

Wells County Drainage Board Minutes
Monday - December 1, 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; Attorney Ted Storer; Engineer Nate Whitacre; Surveyor Jarrod Hahn; Secretary Diana Collins. Jeff Stringer participated in the meeting by electronic means of communication, Zoom, which allowed Stringer to simultaneously attend and observe the meeting. Mr. Stringer was on zoom 2 of the 3 votes taken during this meeting and those 2 votes were taken by roll call vote.

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 November 17, 2025.

Mr. Vanover motioned to approve the Drainage Board regular meeting minutes on November 17, 2025. Mr. Gerber 2nd, motion carried 2-0.

Old Business:

Carl Helms Tile Drain-Tree Roots-Lancaster Township:

Mr. Hahn reported that contractor Culy Contracting from Winchester came back last week to finish taking out the roots blocking the Carl Helms tile in Lancaster Township, section 33, Range 12E. Hahn noted about 100 feet of the 39-inch tile had tree roots blocking 50 percent of the tile. Hahn noted contractor Culy Contracting had cleaned out a large part of the roots for a good water flow. Hahn mentioned that he attended a meeting with City of Bluffton Mayor Scott Mentzer and other department heads and feels that the City of Bluffton is still considering to take over the Helms Tile System. Hahn mentioned that Habig Trucking has not started replacing the Carl Helms tile and not sure it will be in before the end of this year.

Wm. Pace-McClain Open Drain-Nottingham Township:

Mr. Hahn mentioned that a tenant and contractor has completed repairing bank erosion and placing riprap on several areas on the Pace-McClain open drain in Nottingham Township, sections 11 and 12, range 12E between 400E and 500E, north and south of 800S.

Carnes Open Drain -Chester Township:

Mr. Hahn mentioned that contractor Enyeart Construction is still working on the Carnes open drain in Chester Township, sections 4,7 and 9, Range, 11E bottom dipping from 500S going north to the upper end on 400 west. Hahn noted that ditch is deep and requires a long reach excavator.

New Business:

Don Milholland of Jefferson Township, section 31, range 12E was present to speak to the Drainage Board on his farm of 38.01 acres north of US 224 between Meridian Road and 75E.

Mr. Milholland mentioned that it all started in 1992, of him and neighbors signing a petition turned into the Surveyor's office, then in 1994 went to a reconstruction hearing for an open drain. Mr. Milholland noted the there is a lot of water that comes from the north that ponds on his farmland, so an open drain made sense. The petition died due to lack of a 2nd. Mr. Milholland wanted to updated the petition, and a few landowners would not sign again. Mr. Gerber asked Mr. Milholland what do you want us to do today. Mr. Milholland noted that he would like to recoup some of his land for farming as he showed the area on a map. Mr. Milholland continued his history of notes that in 2003 came to the Drainage Board and was told to hire an attorney to update the petition and return the petition to the Surveyor's office. Mr. Milholland mentioned that he had talked to the Surveyor and was told to go to the USDA. Mr. Hahn noted that he took office in 2005 and noted of any landowner wanting to take out trees he highly recommends to contact the USDA office for a wetland determination because of consequences if you do not. Mr. Storer ask who has jurisdiction, Mr. Hahn stated not the Drainage Board. Mr. Milholland feels this not a wetland, and noted that he did get a wetland delineation from Soil and Water Conservancy and was determined to be a wetland. Mr. Hahn noted if he had appealed it, Mr. Milholland said no, he did not think so. Hahn noted that only the Army Corps and USDA/NRCS (swamp busters) who then hires a consultant do a delineation.

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Mr. Storer wanted clarification, is this a regulated drain, or a mutual drain. Mr. Hahn noted that this is a waterway/mutual drain and was petition for a reconstruction in the 1990's. Mr. Storer noted that it would be a good time to continue this discussion at another meeting because we are out of our time frame for this meeting. Mr. Milholland wanted to know what he could do. Hahn suggested to check your wetland delineation paper, and/or talking with Federal Farm Agency to help to see what you can clear, and talk to your neighbors on helping with funding.

2026 Drainage Board Meeting Dates and Times:

Mr. Hahn presented the schedule for the 2026 Drainage Board meetings dates and times for approval. The Drainage Board meets on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month at 4:30 p.m. except as noted. Dates and Times are as follows:

JANUARY	5-20 (Tues)	JULY	6-20
FEBRUARY	2-17 (Tues)	AUGUST	3-17
MARCH	2-16	SEPTEMBER	8 (Tues) -21
APRIL	7-21	OCTOBER	5-19
MAY	6-20	NOVEMBER	2-16
JUNE	1-15	DECEMBER	7-21

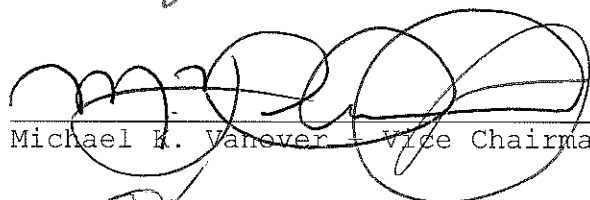
Mr. Vanover motioned to approve the 2026 Drainage Board meetings dates and times as presented. Mr. Stringer 2nd. Concurred by Mr. Gerber, motion carried by roll call vote 3-0.

Adjournment:

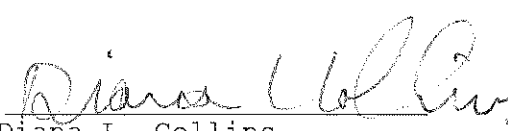
Mr. Vanover motioned to adjourn the Drainage Board regular meeting at 5:02 p.m. Mr. Stringer 2nd. Concurred by Mr. Gerber, motion carried by roll call vote 3-0.

*Next regular scheduled Drainage Board meeting will be on Monday-December 15, 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