

January 13, 2026
Minutes of the Elkhart County Drainage Board Meeting
Elkhart County Public Services Building
4230 Elkhart Road, Room A
Goshen, Indiana 46526
At 9:30 A.M

I. Call to Order

The Elkhart County Drainage Board held its January 13, 2026, Meeting in Room "A" of the Public Service Building, located at 4230 Elkhart Road, Goshen, Indiana 46526. Board Chairman Lynn Loucks called the meeting to order at 9:30 A.M. The following Drainage Board Members were in attendance: Chairman Lynn Loucks, Vice Chairman Ed Pippenger, Secretary Barry Kauffman, Bob Barnes and Mathew Morehouse. Others attending Steven Olsen County Attorney, Philip Barker County Surveyor, Steve Schweisberger Deputy Surveyor, Carl Gilbert Drainage Supervisor/Drone Program Coordinator, Tadd Troxell Drainage Technician and Ian Henderson Survey Party Chief.

1. Acknowledgement of Steven Olsen as Board Attorney

It was acknowledged that the County Commissioners have extended the contract for legal services with Yoder, Ainlay, Ulmer and Buckingham LLP.

A motion was made and seconded (Barnes/Morehouse) to retain Steve Olsen of Yoder, Ainlay, Ulmer, Buckingham LLP, who will serve as the Drainage Board attorney for the 2026 calendar year. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing no one called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the revised motion.

2. Member Term Review

The member terms were reviewed.

3. Election of Officers

The floor was opened for nominations for the election of the 2026 Board officers.

A motion was made and seconded (Barnes/Pippenger) to nominate Lynn Loucks for chairman. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing no one called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

A motion was made and seconded (Morehouse/Barnes) to nominate Ed Pippenger for vice-chairman. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing no one called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

3. Election of Officers (continued)

A motion was made and seconded (Pippenger/Barnes) to nominate Barry Kauffman for secretary. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing no one called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the revised motion.

II. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Loucks opened the floor for discussion on the Drainage Board meeting minutes from December 9, 2025.

A motion was made and seconded (Barnes/Morehouse) to approve the minutes from December 9, 2025 meeting. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing no one called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

II. CDF Report

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|--------------------------------------|--|----------------|
| Expenditure through 12/31/25 | | \$26,022.65 |
| Income | | \$352,785.13 |
| Cash Ending Balance as of 12/31/2025 | | \$3,357,002.00 |
| Funds Appropriated for project | | \$350,108.40 |
| Funds Available to Appropriate | | \$3,006,893.60 |

III. Drainage Items

A. Public Notice / Project Review/ Bid Openings

1. Bechtel Ditch System Maintenance Project #25-028 – Public Hearing & Bid Opening

The Board Attorney opened the Public Hearing. It appears that proper notice was provided stating that a hearing would be 9:30 A.M. Tuesday, January 13, 2026, with respect to the Bechtel Ditch System Maintenance Project #25-028. The Board initially reviewed the matter and decided that a public hearing would be appropriate to identify and determine if the benefits outweigh the cost detriments. Therefore, the Board will give an opportunity for those in attendance to give their views and discussion with the Board prior to the Board ruling on items.

Tadd Troxell reported the Maintenance Project is in Section 33 of Concord Township between CR 9 and CR 11. The project limits begin at a point about 2,000 L.F. south of CR 126 and extend to a point about 800 L.F. north of CR 126. The project also extends west to CR 9. The purpose of this project is to restore the water conveying properties of the Bechtel Ditch System. The project will involve brushing, digging, and obstruction removal on the ditch. The project is scheduled to commence in the winter of 2026 and is to be completed by April 10, 2026. The estimated cost of the project is \$71,305.00.

A. Public Notice / Project Review/ Bid Openings (continued)

1. Bechtel Ditch System Maintenance Project #25-028 – Public Hearing & Bid Opening (continued)

A motion was made and seconded (Pippenger/Morehouse) to close the Public Hearing for the Bechtel Ditch System Maintenance project #25-028. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing none, he called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

A motion was made and seconded (Morehouse/Barnes) to approve moving forward with the Bechtel Ditch System Maintenance project #25-028 citing that the benefits outweigh the cost. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing none, he called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Sealed bids were opened and read aloud by Barry Kauffman.

Jerry Reed Excavating invited but did not bid

L.I. Excavating LLC \$59,732.50

SAR Excavating \$53,751.10

Bids were reviewed for accuracy prior to awarding the project to the low bid, SAR Excavating.

Thad Warble, SAR Excavating, 68096 CR 127, Goshen, IN 46526, I am currently working on the Berlincourt and Wagner Ditch Maintenance Project #25-026 and should be able to complete both projects by deadlines. I will not take on any other work from anyone else; these projects are my focus. The only problem could be the weather. As soon as the crew complete the brushing portion on the Berlincourt and Wagner Ditch I will have them start the brushing on the Bechtel project. I will keep staff updated on my progress on both projects.

A motion was made and seconded (Pippenger/Morehouse) to award Bechtel Ditch System Maintenance Project #25-028 to SAR Excavating for \$53,751.10. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing none, he called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

This project will include the use of access mats in sensitive areas. Some additional access mats will need to be rented over and above the number of mats available from the County Highway Department.

A motion was made and seconded (Barnes/Kauffman) to approve rental of the additional access mats necessary for the Bechtel Ditch System Maintenance Project #25-028. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing none, he called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

A. Public Notice / Project Review/ Bid Openings (continued)

2. Baugo Creek & Grimes Ditch Obstruction Removal Project #25-031 – Bid Opening

Tadd Troxell reported the Baugo & Grimes Ditch Obstruction Removal (under CR 30 bridge) Project #25-031 is in Section 15 of Olive Township. It is located just south of CR 32 and about 1,000 L.F. west of CR 1. The purpose of this project is to protect the stream banks and highway bridge by removing the indicated sandbar. The project is to be completed by March 2, 2026. The estimated cost of the project is less than \$4,000.00.

Sealed bids were opened and read aloud by Barry Kauffman.

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|-------------------------|-------------|
| BMF Excavating LLC | \$ 2,499.00 |
| L.I. Excavating LLC | \$ 4,200.00 |
| SAR Excavating | \$ 3,250.00 |
| Slabaugh Excavating LLC | \$ 3,250.00 |

Bids were reviewed for accuracy prior to awarding the project to the low bid.

A motion was made and seconded (Barnes/Pippenger) to award the Baugo Creek & Grimes Ditch Obstruction Removal Project #25-031 to BMF Excavating for \$2499.00. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing none, he called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

B. Petitions, Permits, Variances and Requests

1. Lehman-Farmwalt Ditch, Laterals “A & B” and Rock Run Creek – NIPSCO – Utility Permission to Cross

Carl Gilbert reported NIPSCO is requesting Utility Permission to Cross Lehman-Farmwalt Ditch and Laterals A & B and Rock Run Creek. The request would be to retire and replace existing utility poles and crossings and install new aerial crossings on the Lehman-Farmwalt Ditch and Laterals A & B. NIPSCO also request to install a new aerial crossing over Rock Run Creek at 61719 CR 37, Middlebury. The crossings are all located in Clinton Township. Lehman-Farmwalt Ditch will be crossed at CR 37 in Section 09 and CR 34 in Section 15. Lehman-Farmwalt Lateral “A” will be crossing at CR 34 in Section 15. Lehman-Farmwalt Lateral “B” will be crossed at CR 43 in Section 12. Rock Run Creek will be crossed at CR 37 in Section 04. As shown on NIPSCO project NBE-MDB-62533 CR 43, Goshen-3PH. It was noted that NIPSCO should be told to completely remove the retired poles from the site.

A motion was made and seconded (Pippenger/Barnes) to grant NIPSCO Utility Permission to Cross Lehman-Farmwalt Ditch and Laterals “A & B” to retire and replace existing utility poles and crossings and install new aerial crossings and install a new aerial crossing over Rock Run Creek at 61719 CR 37, Middlebury, as shown on NIPSCO project plans, NBE-MDB-62533 CR 43, Goshen-3PH. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing none, he called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

B. Petitions, Permits, Variances and Requests (continued)

2. Whisler-Bechtel Ditch – Bryan Sheets – Petition for Maintenance

Steve Schweisberger reported Bryan Sheets, 25876 CR 50 Nappanee carried a Petition for Maintenance for Whisler-Bechtel Ditch for Sections 14 & 23 of Locke Township. Dirt in the ditch has covered the tile outlet tubes. Ora Miller has recently tried to clean out some tiles but was unsuccessful due to the condition of the ditch. It has been approximately 18 years since work has been done on this portion of the ditch.

Ed Pippenger will abstain from voting on this request.

A motion was made and seconded (Barnes/Morehouse) to accept Petition for Maintenance carried by Bryan Sheets for the Whisler-Bechtel Ditch and to place it on the petition list for evaluation. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing none, he called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion. 4-0-1

3. Howard Ditch – NIPSCO – Utility Permission to Cross

Ian Henderson reported Elkhart Christian Academy, Inc has requested Permission to Cross Howard Ditch with a 48” culvert with riprap revetment end treatment at each end of the pipe for a private school drive at 25887 CR 22, Elkhart. Also requested Permission to enter with a 10-inch diameter stormwater outfall pipe from proposed detention basin #2 and a 15-inch diameter stormwater outfall pipe from the existing retention pond #1 which will be expanded. Both outlet pipes will have end sections with 6” to 8” riprap revetment end treatment. Proposed detention basin #2 will have a 6” perforated pipe bedded in pea stone trench. A flap gate will be installed to end of pipe to prevent drainage backflow. These requests are north of CR 22, west of CR 11. in Section 27 of Concord Township. As shown on Abonmarche Consulting’s’ project 24-1510 preliminary drawings pages C2.1 & C2.4 dated 12/03/2025 for the Elkhart Christian Academy Legacy Campaign. There is an existing petition for maintenance on file. Staff will work with the construction company concerning any maintenance needed through the site.

A motion was made and seconded (Morehouse/Kauffman) to grant Permission to Cross with a 48” culvert with riprap revetment end treatment at each end of the pipe for private school crossing. Permission to enter with a 10-inch diameter stormwater outfall pipe from proposed detention basin #2 and a 15-inch diameter stormwater outfall pipe from the existing retention pond #1 which will be expanded. As shown on Abonmarche Consulting’s’ project 24-1510 preliminary drawings pages C2.1 & C2.4 dated 12/03/2025 for the Elkhart Christian Academy Legacy Campaign. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing none, he called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

4. Horn Ditch & Rock Run Creek Lateral “L” Horn-Yoder – NIPSCO – Utility Permission to Cross

Carl Gilbert reported NIPSCO request for Utility Permission to Cross to relocate the existing overhead utility line and install a new Pole 2500’ east of US 33 on the Horn Ditch. Also to retire and replace existing overhead utility pole within the regulated drain

B. Petitions, Permits, Variances and Requests (continued)

4. Horn Ditch & Rock Run Creek Lateral "L" Horn-Yoder – NIPSCO – Utility Permission to Cross (continued)

easement on Rock Run Creek Lateral "L" Horn-Yoder. Both requests are located at College Avenue approximately 2500' east of US-33, in Section 14/23 of Elkhart Township as shown on drawing for the PIE – College Ave Relocation Project WO# 4000066275 dated 6/16/2025. It was noted that NIPSCO should be told to completely remove any retired poles from the site.

A motion was made and seconded (Pippenger/Barnes) to grant Utility Permission to Cross to relocate the existing overhead utility line and install a new Pole 2500' east of US 33 on the Horn Ditch. Also to retire and replace existing overhead utility pole within the regulated drain easement on Rock Run Creek Lateral "L" Horn-Yoder. Both requests are shown on drawings for the PIE – College Ave Relocation Project WO# 4000066275 dated 6/16/2025. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing none, he called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

C. Drainage Project Update and Reviews

1. Berlincourt and Wagner Ditch Maintenance Project #25-026 – Proposed Change Order

Carl Gilbert requested guidance for a proposed change order to Berlincourt and Wagner Ditch Maintenance Project #25-026. The site is in Section 22 of Union Township through a wooded area between CR 48 and CR 50. The proposed change order would include approximately 500 L.F. of obstruction removal, no disposal of materials only place along the top of bank. Pictures of the obstructions were reviewed. Minimal clearing to access log jams. This work is estimated at \$2,500.00. It would also include maintenance digging at \$.75 per foot and spreading of spoil at \$.25 per foot for 960 L.F. at an estimated \$960.00. The total proposed change order on Lateral "A" is estimated at \$3,460.00. Staff have talked with the landowner that owns the house; he does not believe that the obstructions are holding back much water. Staff explained that disturbance to the area would be minimal if the obstructions were removed and placed on the top of bank.

It was noted that there will probably be a change order for more riprap but should still be within the amount for change orders with the additional work. The landowner requested additional work to define the channel.

A motion was made and seconded (Barnes/Kauffman) to approve proposed change order for the additional work between CR 48 and CR 50 for the Berlincourt and Wagner Ditch Maintenance Project #25-026. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing none, he called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

C. Drainage Project Update and Reviews

2. Berlincourt Lateral “A” Video Inspection – Review

Carl Gilbert reported that R & R Visual inspected Berlincourt Lateral “A” to confirm condition of the tile prior to the deadline for the 10-year warranty installed by ADI (C & L Tiling), 196 US 24 1075N Avenue, Timewell, IL 62375. The inspection covered 4,881.6 L.F. at \$1.20 for a total of \$5,857.92. The total due would be \$2,356.92 after applying the credit from Invoice #9609.

A motion was made and seconded (Barnes/Pippenger) to approve payment to R & R Visual for the tile inspection video for Berlincourt Lateral “A”. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing none, he called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

V. Other Business – Additional Staff Items

1. Year End Reports

Year-end reports which included the Drainage Project Update for 2025 and the 2025 Petitions Maintenance Request List/Accepted by the Drainage Board were reviewed.

2. Additional Staff Item – Rock Run Creek

Beavers have made a dam in Rock Run Creek near the work release site. There is 3 to 4 ft of water backed up. The City of Goshen has been notified of the situation. The trapper has been engaged to remove the beaver then staff will remove the dam from the creek.

A motion was made and seconded (Barnes/Morehouse) to approve payment to the Nuisance trapper for the removal of the beaver from the Rock Run Creek. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing none, he called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Board members express thanks to the Surveyor and his staff for all the work completing these projects.

VI. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded by (Morehouse/Pippenger) to adjourn the January 13, 2026, Elkhart County Drainage Board meeting. Mr. Loucks called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing none, he called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Respectfully submitted, Doris Biller, Recording Secretary