

BLPRD Harvest Committee Meeting Minutes  
Saturday, September 18, 2021 – 8:00 AM-9:15 AM  
Packwaukee Town Hall

Roll Call

Present: Gary Kershaw, Joe Dion, Ed Schams, Bernie Sosinsky, Darrel Unsinn, Bob Fohey

Absent: Sara Scheel, Dave Burton, Don Klecz

Gary Kershaw called the meeting to order at 8:00 am

Topics of discussion

A. 2021 Harvest Season

Gary thanked Bob Fohey and the crew for a job well done on the 2021 harvest season. Bob reviewed the hours and loads on the machines.

	<u>TOTAL HOURS</u>	<u>TOTAL LOADS</u>
<b>HARVESTOR #3</b>	291.3	305
<b>HARVESTOR #7</b>	41.3	49
<b>TOTAL WEST END</b>	332.6	354
<b>HARVESTOR #5</b>	388.4	476
<b>HARVESTOR #6</b>	357.5	436
<b>HARVESTOR# 4</b>	252.5	213
<b>TOTAL EAST END</b>	988.4	1,125
<b>TOTAL LAKE</b>	<b>1,331 HRS</b>	<b>1,479 LOADS</b>

This equates to 288 truck loads above 2020 season.

\$12,249 was spent on fuel. We can apply for a road tax return of \$.573 on diesel and \$.478 on unleaded. Repairs, hardware, etc. totaled \$33,154.

We ran out of places to dump weeds. Next year we need have designated person to find weed drops and handle unloading weeds.

Discusson to stock pile lake weeds, decompose, and sell soil if there were space. There is no smell if weed load is not disturbed. Let weeds decompose for 2-3 years and turn over with skid steer and market the soil. We would save miles and fuel by not driving to drop off sites. This is good fertile soil once decomposed. There would be enough space at the lake site to drop a portion of the season loads. A responsible person would need to manage and sell to buyers, possibly a landscaping company. Five to

six miles is the maximum we would want to drop off weeds in order to turn around and be back for the next cutter/transporter load. Two cutter loads equals a truckload. If we hit 290 more loads, we will need more drop off locations.

Tires on the dump trucks need \$3,000 - \$4,000 of truck tires next year. Tires are smooth and now cause trucks to easily get stuck. One spin on wet grass will cause the trucks to get stuck. The truck tires are a safety hazard and is dangerous.

Harvester machine #3 that was sold justifies putting money into the the new used Harvester #7. It is stainless steel hulled which will not rust and is serviceable for many years.

Discussion on personnel. Last week we were short employees. Ron Schiller came in to help us out and operated a cutter. Bob had an exit interview form for employees for fill out. One truck driver left two weeks early as he had another job lined up. Another truck driver has bad knees and left during the last week. Next year, the transporter operator will be back plus the supervisor. Darrel will step forward and will work to advertise more to get help. One way is that he will get in touch with the local FFA. Employees need to be at least 18 years of age. One college student drove from Wautoma this season and was offered a job closer to home for more pay. This season \$12 was the starting wage. In 2018 starting wage was \$13.50. We want to be competitive. Need qualified employees operating \$200,000 equipment. Gary volunteered many hours this year. Other employers starting wage is higher. It takes money to start at higher wage. We are paying for performance, productivity, etc. and want to be realistic.

Darrel will take number of hours worked and show proposed 2022 wages on a worksheet. Need to consider full crew. Any Increase in proposal will increase budget and needs to be done before the budget is approved. People have come and gone. We need a productive crew and get people to come to work that are trained. Employees will jump ship for better pay if starting wage is not competitive. At one point we had ten people apply this season and when they were told the wage, eight didn't show after told what the pay scale is. Positions need to be filled by April. Approval of wages by the board, not at the annual meeting. Training for this season up to 4 weeks and then increase \$1. Darrel will work to find a way to make things nonrestrictive. Possible bonus of \$500 if employee works the whole year. Proposal for budget on wages needs to be presented at annual meeting. At that time, we can decide what goes to labor and let everyone know. Looking at sales of old transporter and harvester could help and offset. Labor for startup and equipment repairs for next year should not be as much as this season. A lot of repairs were completed this harvest season. Fuel costs went up 25%. We should get approximately \$1,500 return on road tax once filed.

Discussion on update employee handbook. Bob got a call from OSHA. One employee walked off the job and filed a complaint. The employee was told to get off the lake when weather conditions are threatening. A response was given to OSHA and they were okay as long as the plaintiff was okay with Bob's response. We will add additional severe weather safety to the employee handbook. Also add to attendance policy if someone is off three days or longer, employee will need doctors excuse to return to work.

One new conveyor is on order with two existing functional conveyors. For harvesters, #4 steel hulled machine will need to be replaced first.

Harvest meetings were held on Saturdays due to requests in the beginning of the season by committee members.

Gary will call Adams Marquette Telephone Co to put Wifi and telephone on vacation until next April.

#### B. Subcommittee for Establishing DNR Lake Map for the Next Three Year Cutting Permit

Bob, Ed, Darrel, Sara, Bernie, and Bill Lewis on subcommittee. Bob stated that Inland has been asked to give us an unbiased opinion on how the lake map should be constructed for the next three years 2022 thru 2024. Bill stated 17 laterals were once 34 laterals and shows what was cut. It coincides with his aerial map. Bob stated to be aware that we struggle to get the current 17 laterals cut. Bill stated two cutters on east end in the past. Bob will also get crew members that have worked on the lake to assist in lake map. The Harvest committee is not responsible for the lake levels.

#### C. Appoint Committee Member to Update Existing Weed Dropoff Sites and Locate More Sites due to Increase in Volume of Weeds Harvested

Looking for a volunteer on the harvest committee to find dropoff weed sites. Need someone to be around the area all summer. Should be put on website and Facebook. Need 5 to 6 miles distance one way in order for truck to return back for pickup of next load. Dumpsites that were closest were used first. Toward the end of the season, there were an abundance of weeds on the east end that cutters were filling up faster and it doesn't take long to fill up transporter and dump truck.

#### Establish Next Meeting

#### Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:12 am.