

Wells County Drainage Board Minutes
Monday - June 16, 2025 4:30 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, Michael K. Vanover, Jeff Stringer; Attorney Ted Storer; Engineer Nate Whitacre; Surveyor Jarrod Hahn; Secretary Diana Collins.

Determination of Quorum:

A quorum was present for the meeting.

Minutes:

Mr. Gerber mentioned the first item to approve the Board's regular meeting minutes on June 2, 2025.

Mr. Vanover motioned to approve the Drainage Board regular meeting minutes on June 2, 2025. Mr. Stringer 2nd. Mr. Gerber concurred, motion carried 3-0.

Old Business

2025 Spray Program-North:

Mr. Hahn mentioned that contractor Chad Baker of Right-a-Way Management is still spraying drains in the northern half of the county. Hahn noted he talked to the contractor and 2 spray rigs are on the northwest side of the county and are currently spot spraying in areas that have waterway along the ditch because of the rain totals ranging from 3 to 5 inches have been reported.

Craven Tile Drain- NIPSCO Utility-Harrison Township:

Mr. Hahn mentioned that he received a "Consent for Utility for Construction Project in Drainage Easement" form NIPSCO on the Craven tile drain Harrison Township, section 16, range 12E. Hahn noted due to the INDOT bridge project NIPSCO was asked to relocate their pipeline. Hahn mentioned that this permit is a forgiveness as NIPSCO has already installed a new line outside of INDOT's project. Hahn noted that this is part of the tile problem that NIPSCO had been helping with to discover the it was AT&T utility who hit the tile restricting the flow. Hahn recommends approving NIPSCO Utility to be in the Craven tile drainage easement as a forgiveness after the fact. Mr. Storer noted that NIPSCO has crossed out language on page 1. Section A. is and after reviewing the current version 2022 form, and the with previous Attorney name and other language to revision, it is a better benefit for the Board to provide a cleaner up to date version to view. Mr. Storer and the Board members made discussion on page 1. Sections A.B.C.D. and page 4. The prepared instrument (bottom of page) should read Attorney Mr. Storer as the Wells County Attorney.

Hahn noted that he can see the concerns and the revision needed but also sees the utilities companies have had some heartburn with the language that exempts us and the contractor for any damages. Mr. Storer and Hahn will research to find language in possible the 811 code that requires notice before doing excavation that may reference what we are looking for. The Drainage Board members decided not to motion on the NIPSCO Utility for Consent for Utility for Construction Project in Drainage Easement on the Creaven tile drain in Harrison Township, section 16, range 12E. until the language in the Consent form is resolved.

New Business:

Carl Helms Tile System-Lancaster Township- Almco Steel Project Plans: Discussion on Transfer of Jurisdiction:

Mr. Hahn mentions that Almco Steel hired MLS Engineering to prepare a Drainage Report which was sent out by email to each Drainage Board member. Hahn handed out a paper copy of their detention pond where the Helms legal drain is located. Hahn noted that when meeting with Almco Steel on the Helms tile it was discovered that a section of the tile was partially plugged with tree roots and needs some attention. Mr. Hahn also noted that Almco Steel has not been before the APC for approval of plan. Mr. Gerber asked if there is a cost in mind. Hahn noted he has, not solicited for official quotes, but have a rough estimate of \$20,000.00 to replace that section of tile. Depending on how we all want to proceed, official quotes may be required, or a fixed dollar amount toward the total project could be approved. Mr. Gerber asked what the tile size is to be replaced. Hahn feels it is an 18-inch, but could be a 20-inch tile which would be replaced with a 24-inch tile. Mr. Hahn mentioned the Carl Helms tile system has never had a watershed maintenance fund established and all tile and the affected landowners in the watershed are totally in the City's limits.

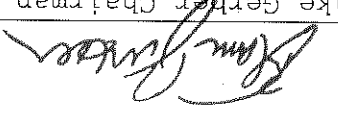
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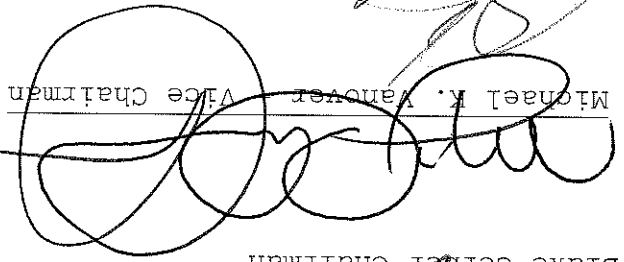
Mr. Stringer agrees that the tile needs replaced then give the tile system to the City of Bluffton. Mr. Vanover noted that it makes sense to relinquish jurisdiction to the City of Bluffton. Mr. Hahn mentioned that he has had several discussions with city council members when in a meeting discussing Almco Steel plans on the Helms tile to transfer jurisdiction of the tile system to the City of Bluffton for future maintenance, but the City of Bluffton department leaders want the tile to be replaced where broken. Hahn noted that the City of Bluffton has no fee for stormwater but believes they set funds aside in the Utility Fund, but noted that the City is working becoming an MS4 that will resolve the stormwater fund. Hahn would like for the Drainage Board to give Mr. Storer some guidance on an interlocal agreement between the Commissioners, Drainage Board, and City of Bluffton that would transfer that drain's tile system to the City of Bluffton, and to have the commissioners approve spending a dollar amount to be determined to replace broken down tile. Mr. Store would like to see two things happen: 1. Mr. Hahn to have meeting with the heads of City of Bluffton, 2. tile replacement a share cost of the. Hahn noted IC 36-9-27-20 provides for the ability of the board to relinquish jurisdiction of a drain that is located within a municipality "A board may, by resolution, relinquish its jurisdiction over ditches and drains located in a municipality or a sanitary district, if that jurisdiction is accepted by the municipality or sanitary district.

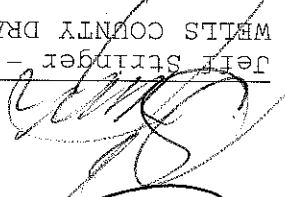
Reminder of Next Drainage Board Meeting Cancelled-July 7th:
Mr. Hahn reminded the Drainage Board the meeting on Monday-July 7, 2025 is cancelled to being at the Stormwater Conference and the County Surveyor's Summer meeting that week.

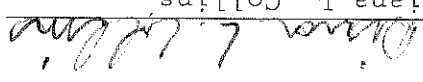
Adjournment:
Mr. Stringer motioned to adjourn the Drainage Board regular meeting at 4:56 p.m.
Mr. Vanover 2nd. Mr. Gerber concurred, motion carried 3-0.

NOTE: Cancelled- Drainage Board meeting on July 7, 2025
*Next regular scheduled Drainage Board meeting will be on Monday-July 21, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.


Blake Gerber Chairman


Michael R. Vanover Vice Chairman


Jeff Stringer - Member
WELLS COUNTY DRAINAGE BOARD

ATTEST: 
Diana L. Collins
WELLS DRAINAGE BOARD SECRETARY