

Wells County Drainage Board Minutes  
Monday - April 3, 2023 4:00 P.M.

The Wells County Drainage Board met in a regular scheduled meeting at the Wells Carnegie Government Annex, 223W. Washington St., Multi-Purpose Room 105, (Lower Level), Bluffton, Indiana.

Drainage Board members present: Voting members Blake Gerber, Jeff Stringer; Attorney Ted Storer, Engineer Nate Rumschlag, Surveyor Jarrod Hahn, Secretary Diana Collins. Michael K. Vanover is on zoom by electronic means of communication which allowed Vanover to attend and observe the meeting and hearing. Only the minutes vote was taken by roll call vote.

Determination of Quorum:

A quorum was present for the meeting.

Minutes:

Mr. Gerber opened the Drainage Board meeting with the first item on the agenda to approve the Board's regular meeting minutes on March 20, 2023.

Mr. Storer noted that Mr. Vanover is on Zoom by electronic means to observe the meeting and hearing therefore need to take a roll call on the minutes motion only.

Mr. Stringer motioned to approve the Drainage Board regular meeting minutes on March 20, 2023 as submitted. Mr. Gerber 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion carried by a roll call vote 2-0.

Mr. Gerber recesses the Drainage Board meeting to open the Bills Creek Watershed hearing turning the hearing over to Mr. Hahn.

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Bills Creek Watershed Increased Assessment Hearing: Cause #2023-01:

April 3, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Current Rates: \$1.00 per acre/\$10.00 outside City Limits  
/\$5.00 in City Limits

Proposal of \$2.50 per acre and a \$30.00 minimum

Proposal Watershed Assessment \$33,947.76

Watershed Acres 7,200.06

Harrison Township, Section 3,4,5,7,8,9,10, 11,15,16,17,18,19,20,  
21,22,27,28, Range 12E.

Liberty Township, Section 13, Range 11E.

Mr. Hahn welcomes the landowners attending and introduces all the Drainage Board members and appointees as he begins the hearing.

Mr. Hahn first mentions the procedures of the hearing to include PowerPoint presentation, objection letters, public comment, questions, closing public hearing, Board discussion, motions made for or against the proposed rates, findings and order to sign then mailed out, adjournment, then mail out the findings and order, Judicial review of 20 days begins on the date of mailing out the findings and order.

Landowners Present: Gaylon Reinhard, Courtney Pfister, Doug Sundling, Lori Sliger, Wanda Smith, Thomas W. Pett, Fredrich J. Roehs

Mr. Hahn began his PowerPoint presentation with the Bills Creek watershed map area, history of maintenance fund was established in 1975 at the rate of .25 per acre, with a \$3.00 minimum charge, it was then raised in 1983 to the current rate of \$1.00 per acre with a \$10.00 minimum for rural properties and \$3.00 minimum for urban properties, then in 2002 minimum urban went to \$5.00 by Law, presented map of the areas that still need brushing and what currently has been done included in the surveyor's annual maintenance report. The watershed includes 62,304 feet (12 miles) of open drain, and 67,560 feet (13 miles) of tile. A large portion of the main open channel needs to be brushed along with a few tributaries then do a bottom clean out. Hahn mentioned portions of the tile tributaries have been replaced, leaving most of the most tile tributaries at or over 100+ years old needing to be replaced. Hahn showed maps of open and tiles of work that has been done and work that is left to do. Also spray maintenance is done every other year, tile repairs/replaced every year and bottom clean out every 6 to 8 years. Hahn mentioned that landowners, developers, City of Bluffton, County Commissioners and Highway Department have helped contribute funds beyond their annual drainage tax to help replace old tiles. Hahn also mentions the proposed assessment is payable in 2024.

Mr. Hahn noted of the reasons of increasing the assessment because of a continuous negative balance, rising cost of materials, rising cost of contractors, rising cost of

Mr. Springer motioned to collect up to 8 times the watershed's annual assessment. Mr. Gerber 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion carried 2-0.

The Wells County Drainage Board now publicly adopts the maintenance report of the County Surveyor and the Bills Creek watershed schedule of assessments as amended and finds in proper order and files its copy and enters its Order, adopting the schedule of assessments as amended.

Hahn mentioned that there is a 20-day judicial review period after the landowners receive the Findings and Order.

Mr. Gerber closed Bills Creek watershed at 5:05 p.m. hearing to continue the Drainage Board regular meeting.

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Petition and Approval Drain Easement Form-Discussion to Modify:

Mr. Hahn mentioned the "Petition and Approval to Locate Structures within County Drain Easement" document form will be discussed at our next meeting on April 17<sup>th</sup> due to the current meeting time.

Wells County Engineer Nate Rumschlag Report:

Mr. Rumschlag mentioned that the bridge project at Bills Creek where it empties into the Wabash River on River Road information will be taken to the Commissioners meeting today for further discussion.

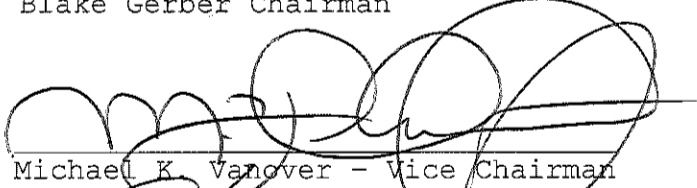
Mr. Hahn asked Mr. Storer if we need to take a roll call on adjournment, Mr. Storer replied no.

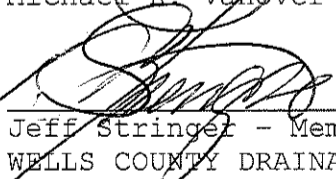
Adjournment:

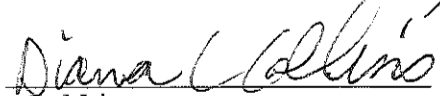
Mr. Stringer motioned to adjourn the Drainage Board meeting at 5:10 p.m. Mr. Gerber 2<sup>nd</sup>, motion carried 2-0.

Next regular scheduled Drainage Board meeting is Monday-April 17, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.

  
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Blake Gerber Chairman

  
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Michael K. Vanover - Vice Chairman

  
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Jeff Stringer - Member  
WELLS COUNTY DRAINAGE BOARD

ATTEST:   
Diana L. Collins  
WELLS DRAINAGE BOARD SECRETARY