

May 12, 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 May 12, 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, Commissioner Bob Barnes, Ed Pippenger Matthew Morehouse. Others attending Steven Olsen County Attorney, Philip Barker County Surveyor, and Carl Gilbert Drainage Supervisor/Drone Program Coordinator, Tadd Troxell and Ian Henderson Survey Party Chief. Not attending: Barry Kauffman and Steve Schweisberger Deputy Surveyor

II. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Loucks opened the floor for discussion on the Drainage Board meeting minutes from April 14, 2026.

A motion was made and seconded (Morehouse/Barnes) to approve the minutes from April 14, 2026 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

Expenditure through May 8, 2026		\$66,219.67
Cash Ending Balance as of May 8, 2026		\$3,225,609.79
Funds Appropriated for project		\$212,427.51
Funds Available to Appropriate		\$3,013,182.28

III. Drainage Items

A. Public Notice / Project Review/ Bid Openings

1. Baugo Creek Obstruction Removal Project #26-012 – Bid Opening

Tadd Troxell reported the project is located ½ mile south of CR 32, and 700 L.F. west of CR 1 in Section 15 of Olive Township. The scope of work is a simple obstruction removal, and the landowner will dispose of the removed tree. The project is to be completed by July 13, 2026. The estimated cost of the project is less than \$4,000.00.

Sealed bids were opened and read aloud by Bob Barnes.

Eight contractors were invited to bid, only 2 submitted bids.

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

1. Baugo Creek Obstruction Removal Project #26-012 – (continued)

Jerry Reed Excavating	\$3,000.00
SAR Excavating	\$3,000.00

Bids were reviewed for accuracy with both bids being equal; “pulling of lots” method was used to determine which contractor the project would be awarded. Jerry Reed Excavating was pulled as the winning bid.

No official motion was made to award the project. A motion to award the project will need to be made at the June meeting.

2. Lily Creek Maintenance Project 26-014 – Bid Opening

Tadd Troxell reported project #26-014 is located along approximately 925 L.F. of Lily Creek between Modrell Avenue and Sunset Avenue, west of Lilac Street, in Section 33, Osolo Township. The project consists of mowing, brushing and grinding. The Redevelopment Commission has requested the banks be mowed because people are hiding in the overgrown brush. This property is owned by the County. The project is to be completed by July 13, 2026. The estimated cost of the project is less than \$2,775.00.

Sealed bids were opened and read aloud by Bob Barnes.

Seven contractors were invited to bid, only 2 submitted bids.

Jerry Reed Excavating	\$2,007.25
SAR Excavating	\$2,220.00

Bids were reviewed for accuracy prior to awarding the project to the low bid of Jerry Reed for \$2,007.25.

A motion was made and seconded (Pippenger/Morehouse) to award the Lily Creek Maintenance Project 26-014 to Jerry Reed Excavating for \$2,007.25. 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.

3. Werntz Ditch Culvert Lining – Project Services Agreement

Carl Gilbert reported that this project has been under discussion for over a year in the office. Site 1 is located on North Elkhart Street in Wakarusa. The Board paid for materials for the Town of Wakarusa to fix a suck hole at this site in May 2024. The existing crossing is 300 ft. long, 74-inch diameter corrugated metal pipe. This has been an ongoing investigation on how best to fix this culvert. In 1978, Doctor Abel got permission to extend the existing road culvert the west then placed a parking lot on top of it. Site 2 would address the existing crossing located at Indiana and Waterford Street in Wakarusa. The existing crossing is 73” X 55” diameter corrugated metal pipe. Replacement cost would be prohibitive. INDOT is lining culverts instead of replacing. A proposal from Insituform for a fiberglass liner for both crossings was quoted at \$770,714.46. This would be a 50/50 cost share with the Town of Wakarusa. There is a 1-year warranty on the fiberglass liner. There would be an additional \$70,000.00 of engineering fees to be added to the cost share. JPR 1 Source is on retainer with the Town of Wakarusa for engineering services.

A. Public Notice / Project Review/ Bid Openings – (continued)
3. Wertz Ditch Culvert Lining – Project Services Agreement (continued)

A motion was made and seconded (Pippenger/Barnes) to move forward with interlocal agreement for a 50/50 cost share project with the Town of Wakarusa to line 2 crossings on Wertz Ditch at N. Elkhart St. and East Waterford/Indiana Street. 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. York Twp. Ditch Lateral “F” – Michael Lambright Property – Review

Carl Gilbert explained that the reoccurring rodent problem has been discussed many times over the past several years. The beaver leveler was constructed and worked for a year and half at most than the beaver built downstream. A few years ago, the landowner proposed installing a new bypass tile to help provide relief from the high-water issue. Staff are not sure this idea would work to remedy the situation. The landowner has already brushed and dug from the toll road to his private crossing on his own. Staff have put together 2 options for consideration. Option 1 would be to continue brushing and digging from the private crossing to the pond to make access easier to remove obstructions and continue to remove beaver as needed. This option would cost approximately \$2,500.00 for brushing, digging and continued obstruction removal, minimum of \$175.00 for beaver removal and \$500.00 to \$1,200.00 obstruction removal per time. Option 2 would be to install a bypass tile, approximately 900 L.F., to connect the wetland pond to a downstream point. Option 2 would cost approximately \$15,000.00 to \$20,000.00. It was noted that the tile could reduce the strain on the open ditch but there is no guarantee it would work. The beaver could obstruct the tile and render it useless.

Michael J. Lambright, 13658 CR 4, Middlebury explained the history and progression of beavers causing water to back up flooding his access drive and causing damage to neighboring properties. He has invested time & funds trying to solve the problem on his own. He would like to see the bypass tile installed to relieve the high-water issue.

Mathew Morehouse recommended removal of all the trees within the ditch right of way from the toll road to the pond. Removal of the habitat might drive the beaver back into the pond area. This would also create access for obstruction removal projects.

Carl Gilbert noted that brushing the ditch and the cost of continued removal of beaver and dams would be more cost effective than a tile that may or may not work.

Michael Lambright stated he does not believe that brushing will solve the problem but is willing to allow the brushing project. He would like to see the water level return to where it was when he bought the property.

A motion was made and seconded (Morehouse/Pippenger) to move forward with a project to removal all the trees in the 75’ right of way on both sides of the ditch from the toll road to the pond and continue to trap and remove obstructions as needed on the York Twp. Ditch Lateral “F” on the Michael Lambright property. 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. Haverstick Darkwood Ditch – Aaron Lambright – Variance Request

Ian Henderson explained this request is for a 75 ft. variance to place a 4 ft. high chain-link fence on the top of bank to keep the kids out of the ditch. His neighbor to the north has a fence to the top of the bank and the neighbor to the south has a shed on the top of bank. The site is located in north of CR 150 west of CR 7 in Tecumseh Acres in Section 19 of Union Township. He is willing to accept physical and finance responsibility in the event maintenance needs to be done from his side. Staff has a favorable recommendation.

A motion was made and seconded (Barnes/Morehouse) to grant a 75 ft variance to Aaron Lambright to place a 4 ft high chain-link fence on the south top of bank of the Haverstick Darkwood Ditch. Mr. Pippenger called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing none, he called for a vote. The Board voted in favor of the motion.

2. New Miller Stutsman Ditch – Pressler/Willows – Variance Request

Ian Henderson reported this site is within The Willows Senior Community located east of CR 15, south of CR 26, in Section 36 of Concord Twp. The entire complex was built without any variance; there are a few houses that were situated within 75 ft of the north top of bank. Jackie Pressler would like to build a deck attached to the south side of the existing house which is approximately 25 ft. from the top of bank. The deck will not be any closer than the other corner of her house. There is no variance in place for the existing houses. City of Goshen is now requesting a variance before they will issue a permit for the deck. There is an existing chain-link fence closer than where the deck will be. All of the existing encroachments do not have any variances. How do you give a variance to be attached to the house that does not have one.

If a variance is granted, it would be with the notation that if access is needed to maintain the ditch the homeowner will need to remove the deck immediately. The land is all owned by the "Willows". The signed request is from the current homeowner not the landowner. The "Willows" must sign the variance request form and agreement.

A motion was made and seconded (Barnes/Morehouse) to conditionally approve the variance, if the landowner (Willows) signs the petition and agreement to place an attached deck 25 ft. from the top of bank of New Miller Stutsman ditch. The homeowner must remove the deck if it becomes an obstruction for maintenance of the ditch. Mr. Pippenger called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing none, he called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

3. Wisler Ditch – Andy Flickinger – Variance Request

Carl Gilbert reported Andy Flickinger, 30210 CR 40, Wakarusa is requesting variance to construct farm pond to be no closer than 40' from the east ditch bank. The site is south of CR 40 west of CR 1 in Section 34 of Olive Township. If there is a maintenance project, it may have to be completed from the east side of the ditch due to the placement of a Christmas tree farm right up to the top of bank on the west side of the Ditch.

B. Petitions, Permits, Variances and Requests – (continued)
3. Wisler Ditch – Andy Flickinger – Variance Request (continued)

A motion was made and seconded (Morehouse/Barnes) to approve variance for Andy Flickinger to place a farm pond no closer than 40 feet from the east top of bank of Wisler ditch. Mr. Pippenger 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. Yellow Creek Obstruction Removal Project #26-013 – Private Crossing – Discussion of Potential Project Scope

Tadd Troxell explained that the proposed project is located north of CR 40, west of CR 11, in Section 28 of Harrison Township. The twin tube crossing on the north side of CR 40 is an obstruction, catching debris & slowing the flow causing sediment to fall out.

The twin tubes together are equal compacity to the pipe at CR 40. Staff would like to have the crossing removed, if the landowner agrees.

Carl Gilbert noted that the office contacted Eldon Ringler, he indicated that his son now owns the property with the crossing. Mr. Ringler said he would ask his son to contact the office. We have not heard from the son yet.

Ian Henderson noted that this property has 2 crossings, close together. The newer crossing is used daily. The twin tube crossing is now just secondary.

Staff have been discussing maintenance options for this portion of Yellow Creek which could include removal of the obstruction and dig a sediment pit. We are looking for guidance on what route to take.

It was recommended that the landowner be given notice that the twin tube crossing on his property has become an obstruction, restricting the flow of the ditch. This obstruction is detrimental to the landowner, the properties upstream and CR 40 crossing. The private crossing limits the County's options for maintenance in this section of Yellow Creek. The obstruction should be removed/repared to restore the flow. The landowner may be physically and financially responsible to remove/repair the obstruction. The landowner shall be given until July 1, 2026, to respond.

A motion was made and seconded (Morehouse/Barnes) to give notice to the landowner that his twin tube crossing on Yellow Creek has become an obstruction and should be removed/repared to restore the flow. The landowner may be physically and financially responsible to remove/repair the obstruction. The landowner shall be given until July 1, 2026, to respond. Mr. Pippenger 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 (continued)

2. Berlincourt & Wagner Ditch Maintenance Project #25-026 – Update

Carl Gilbert reported that Project #25-026 has been called complete. Originally the completion date was March 2, 2026, an extension was granted at the February 10, 2026 meeting to April 11, 2026. It has been a rainy spring. The average rain for the Goshen area is 11.2”, this year for the same period of time is 16.2”, there has been an additional 5” of rain this spring. It is the recommendation of staff that there is weather justification for an extension beyond the completion date.

A motion was made and seconded (Pippenger, Barnes) to confirm no liquidated damages and to extend the new completion date to May 8, 2026 for the Berlincourt & Wagner Maintenance Ditch 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.

Landowner Complaints for Project #25-026

A landowner complained about small brush debris floating downstream from where the contractor was working. Upon staff's request, the contractor tracked down specifically to remove the brush debris from the channel. Staff recommended a change order for \$500.00.

A motion was made and seconded (Pippenger/Morehouse) to approve a \$500.00 change order for the removal of the additional brush from the channel for the Berlincourt & 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.

Next Landowner Complaint for Project #25-026

This ditch is in low-lying muck. The ditch was dug and the banks caved. The landowners are now complaining that the banks caved in. The water is flowing around and not causing obstructions. The cave-ins that happened early in the project have not gotten worse. I do not blame the contractor; this has happened before with previous contractors. It was recommended to monitor the cave-ins and see if they become an obstruction to the flow, then repair them at that time.

A motion was made and seconded (Barnes/Morehouse) to monitor cave-ins that occurred due to the Berlincourt & Wagner Ditch Maintenance Project #25-026 and if they become an obstruction, repair them at that time. 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.

Next Landowner Complaint for Project #25-026

The removal of this sandbar was in the scope of the work; the contractor removed the sandbar then a sandbar reappeared at the same spot. Carl Gilbert personally

C. Drainage Project Update and Reviews - (continued)

2. Berlincourt & Wagner Maintenance Project #25-026 – (continued)

inspected and documented that the sandbar was removed prior to it reappearing. There is an old bridge, and it seems to be pinching the water, then when it hits this area that is eroded and wide the sediment drops out. The bridge is on the Racetrack property; we have reached out to the property owner, but no one has responded. I was hoping to remove the bridge and widen out the banks as part of the project, but no one responded. The contractor is no longer on site.

This bridge is in failure and appears to be slowly falling into the Berlincourt Ditch. At some point it will become an obstruction and limit the capacity of the ditch which would be detrimental to properties upstream.

Staff proposed two possible solutions for resolution of the problem: (1) repair the bridge and reinforce the embankment walls so that the superstructure is properly supported. (2) Removal/relocate the bridge outside the 75' right of way. The landowner would be responsible for the physical and financial burden for either option. The landowner will be given notice of the options and requested to respond by July 1, 2026. If the landowner does not address the issue, then the Board can act and the landowner may be responsible for the cost. The Board will be able to decide at that point.

A motion was made and seconded (Morehouse/Pippenger) to give the landowner of the Racetrack property notice that this bridge is in failure and falling into the Berlincourt Ditch. The landowner may be physically and financially responsible either to repair the bridge and reinforce the embankment walls so that the superstructure is properly supported or remove/relocate the bridge. Request the landowner to respond by July 1, 2026. 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.

Final Landowner Complaint for Project #25-026

Landowner complained that the contractor did not dig out in front of his tile. The contractor dug up to the tile on the upstream side three quarters across the channel then dug beyond it but did not dig in front of it. Tile was marked that it was there, but I struggled to see where it was. The landowner stated the tile was underneath the water. The landowner was not happy that I did not make the contractor go back and dig that out. The contractor acted appropriately considering the situation. The landowner should be responsible to dig out his own opening to make sure it is flowing. I wanted to make the Board aware of the situation so if anyone received a phone call. **Information only.**

3. Bechtel Ditch System Maintenance Project #25-028 – Update

Carl Gilbert reported that this project is not completely done; the contractor is anticipating completion by the end of the week, weather permitting. Since the completion date is unknown, no action will be taken on the time extension. Upon final completion, the Board may consider any possible liquidated damages.

C. Drainage Project Update and Reviews - (continued)
3. Bechtel Ditch System Maintenance Project #25-028 – Update (continued)

Mat rental

The contract noted that any damage or late fees would be the responsibility of the contractor. More mats were rented because the highway mats were junk. Cost of the mats increased by \$1,485.00 due to damage and extra days. There were 2 mats damaged not due to any fault of the contractor. The weather created problems.

A motion was made and seconded (Barnes/Pippenger) to approve payment for the additional mat rental fee, late fee and damaged mats 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.

Landowner Request on Project #25-028

The ditch was shallower before the maintenance digging and after the landowner on the south side of CR 126 cannot access their property on the opposite side of the ditch. They are now requesting a drive thru crossing. This could be a cost share and possibly riprap some washouts on the project.

A motion was made and seconded (Barnes/Morehouse) to table the request for a drive thru crossing on Bechtel Ditch until the landowner can be in attendance. 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. Howard Ditch Maintenance Project #26-001 – Update

Carl Gilbert reported the project is located north of CR 22 between CR 9 and CR 11, south of US 20 in Section 21 of Concord Township. The purpose of this project is to restore the ditch's ability to convey water by performing maintenance on approximately 1,750 L.F. of Howard Ditch. The project is to be completed by May 11, 2026. On May 5, 2026, the contractor stated that he would have trouble getting the project complete on time due to the weather. The contractor has completed most of the maintenance digging but needs to complete the leveling. The contractor is requesting a time extension until the end of May. It is the recommendation of staff that there is weather justification for an extension beyond the completion date.

A motion was made and seconded (Barnes/Morehouse) to approve time extension on Howard Ditch Maintenance Project #26-001 until May 31, 2026. Mr. Pippenger 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. Yellow Creek Obstruction Removal Project #26-016– Project Review

Ian Henderson reported a tree has fallen into the Yellow Creek on the north side of CR 26, west of CR 113 in Section 26 of Concord Twp. The landowner attempted to remove the obstruction, but the tree was too large. Another tree has floated downstream and got hung up in it. Staff would like to rent equipment and remove the blockage before it creates an emergency. It would be \$1,375.00 for the excavator rental from Wakarusa Heavy Equipment.

A motion was made and seconded (Barnes/Morehouse) to instruct staff to rent equipment and remove the blockage on the north side of CR 26 west of CR 113 in Yellow Creek. Mr. Pippenger called for comments or discussion on the motion, hearing none, he called for a vote. The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

VI. Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded by (Morehouse/Barnes) to adjourn the May 12, 2026, Elkhart County Drainage Board meeting. Mr. Pippenger 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