TOWN OF CEDAR LAKE, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA
MINUTES OF THE UTILITY BOARD

July 15, 2025

Public Meeting Advertised for 6:30 PM
Conducted at the Cedar Lake Town Hall
Pledge of Allegiance & Moment of Silence

Roll Call:

Present	Robert H. Carnahan Board Member	Ward 1	Present	Mary Joan Dickson Board Vice-President	At-Large
Present	Julie Rivera Board Member	Ward 2	Present	Richard Thiel Board President	At-Large
Present	Nicholas A. Recupito Board Member	Ward 3	Present	Jennifer N. Sandberg, IAMCA, CMC, CPFIM Clerk-Treasurer	
Present	Chuck Becker Board Member	Ward 4	Present	Benjamin Eldridge Town Manager	
Absent	Greg Parker Board Member	Ward 5	Present	David Austgen Town Attorney	

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Approval of Minutes – June 17, 2025**
   A motion to approve was made by Mary Joan Dickson with second by Julie Rivera. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Recupito – Yes, Thiel – Yes. Vote 6 – 0.

2. **Sewer Rate Increase Discussion**
   Mr. Thiel stated they mentioned this a little while ago. Mr. Carnahan stated in order to do a sewer rate increase, they have to have the financial consultant do a study to justify a sewer rate increase. Mr. Austgen stated yes. Mr. Thiel stated Sue is online. He did speak with her last Thursday about this item. Mrs. Haase stated they had talked about it two years ago and then mentioned it last year again. The Cedar Lake debt has rolled off. That was for the Town's infrastructure. There is capacity. The only thing that needs to be talked about with Ben and Tim is what do they want as capital to be paid through rate dollar for dollar. She asked if they would look for additional long-term debt themselves. She asked what they are going to do about the Lowell situation. That has to play into the revenue requirement. Mr. Carnahan said they don't know nothing about that yet. Sue stated she wants to make sure that is covered and they do not have to go back in for another rate increase. She stated it is her understanding that work has started on the EQ basin at the plant. The Town is not paying anything on it. She asked Jennifer if they were being billed for it monthly. Ms. Sandberg stated they have not seen any capital bills from the Town of Lowell. Sue stated they did not see any last year either. They have not yet seen the reimbursement resolution. It will play a big part into what they say they need for rates. Mr. Thiel asked what do they do with the situation with Lowell. They know at some point they are going to have to raise rates. He asked without putting the cart before the horse, is there anything they can be doing. Mr. Austgen stated they can certainly begin with the basics of rate review and rate analysis. He stated they probably should. They have not done this since 1998. He discussed an intense financial analysis and the likelihood of needing it for discussions with Lowell. Mr. Carnahan stated they are not getting any information from Lowell. Mr. Austgen stated we are not. Mr. Thiel asked about giving direction to Sue to start the process with Ben and Tim. Mr. Austgen stated he thinks so. She will end up working with Jennifer and Tim. And Ben of course. Mr. Eldridge asked when the last time they raised the sewer rate was. Mr. Carnahan stated 1998. It went from $18 to $48. Mr. Recupito asked if they are having the analysis done,

what are they basing it off of. He asked if it was based off of maintaining operations and capital improvements that will enhance services for the current users. He asked if they are basing off of allowing expansion for new growth. He stated he would go on the record and say he cannot be for a sewer increase if it is for new growth and the people here already are going to have to pay for it. He asked what are they going to give direction based off of. Mr. Carnahan stated he thinks they have to have a financial analysis of the current situation and with recommendation from them, what they think they need to increase the rate. He thinks it is premature to start something now until they know what they are going to be facing from Lowell. Ms. Sandberg added they need the Council to tell them what they want to see capital wise. An analysis cannot be prepared if they do not know what capital projects are anticipated. A brief discussion continued on capital and Lowell. Sue stated she prepared a quick analysis of how they did in 2024 with the budget. As far as the operating costs that they are directly in control of, Cedar Lake only not the wastewater treatment with Lowell, they came in slightly under budget by approximately 1.69%. If you include the Lowell costs, they were 30.03% over what they had budgeted. If you take out the Lowell, they are pretty spot on. It is the Lowell costs that are causing big differences. Discussion continued on Lowell and the reimbursement calculation.

3. **Written Report**
    a. Fund Report - Clerk-Treasurer Sandberg reported the cash and expenditure reports were previously sent out. Mr. Carnahan stated they have a lot of money in that account. He asked if they are earning a lot of interest off the sewer money. Ms. Sandberg stated no. Mr. Carnahan asked if it could be done to where they can earn interest. Ms. Sandberg stated before they start investing the sewer money, she would rather have a better plan. To know what direction they are going. She stated she does not want to invest it or tie it up in a CD or similar until she knows what they are doing. She referenced the cash flow over the last few years. She stated they have been using the funds for many improvements over the last few years. Mr. Carnahan asked if there was an account that is not locked in for a certain amount of time to gather some interest. Ms. Sandberg stated there is and continued to voice concerns regarding cash flow. Mrs. Dickson stated when the bill from Lowell shows up, they will need money. Ms. Sandberg stated she is correct. They paid out six figures last year. Mr. Carnahan discussed his interest earned in his checking account. Ms. Sandberg stated that is personal. Government has rules and regulations. She again discussed cash flow and use.

4. **Consultant(s) & Staff Report(s)**
    a. Engineer
        i. Sanitary Update- NIES
            a. West Side Sewer Interceptor Phase 2 – Mr. Simstad reported contract documents are in order. They have a road cut permit by the contractor Gatlin. The county utility permit is in front of the Lake County Commissioners for review. Once both of those are approved, a pre-construction meeting can be scheduled and the notice to proceed can be prepared. Hopefully, before the next meeting in August. Mr. Carnahan asked about the estimated cost. Mr. Simstad stated the project has already been awarded. They are moving forward with the construction. Mr. Carnahan asked if there were not add-ons. Mr. Simstad stated no because they have

not started construction yet. There is a change order allowance in the project to protect from unforeseen circumstances. Letters were sent to the owners adjacent to the project as the request of the Lake County Commissioners.

ii. Water update- CBBEL

a. Current Water Capacity – WPM Pump House – Mr. Baldwin reported the water master plan updates. The revisions have been finalized. There is a meeting tomorrow morning with Town staff to discuss the distribution of the water master plan and finalize proposed findings and recommendations. The Water Department has moved forward with the quote from Xylem for installing the SCADA control systems on Parrish and Havenwood pump stations. The system at Paradise Cove/WPM is online and functioning to the public safety buildings. The new hydropneumatic tank and associated connections, chlorination, testing, and flushing have been completed and passed. The interior connections are made and now operational. Mr. Carnahan asked why the fire hydrants were covered in plastic. Chief Mager stated he requested that until they know the exact fire flow calculation.

b. Director of Operations/Superintendent

i. Operation & Maintenance Report – Mr. Kubiak reported yesterday they got the water main hooked from the north end to this building, the parks building, and bathrooms. They are now on Town water and the well has been disconnected. That was a condition for the permit and the tie in and everything was hooked up to the north end. Meters are in for the buildings and separate for billing. Lift Station 1 has new pumps ordered and they should be here by August 1st. That is the big lift station in South Shore. One of the pumps burnt up at Lift Station #3. That is on Morse to the south. It is at the shop and due to be back next Tuesday. The backup pump is there just in case it is needed. They are working on a quote for controls for WPM so that can be taken care of for the water also. Mr. Carnahan asked about the lift station by Lemon Lake. He asked if there were plans to do concrete. Mr. Kubiak stated they hope to do it before the end of the season. Mr. Recupito stated they finally have water at the police and fire stations as well as Town Hall. He asked if there were any restrictions other than what Chief Mager mentioned. Mr. Kubiak stated fire flow will not be sufficient until the link gets together through Lakeside. Everything is functioning and passed testing. The police station has the final inspection coming up. Mrs. Dickson asked about abandoning the well. Mr. Kubiak stated they currently have to provide a building or something to put a well pressure tank. He stated they utilized that. There is no where for that currently. It used to be in the old pool house but were moved to the new bathrooms. They had to abandon the well pressure tank and stuff to put the water meters and stuff in the bath house for the public water. Essentially, they would have to dig a pit or house someplace in order to utilize that. He discussed potentially getting costs if that is something they are interested in. Mr. Thiel stated he would like to look into that before abandoning it. Mrs. Dickson asked if there would be water access for Farmers Market. Mr. Kubiak stated the hydrant that was out there is active with Town water and also, they put in a new hydrant for the community garden. Discussion continued on the existing well. Mrs. Dickson stated she would like the well to not be abandoned just yet. She would like the opportunity for them to look at it. Mr. Kubiak stated they would either have to provide a building that can be winterized or like a pit to put the tank and stuff underground.

c. Town Manager – No report.
d. Town Attorney – No report.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **JMOB Report –** No report.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Margaret Mirich, 11727 W 124th Place, asked for clarification on the joint operations with Lowell. She stated she heard they are not responding. Mr. Thiel stated that is it in a nutshell. Mrs. Mirich voiced concerns about sanitation. She stated she is not worried about irrigation but the tax dollars and cost of living here. She was surprised there has not been an increase since 1998. A brief discussion occurred on Mr. Recupito's earlier comments on the current ratepayers not being responsible for growth. Mrs. Mirich voiced concerns about current referendums on her taxes and possible future increases.

Carol Kerr, 9900 W 129th Place, stated on June 25th she requested a copy of the public record of the draft copy of the townwide water master plan provided on May 5th. She stated she received a notification today from the Town Manager that she will not be getting that. She stated the taxpayers paid $4,000 maybe $6,000 for the report. She asked why they could not have a copy of it. She asked about a redacted version. Mr. Austgen stated there is a law that has been adopted that prohibits the disclosure of certain information that pertains to public safety and the like. It is statutory law and they are going to abide by it. Mrs. Kerr asked about the whole report being public safety. Mr. Austgen stated yes. It has been identified as such here for public safety and the operation of the municipal water utility. Mrs. Kerr discussed the process for denial of a public record. She stated she would fight it with the attorney general's office. She stated the public needs to be involved.

ADJOURNMENT President Thiel adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:09 PM.

TOWN OF CEDAR LAKE, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA UTILITY BOARD

______________________	______________________
Robert Carnahan, Ward 1	Julie Rivera, Ward 2
______________________	______________________
Nicholas A. Recupito, Ward 3	Chuck Becker, Ward 4
______________________	______________________
Greg Parker, Ward 5	Mary Joan Dickson, At-Large
ATTEST:	______________________
	Richard C Thiel Jr., At-Large

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Jennifer N. Sandberg, IAMCA, CMC, CPFIM
Clerk-Treasurer

The Minutes of the Cedar Lake Utility Board are transcribed pursuant to IC 5-14-1.5-4(b), which states:
(b) As the meeting progresses, the following memoranda shall be kept:

(1) The date, time, and place of the meeting.
(2) The members of the governing body recorded as either present or absent.
(3) The general substance of all matters proposed, discussed, or decided.
(4) A record of all votes taken by individual members if there is a roll call.
(5) Any additional information required under section 3.5 or 3.6 of this chapter or any other statute that authorizes a governing body to conduct a meeting using an electronic means of communication.