

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

August 19, 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	Ward 1	Present	Mary Joan Dickson	At-Large
	Board Member			Board Vice-President	
Present	Julie Rivera	Ward 2	Present	Richard Thiel	At-Large
	Board Member			Board President	
Present	Nicholas A. Recupito	Ward 3	Present	Jennifer N. Sandberg, IAMCA, CMC, CPFIM	
	Board Member			Clerk-Treasurer	
Present	Chuck Becker	Ward 4	Present	Benjamin Eldridge	
	Board Member			Town Manager	
Present	Greg Parker	Ward 5	Present	David Austgen	
	Board Member			Town Attorney	

NEW BUSINESS

1. Approval of Minutes – July 15, 2025

A motion to approve was made by Nicholas Recupito with second by Greg Parker. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Recupito – Yes, Parker – Yes, Thiel – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

2. Request Approval of Quote for Valve Replacement at Lift Station #3

Mr. Kubiak reported this is a bad valve at lift station #3. The valve they need to close in order to get the second pump out is broken and will not close. This is an inserter valve and they could put a line stop in the line prior to the valve so they do not have to bypass the station. They will put a stop in the pipe, take the valve out, replace it, take the stop out and get the pump fixed. Mr. Carnahan asked which lift station this is for. Mr. Kubiak stated lift station #3, right on Morse. He said it is an extra \$8,600 to do one of the line stops. It is \$36,000 for the first one and \$8,000 for the second one. He stated they are opting to go ahead and put the line stop in the second one because it is so deep and the mobilization cost is so high. This will create a redundancy if the valve fails in the future. Mr. Parker asked if it was related to all of the force main breaks near that station. Mr. Kubiak stated it is not. The pump is out right now. The other pumps redone new but they need to get this addressed ASAP so they can have two pumps up and running. Mr. Carnahan asked if this is \$44,500. Mr. Kubiak stated yes. Mr. Recupito asked Ms. Sandberg what fund the money would be coming from. Ms. Sandberg answered the WWTP Special. Mr. Carnahan asked what the cuts were in the road were for. He asked if it was where they had to repair pipe. Mr. Kubiak stated yes, he was going to get to that next. A brief discussion continued.

A motion to approve was made Mary Joan Dickson with second by Robert Carnahan. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Recupito – Yes, Parker – Yes, Thiel – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

3. Request for Insurance Assessment on Lift Stations

Mr. Kubiak stated this was an item brought up during the staff meeting. They want to get an appraisal or updated quote on replacement costs for lift stations. A lot of the information is outdated. He stated he is not sure who came up with the plan but it was talked about at the meeting. The believe the values are low compared to what they

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

believe that it would cost to replace. Mr. Kubiak asked Jen if she knew the last time they had anything assessed. Ms. Sandberg replied she has heard that the last appraisal was in 2015. She asked them that if they were going to consider this item, perhaps they consider an appraisal of all the Town properties, not just lift stations. Take a look at everything. Mr. Thiel discussed previous talk of going out and doing an inventory analysis of the lift stations. Mr. Kubiak stated they kind of have that. The cost for insurance purposes is kind of huge. Mr. Recupito asked Ms. Sandberg if she was suggesting for all wastewater properties. Ms. Sandberg stated she was suggesting everything the Town owns. Mr. Parker stated all Town assets. Ms. Sandberg stated yes. That way the schedule of values is up to date at the same time. Mr. Carnahan asked if they have to wait to do it at a Town Council meeting. Mr. Austgen stated they need both. There is an overlap of equipment and infrastructure to both utility and Town government. A brief conversation continued.

A motion to approve was made by Greg Parker with second by Julie Rivera. Roll Call: Carnahan – Yes, Rivera – Yes, Becker – Yes, Dickson – Yes, Recupito – Yes, Parker – Yes, Thiel – Yes. Vote 7 – 0.

4. Written Report

- a. Fund Report** – Clerk-Treasurer Sandberg reported the cash and expenditure reports were previously sent out.

5. Consultants & Staff Reports

a. Engineer

- i. Sanitary Update** - Mr. Simstad reported with the west side sanitary sewer interceptor project 2, they are looking to schedule a pre-construction meeting with Ben and staff in the next couple of weeks. Contractor is ordering materials and will begin work on the area north of 159th and west of Cline Avenue following the harvest. They do not want to lose any income for the property owners in that area. That will coincide fairly well with what they are looking at for the ordering of materials. Most of the shop drawings have been approved and they still have a few waiting. He stated the item 3 that Tim discussed will be necessary for what is required under the new senate bill and house enrolled act for the capital improvement plan and asset management plan for the sanitary utility. He stated they already have one for the water utility that was approved by the Indiana Finance Authority and the State Revolving Fund as part of the projects that were done for the east side interceptor and the Krystal Oaks elevated tank. On the west side, they do not have the assets in a manner that would be consistent with the state requirements. They would take any work that Tim, Tony, and Kyle do, and incorporate that into a new capital improvement plan and the asset management plan as well to supplement the information they already have to be consistent with those state requirements moving forward. Mr. Recupito asked Mr. Simstad how much work he has on phase 3. He asked what kind of work is left that needs to be done. Mr. Simstad stated they did an initial analysis of that. In March of 2024, they had routings that were submitted to the Utility Board. At that point, they was a recommended path moving forward and then routes for project 3A and 3B being \$3.3 million and \$1.0 million respectively. They have not moved forward on design as at this point there has been no direction to. They can should the Utility Board make recommendation to move forward on design. Mr. Recupito stated he believes they need to get

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

moving on that. Mr. Carnahan and Mr. Parker agreed. Mr. Recupito asked if that would have to be an agenda item. It was stated yes. Mr. Simstad stated they do have an engineering services contract with the Town, it was prior about a year and half ago. Direction was made to halt work on that project. A brief discussion continued. Mr. Recupito asked for it to be an agenda item next month. A brief discussion continued on next steps with phase 2 and future routing.

- ii. **Water Update** - Mr. Baldwin reported the master plan has been completed and submitted to the Utility Board and IDEM for review. A meeting was held with IDEM officials at the beginning of August to talk next steps and projects. It was very receptive for the major pieces involved with some of the large improvements proposed. A public meeting will be held next week to discuss the master plan. It will give details about the master plan. Mr. Eldridge reported the plan is to hold it on Tuesday, August 26th. Mr. Baldwin stated it will be held at Town Hall at 6:30 PM. They will discuss the master plan for the potable water system, common terminology, system overview, water models, and what is involved. Improvements will be discussed as well. Mr. Thiel asked Ben to make sure it is posted well in advance for the meeting. Mr. Baldwin stated the presentation will be posted on the website. Draft slides have been sent to the Utility Board for review.

- b. **Director of Operations** - Mr. Kubiak reported they are waiting for the controls for the west side still. Hopefully, another month or so. Mr. Carnahan asked controls for what. Mr. Kubiak stated for the wells at Havenwood and Parrish. They want to discuss in the near future about moving forward with controls for WPM. He stated they have a quote. He discussed having a connection and the controls will be essential to the east side. Mr. Carnahan asked if they are preparing to send the water to Lakeside South. He asked if there was a timeframe. Mr. Kubiak stated it is still hinging on the development of Lakeside South. He anticipates it happening in the near future. He does not want to be in a position where that starts to be done and they have to wait for controls to come in. A brief discussion continued. The force main on Morse had six breaks in eight days. Eight or nine days have passed without a break. He stated there were 3x4 inch holes that blew out of the side of the ductile pipe due to age. No rhyme or reason as to where. They are trying to get quotes together for replacing it. It has to get done. They found plans from 2001 that never happened. Mr. Parker asked how far north it has to go. Mr. Kubiak stated 149th to Reeder Road. Discussion continued on the length of the pipe. Mr. Kubiak stated they have been waiting on locates. They called them in three different times. They had to call in an emergency locate yesterday. He discussed potential routing and condition of the existing main.

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

OLD BUSINESS

- 1. **Update – Sewer Rate Increase** - Mr. Thiel asked Ms. Haase if she had anything on that. Ms. Haase stated she is working on putting together regular revenue requirements. She stated what she is in desperate need of, which goes in line with the upcoming requirements of house enrolled act 1459, the capital assets that they have to replace. This way they know what they have in the revenue requirements for capital. Right now, we

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

have just been putting it in as what we spent the previous year. She stated she does not know on an ongoing basis if that is necessarily sustainable. She stated hopefully they will find out more on the requirements from Lowell going forward on costs. She stated she has seen no movement at the SRF on the wastewater treatment plant. Mr. Carnahan stated he drove past Belshaw Road and they are having all kinds on construction out front there. He stated they do not know what is going on. Mr. Thiel stated no. He knows Ben was trying to reach out to Lowell to get something on the books for a JMOB meeting. Mr. Eldridge stated in his last email he included seven or eight days. They are requesting the meeting be held in Cedar Lake. Mr. Carnahan stated they are still in a standstill with them. Ms. Sandberg stated she has not received the McMahon Report. Mr. Thiel stated that was due in March.

2. JMOB Report – No further update.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Daniel Diehl, 8915 W 142nd Ave, stated his father recently passed away. He left property in Cedar Lake. He called utility and talked to someone who said the bill goes on forever. He stated he is not trying to talk down but trying to find out if there is anything he can do to appeal the process. He asked what is the process. He discussed the code for utilities, specifically 53.01. It discusses ERU's and vacant properties being assigned half of one ERU. Mr. Parker stated that is for storm water. Mr. Diehl stated that for vacant property, the way he understands it is it could be a house that is vacant. Mr. Recupito stated that is for no home on it. A vacant lot. Mrs. Dickson stated no structure. Mr. Diehl stated during the phone conversation there was mention about a lien on the property. He discussed 53.09 discussing that it is at the board's discretion and the board may certify it to the auditor. He asked them for their consideration if it comes to the point of certifying to the auditor. Mr. Thiel stated after their conversation earlier, he did speak with Ms. Sandberg regarding timing. She has to go over it tomorrow with the billing department. Discussion continued on obligations and liens. Mr. Carnahan asked Ms. Sandberg to discuss the process. Ms. Sandberg stated when it comes to how they handle liens. It is done twice a year, in May and November. This way it has time to be processed by County to be put on the next roll for taxes. She stated usually it is four months in arrears to trigger the billing system. Three notices are sent to allow folks time to pay before a lien is placed. Mr. Eldridge asked if the billing ordinance, if a request is made to pull the water meter, if that would stop billing. Ms. Sandberg stated it depends on the property address and whether or not it is on municipal water. If so, yes, they can shut it off and there will be no bill for water. But the three other services, the way those ordinances are written, the billing does not stop. Mr. Eldridge asked if the home is on city water. Mr. Diehl stated it is a well. Mr. Carnahan discussed folks who are not here during the winter months but still get charged.

Carol Kerr, 9900 W 129th Pl, discussed a comment made by Mr. Parker at the last meeting discussing an ideal situation to return the sewer money to the sewer fund. She asked if that was correct. Mr. Parker stated he would love to do that. Mrs. Kerr asked how much do they owe it. Mr. Parker estimated \$2.3 million. He stated \$2.1 million was already returned. Mrs. Kerr discussed a newspaper article. She stated it was for PCBs. She discussed the article. She stated she had a friend look up the settlement agreement and the specific language of the settlement itself including uses and restrictions. She stated to her it seems there is no need for a sewer rate increase if they put back the \$2 million that they took out. Mr. Thiel asked Mr. Simstad about there being a difference between storm sewer and sanitary sewer. Mr. Simstad stated that is correct. Mr. Thiel stated he would assume that any Monsanto money would be in relation to runoff and storm sewer related. Mr. Simstad agreed. Not domestic usage in the home that goes to the sanitary sewer. He stated he is not familiar with the particular settlement but Mr. Thiel is correct. Discussion continued on sanitary sewer and future interceptor projects. Mrs. Kerr stated she is talking about the \$2 million. She stated to her the intent; Monsanto would not care what they used the money for. She discussed other communities getting greater amounts. She

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

continued to voice concerns about the money taken from sewer. Mr. Thiel stated they are looking at a potential \$52 million dollar expansion at the wastewater treatment facility. By agreement, the Town would be responsible for nearly half. A lot of the discussion on a sewer increase is due to that. Mrs. Kerr continued to discuss the Monsanto settlement and use of the funds.

Margaret Mirich, 11727 W 124th Pl, asked about last month and comments by Sue regarding debt and Lowell. She asked if they were setting aside money, they owe Lowell right now for when they square up. Mr. Thiel asked Jen if she wanted to answer. Ms. Sandberg stated there are two bills paid each month to the Lowell Sewage Works. One is based on estimated operations and maintenance charges. That is roughly \$92,000. There is a separate bill related to current existing debt. There are two outstanding debts and approximately \$43,000 a month paid to them. Those payments are taken into consideration when they have McMahon do the annual report and the Town owes what they call the true-up. If there are other capital projects or increases that have been done over there, they will have to pay for that. Mrs. Mirich stated because they have not told us if they have done that. Ms. Sandberg stated that was correct. A couple of years ago she asked them to bill the Town as capital projects come up. That way the Town could pay their 50%. That lasted approximately a year. It has not been done in the last eighteen months. Mrs. Mirich asked if they are putting anything aside because they are sure they will owe something. Ms. Sandberg stated they do not have separate fund to put it into. She stated they just know that they will need a portion of the capital monies to make the reimbursement to Lowell. If it is related to operations and maintenance it will come from the operation fund but a majority will be from the capital fund. Mrs. Mirich asked if the police and fire station is open. Mrs. Rivera stated the police is but not the fire. Mr. Thiel stated there is a staffing issue. They cannot staff both stations. Mr. Recupito stated they get a lot of crap about the fire station being empty. They should as they are the ones up there. He stated they have been looking for answers about what the plan was. A former Council Member put up a Facebook post that there were no immediate plans to staff that place. He stated they now sit up there and there are no plans to staff it because it takes a lot of money and there is only so much money. Mrs. Rivera stated miscellaneous revenue has shrunk because of the moratorium. There would have been money for additional people through the years. She stated there are no building permits. She stated no one thought it would get to that point. Mrs. Dickson stated they cannot operate on building permits. Mr. Thiel stated he has looked at the past budgets and only two new people were hired in the last few years. Mr. Recupito disagreed with Mrs. Rivera and stated irresponsible growth was going on. The moratorium did not stop people from pulling permits. Permits are going out. Mrs. Rivera stated she wanted a report from Sue on miscellaneous revenue from 21, 22, and 23 to now. That can go for police and fire. Mr. Parker stated there are 1100 lots ready to go. Mrs. Mirich asked if the master plan would show where they are going to put the new water tower. Mr. Recupito stated they do not know exactly but they have certain sites. Mrs. Mirich asked about a comment made by Mr. Recupito regarding not wanting his ward to pay for mistakes of the past. She asked if there would be any reason to charger newer residents. Mr. Recupito stated no. His comment was in regards to sewer. He does not believe in charging the people for more growth. He believes the developers should be paying for that.

Mark Blandford, 13904 Soper St, asked about the sewer and if they are charged by volume for the sewer going down to Lowell. Ms. Sandberg asked for Sue's help in explaining the two calculations as one is based on flow. Ms. Haase stated what they pay to Lowell for operating and maintenance is based on actual flow. A percentage of the total flow at the plant. If the Town is 52% and Lowell is 48%, that is the split on the operating cost. It is based on the percentage not the gallons sent. The capital expenditures are in the agreement and it is a 50/50 split. Mr. Blandford discussed previously working for the Town. He discussed sump pump inspections. He stated the new subdivisions are taking their sump pumps and downspouts and putting it into the sewer pipes. Mr. Kubiak stated there are individual storm sewer taps for all of the new houses. All of those sump pumps and downspouts are going into the storm sewer not sanitary. Mr. Blandford continued to voice concerns. Mr. Kubiak stated every house has an individual storm

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

sewer tap. The lines are checked. Maybe in the past there was not separate taps but now there is. He asked about the sewer pipe on Lauerman and if it has ever been scoped. Mr. Kubiak started yes. A lot of the Lauerman pipe has been relined. There are still things to be fixed. A brief discussion continued.

ADJOURNMENT President Thiel adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:28 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

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.