has been completed the DNR will be going back to monitoring the lake levels. Joe stated that last summer the lake was never at the high level due to mother nature.

Al mentioned to keep in contact with Pat Kilbey. Pat has some experience with dredging.

2. Adjournment was at 9:01am **Motion** made by Ro to adjourn, seconded by Bernie, Discussion none, None opposed, Approved. Al Rosenthal was on the phone from Arizona, Absent Jon Sheller, Marquette County Representative and Larry Haygood.

Respectfully Submitted by Ro Klecz