

April 02, 2025

The Newton County Drainage Board met in the Commissioner's Room of the Newton County Courthouse at 10:00 a.m. CST on April 2nd, 2025.

Members present were Councilman Scott Carlson, Commissioner Steve Eilers, Commissioner Rob Churchill, Drainage Board Attorney – Jacob Ahler, Drainage Board Secretary – Jamie Rowe and Surveyor – Beau Watkins. Also present were Brent and Tammy Skrzekut of Dirt Diggers Excavating Inc. and landowners Norm Light and Jeff Light.

Councilman Carlson called the meeting to order.

Minutes **03-19-2025**

Commissioner Eilers made a motion to approve the minutes. Second by Commissioner Churchill. Motion passed 3-0.

Lake Village Project – Tree Mitigation

The Board discussed the cost of planting and maintaining trees versus purchasing an in-lieu credit from the DNR, which would be \$64,600.00.

Landowners Brent and Tammy Skrzekut are willing to plant the trees on their personal property. Mrs. Skrzekut has been in contact with the DNR Nursery in Medaryville to discuss the most appropriate trees for their soil.

Discussion was held regarding the terms of the permit, which include monitoring for a minimum survival rate of 75% and reporting to the DNR biologist by December 31 of each year for the next three years. If there is a year the survival rate is not met, replanting would be required along with an additional year of monitoring.

Although Dirt Diggers Excavating, Inc. did not provide an estimate, they committed that their cost for material, labor, maintenance and reporting will fall below \$64,600.00, the cost of the in-lieu fee credit.

Attorney Ahler will prepare a contract detailing the permit requirements for review and signatures, to be ratified at the next Drainage Board Meeting.

The Skrzekuts have been provided a copy of the permit and are therefore aware of all requirements.

Dirt Diggers Excavating, Inc. disclosed for the record that the trees will be planted on their personal property.

After due discussion, Commissioner Churchill made a motion to approve the contract under the terms discussed. This contract will be ratified at the next Drainage Board Meeting. Second by Commissioner Eilers. Motion passed 3-0.

Follow-Up

Thompson Ditch (612) – Wall in Ade

Surveyor Watkins reported that he had attempted to contact the owner of the phone line, however due to changes in ownership, he has not had any answers.

Surveyor Watkins has not yet received a response from NIPSCO regarding their line, which is delaying the repair work from beginning.

The Board directed Surveyor Watkins to follow up with NIPSCO.

VC Borklund (508) / Landfill

Surveyor Watkins and farmer John Whaley have not been able to meet in person to discuss reshaping the waterway.

Zoborosky Tile (524)

Surveyor Watkins presented his report to the Board.

Discussion was held regarding a landowner who contacted him about several tile holes.

The Surveyor went to review the holes but the holes had already been filled and were not flagged.

Discussion was held regarding the size of the tile – Surveyor Watkins believes at County Road 100 - the start of the tile, is a 12” tile and at the outlet is 16”.

The Board directed Surveyor Watkins to hire a contractor to investigate the drainage problem.

Other Matters

Light Tile (741) – Landowners Jeff Light and Norm Light were present to discuss Light Tile.

They stated a neighbor has contracted Dwenger Excavating to lay tile parallel to the county main.

The Lights are requesting that the county main be replaced by Dwenger Excavating, while they are already on site. The tile replaced would only be on the neighbor’s property – approximately a quarter mile.

After due discussion, Commissioner Eilers made a motion to approve the replacement of the county main by Dwenger Excavating, provided the cost is below \$50,000.00. Second by Commissioner Churchill. Motion passed 3-0.

Surveyor Watkins will contact Dwenger Excavating to discuss details and to obtain the route.

2026 Budget – Discussion was held regarding the 2026 Drainage Board Budget. No action taken.

Knight-Moffitt (581) – Commissioner Churchill discussed a problem along this drain on his property that will need to be addressed in a timely manner.

As this is a joint drain with Jasper County and qualifies as an emergency situation it falls under the joint board amendment dated September 21, 2022, which authorizes each Surveyor to handle an emergency situation, excluding routine maintenance and cleaning, up to \$20,000.00 cumulative for any one drain system.

After due discussion, Commissioner Eilers made a motion that Surveyor Watkins repair the problem and email Jasper County. Second by Councilman Carlson. Motion passed 2-0.

Commissioner Churchill abstained from voting.

Adjournment

Commissioner Churchill made a motion to adjourn. Second by Commissioner Eilers. Motion passed 3-0.

X

Scott Carlson
President

X

Steve Eilers
Vice President

X

Robert Churchill