

**MINUTES**  
**Buffalo Lake Protection and Rehabilitation Meeting**  
**Saturday March 2nd, 8:30 a.m.**  
**PACKWAUKEE TOWN HALL**

**1. Call meeting to order.**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30am by chairperson Bernie Sosinsky

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Pledge was recited.

**3. Roll Call**

Commissioners present: Bernie Sosinsky, Darrell Unsinn, Dustin Esselman, Karyn Niin Kitigade, Dwight Federson. Absent: Judi Nigbor, Jon Vote

16 lake district members were in attendance.

**4. Accept minutes from January 18th, 2024.**

The minutes were accepted as written. Dustin Esselman motioned - seconded Darrell Unsinn

**5. Changes or Additions to Agenda**

No changes or additions

**6. Treasury Report**

Darrell Unsinn presented the financial report. Report is available for members by request.

There was a discussion regarding a \$14933.48 carry over. It will be placed in the Operating Fund.

Karyn Niin Kitigade made a motion to approve the treasurer's report. Dwight Federson seconded.

**7. Lake Level Update**

Dustin Esselman is taking the lead on working on the members lake level concerns. He has been talking with the DNR regarding the studies that they want done.

He has sent the list of required studies to three agencies: Onterra, Wisconsin Lakes and Ponds, and Cason and Associates and requested quotes. Cason sent a quote, Onterra said that they would not be able to do all the required studies, he hasn't received a quote from Wisconsin Lakes yet.

Cason initial bid was \$107,000. This has not yet been negotiated. This bid did include updating the lake management plan which needs to be done this year. Dustin is following up with the DNR grant specifics to see if that will be allowed within the grant.

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The grant money we received from the state legislators was \$100,000.

If the study costs more than \$100,000, there will be a special meeting to discuss approval of the expenditure.

Bernie stated that there is a \$6,000 discrepancy on Onterra bid.

Per Darrell, after updating the lake management plan we will be able to apply for a five-year harvesting permit instead of an annual permit.

Karyn asked if Dustin still intended to send an email to the lake district members letting them know that Senator Ballweg is no longer supporting us in our endeavor to change the dates for the changing of the dam level. This was discussed at our last meeting. Dustin stated that he talked with Senator Ballweg and she said that she would support us if we put forth the effort to see this through. Bernie said that members should continue to contact Senator Ballweg and Representative Jon Plumer regarding our lake level. .

**8. Harvest Committee Update (equipment, personnel, and herbicide treatment,)**

Equipment:

**Harvester:** The new harvester is done. Darrell Unsinn said it is "sweet". Bob Foley and Darrell will make arrangements to get it here to the yard.

When the harvester arrives the district must pay the balance in full and then we will get the grant money.

Lake Puckaway Lake District still needs to pick up the harvester that they purchased from us.

**Forklift:** The emergency brake was repaired. There is still the concern that the right lift cylinder is leaking. The estimate to repair it is \$5,611.60. It can't be worked on at our yard so it would have to be transferred to the repair company's place in Stevens Point. Darrell believes that this leaky cylinder is a safety concern. There was a discussion of the ways that the forklift is used.

Lake district members Don Klecz suggested that the board looks into purchasing a used 55-19. He felt that this would be more useful than a forklift. Further discussion on repairing the fork lift was tabled until Darrel can get more information and discuss it with Bob.

Both of the dump trucks have been sold. We still have a Ford F250 and Ford box truck. Darrell thinks that in the future we should discuss getting another truck. Something newer instead of buying old used trucks as we've been doing.

**Employment:** Darrell is advertising in the local paper and on the Indeed Employment website. Right now we have enough people on board. He will continue doing interviews.

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#### Herbicide Treatment:

Darrell emailed a new survey to all the participants of last year's spraying. He emailed 171 people, only 44 people replied. 38 were positive. 6 said that they didn't feel it worked and would not do it again. Most people were not at their home when the spraying was done.

Darrell recently spoke with Jim Scharl Wisconsin Lake and Pond regarding the chemical treatment they did last year. Jim acknowledged that he underestimated the full scope of what the job would be. Darrell said that based on the work they did last year he would not recommend that we use them again. Jim did quote a price for this year. It would be \$65.00 per pier if we had 100 or more.

Darrell also spoke with Charles Patterson of Lake and Pond Solutions, LLC. They quoted a price of \$68.38 and if they came back to do a second treatment, the price would be the same. Darrell said that chemical treatment is not a permanent fix and would only last so long before needing a second treatment. Their quote was \$68.38 per pier regardless of the number of piers they were doing.

Darrell's recommendation is to go with Lakes and Pond Solutions. This is based on the struggles that he had last year with Wisconsin Lake and Pond.

He has not spoken with Lake and Pond Solutions about any other work that we might want to do. Darrell and Bob Fohey have identified a few areas that they feel should be treated. They will discuss this further and then get a quote from both companies for treating these areas.

A lake district member asked if there was a guarantee that the treatment will work and if they are using the same chemicals as last year. Darrell said that there isn't a guarantee and that they would use the same chemicals.

Darrell said that we are using the word herbicide when we talk about the treatment because for some people the word chemical is scary. The herbicide is a liquid that is heavier than water. It sinks but because there is a little bit of current, this might be why on one side of his pier, the treatment was more effective than the other.

Bernie asked for a show of hands from the members in attendance if they would do the treatment again. Bernie estimated that over 60% of them would do it again.

Bernie said that he feels the lake last year was in as good of shape as it has been since he was here in 2018. He feels that the pier treatment helped the whole lake. The laterals were cleaner. He also feels that marking the laterals out to the channel helped. We will continue to do that this year.

The causeway will be done this summer. The culverts will be bigger. Hopefully this will increase water flowage.

Dwight Fenderson made a motion that we go with Lake and Pond Solutions because they appear to be a more professional organization. Darrell seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Darrell said that Lake and Pond Solutions said that when they come to do the job they would work daily until the job is completed. Darrell then stated that anyone who has a property adjacent

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to an area that will be treated will receive a notice. It will also be put in the local newspaper. He will need people to go to each property and put flags on the piers that will be treated.

Darrell asked members to urge others to sign up on our email list.

Dusin asked what the last date for signing up for the treatment would be. Darrell said mid April, maybe the 15th.

Bernie suggested that someone else be able to get the checks from the post office so that it doesn't all fall on Vikki to do.

#### 9. County/township Reports - No one here to report

#### 10. Ecology committee update -

Karyn stated that she read through the information she received from a lake district member regarding putting in silt traps on the creeks that empty into Buffalo Lake. She will contact Pat Kilby, Tom Onofrey, Chris from Central Sands, and Ted Johnson to ask if they would be allowed.

Dwight Federson, Larry Haygood, and Gary Kershaw volunteered to be on the committee to look into the silt containment project

Bernie suggested that we check to see if there are any grants available for this. Bernie asked if the lake would eventually cleanse itself if we used the traps. Gary Kershaw said yes but it would take time.

Bernie asked Ro Klecz if the silt was removed by her when the dam on a pond by County Rd C broke. She said no. She has contacted the DNR many times and will continue to do so. She will keep the board informed.

A member asked if the DNR ever monitors the phosphorus level in the lake. Karyn said that she would ask Ted Johnson, of the DNR, if they do.

Karyn said that yes, farmers are big offenders in regard to phosphorus entering the lake, but we need to look at individual property owners as well. She suggested that each of us stop mowing the two feet of our lawns nearest to the lake. This would be a simple but effective thing to do. It would stop runoff of fertilizers and other things people put on their lawns, runoff from driveways and roofs, stop grass clippings from falling into the lake, and stop people from raking leaves into the lake.

Ro asked what about native plant gardens. Karyn agreed that it would be awesome if everyone put in a Wisconsin Healthy Lakes Native Plant Garden on their shoreline but unfortunately, not everyone will. Not mowing that two feet of grass can be done by everyone. Karyn pointed out another benefit of not mowing is that geese will not come up in your yard if the shoreline is not mowed. Darrell agreed that this is true. He only cuts a path down to his shore and he no longer has geese on his lawn.

Karyn finished by saying "Give Two Feet For Buffalo Lake".

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11. **Fish Committee update** - Paul Ratzburg was not in attendance. Bernie reported that the fish have been ordered and when the water temperature is right, they will bring the fish. There will be crappie, perch, and bass. Bernie asked that if we see dead fish on our shore that we take pictures and send them to him and to the DNR.

12. **Unfinished Business** - Daniels Company will finish up the boat landing at the harvest yard.

13. **New business** - Darrell said Bob Fohey will need a new laptop. Dustin said that he might have one that he could donate.

A member asked about the lake level. He said that because the lake level is so low he is ruining props. He asked if the lake level will go up. Another member said it might if we get rain.

The dam is regulated by the DNR. What the lake district is trying to do is to get the dates for raising the level on May 4th and lowering it on October 1st. Bernie stated that the dates are currently May 20th - October 1st.

Bernie said that the bridge over the gates is closed because the ground by the gates is being undermined.

Karyn reminded members that there is a drought and that across the nation rivers like the Colorado and Rio Grande are drying up. She said that members should be talking to their legislatures and the DNR.

The low water level has impacted many things on the lake.

14. **Set date for next meeting.** The next meeting will be Saturday, May 4, 2024 at 8:30am.

**Adjournment at 9:50am**