

**MINUTES OF THE KANKAKEE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION
HELD THURSDAY, MARCH 15, 2018 AT
9:30 AM CDT
KANKAKEE FISH AND WILDLIFE AREA HEADQUARTERS
4320 W. TOTO ROAD
NORTH JUDSON, IN 46366**

Chairman Chris Knochel called the meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Secretary Vince Urbano called the roll.

Members present

Kevin Breitzke	Bill Crase	Craig Cultice
Mike Delp	Anthony Hendricks	
Jim Kreiger	Mark Kingma	Chris Knochel
Tom Larson	Mike Novotney	Kim Peterson
Ken Porter	Ken Purze	Gene Schmidt
Jerry Tippy	Vince Urbano	

Guests Present

Bob Barr	Dave Bausman	Bill Beaver
Siavash Beik	Bryan Boggs	Stephen Bowers
Edwin T. Bowmar	Allan Cameron	Eric Courtright
Jeff Cummins	John Davis	Gus Ellicott
Bill Emerson Jr.	Connie Gramarossa	
Dan Gumz	Christine Keil	
Rick Lichtenbarger	Chester Magiera	Lee Nagai
Harvey Nix	Jared O'Brien	Russ Pumroy
Jack Ryan	Mark Scarborough	Joe Skelton
David J. Smith	Dick Welsh	Mark Wunderink

Staff Present

Jody Melton

Jody introduced Marshall County Commissioner Michael Delp who will now serve on the Commission

Approval of Minutes

Kevin Breitzke made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2017. Jerry Tippy seconded and the minutes were approved.

Naming of nominating committee

A nominating committee was not created in November or January because the meetings had no quorum. Tom Larson made a motion to re elect the present officers, Kim Peterson seconded. In discussion Bill Crase and Tony Hendricks said they felt a nominating committee should be named and present a slate for the next meeting for officers for 2018. Chris Knochel and Tom Larson said half the year would be over before the next meeting. A vote was called on the motion to re elect the present officers and the vote was 8 yes and 6 no. The officers were re elected. Officers are Chris Knochel, Chairman; Ken Purze, Vice Chairman; Vince Urbano, Secretary; and Kevin Breitzke, Treasurer. Anthony Hendricks asked that his objection be added to the official minutes that no nominations were taken from the floor.

Chairman Knochel asked for introduction of guests.

Finance Report

Jody Melton presented the finance report. The report consisted of a final administration account of 2017, a proposed budget for 2018, and an agreement with NIRPC for staff services. The 2018 proposed budget and NIRPC contract are identical to the 2017 agreements. He did not change any of the language or numbers for 2018 as he plans to retire sometime in 2018 and the contract can be amended to account for that. While he has not decided on an exact date, he does not plan to continue in 2019.

The KRBC received its allotment from the state for \$600,000 in October 2017 for the 15-16 biennium. Ken Purze made a motion to approve the administration budget, the NIRPC contract, and to authorize \$121,000 for the USGS gages for two years, \$25,000 for LaPorte Co. SWCD for the voyager canoes for Kankakee Days, approve any county surveyor authorized claims for repairs on the Kankakee and Yellow Rivers from the

February/March 2018 flooding event and approve bringing each county's emergency fund to \$10,000. The remainder of the \$600,000 will be held until authorized for specific projects submitted to and approved by the KRBC. Kevin Breitzke seconded the motion.

Tony Hendricks asked about the pilot project funding and how that was accomplished. The last session of the General Assembly authorized \$600,000 for the pilot project but the local counties need to match that with 25% local money. Newton County has provided a letter to the KRBC that states Newton County will spend \$150,000 of Newton County funds on their project in the Kankakee River. That letter should provide the 25% match required and the KRBC can request release of the \$600,000 for the pilot project. The pilot project was funded with the rainy day fund from the Wetland Reserve funds from the Rivers Edge Wetland Reserve Program. When that \$600,000 is received it will cover the cost of the Yellow River pilot project and restore the Wetland Reserve Rainy Day fund. Vote was called and motion passed 14 yes, 1 no.

Flood Damage

The rains started full force on Presidents Day, the 19th.

Plymouth on the Yellow River had a record crest near 17 feet and suffered damage along the river in the city. Damage amounts are still being gathered. The Yellow River flooding moved on to Knox where several areas of the city were filled with water and sandbagging took place. On Wednesday the Yellow River bank within the Fish and Wildlife Area west of SR39 broke and attempts to fix it began. DNR opened the north side to allow water to fill the F&W area.

St. Joseph County started losing Kankakee River bank on Tuesday and Wednesday and repairs were attempted although most of those repairs are taking place now. The flooding caused river bank failure near US 35 in LaPorte County and eventually riverbank failure within the Fish and Wildlife Area north and south of SR 8. A new break is being repaired now near 1800 South in LaPorte County.

On Wednesday the river overtopped the river bank near 250 S in Porter County and near 400 South in Porter County and the water moved west toward US 231. That evening the riverbank at Ramseys Landing broke and about 30 homes were cut off from land access and eventually electricity and gas were shut off. Jasper County repaired that breach on Monday or Tuesday and Porter County removed a large mass of debris from the river bridge there. That area is still full of water (and sand from the breach) and

gas is still not on. Much of north Jasper County is still full of water from breaches to the Hodge Ditch system.

Downstream at Camerons west of I 65 where a new bank was being designing, the battle was finally lost and the bank was breached. Adding to the woe, debris at the railroad track caused a second breach which flowed under the RR track and inundated a portion of northern Newton County. The water contributed to the high water table at Thayer and caused problems for those homeowners. SR 55 was closed south of the river cutting off access from Shelby to Thayer.

In Shelby at Shady Shores sandbagging started in earnest on Tuesday and continued through Wednesday when the river reached a record peak and began running over the sandbags, something that has not happened before. Lake County government officials sent in extra help to raise the sandbags and Shady Shores surprisingly held. The area known as Wildwood west of Shelby did not fare so well. This flood event was so high that extra help from the county and township and surrounding fire departments had to come in with extra bags and pumps.

Further west there was a dangerous spot on the Williams (Niemeyer) Levee west of US 41 which was addressed by the Lake County Surveyor and another spot near State Line. Both issues were taken care of.

And while US 41 was totally closed, then closed northbound for several days, Sumava Resorts held strong. The residents monitored the bank, caught a couple of seepage spots but all in all, Sumava went well.

The Governor has declared all the counties of the Basin disaster areas and may qualify for federal disaster declarations. Keep records of all expenses due to the flooding and make sure the Homeland Security office in the county has those figures.

Plymouth had houses flooded, Porter County has bridges out, county and state roads are underwater. There will be much to repair.

Tony Hendricks asked if there were any blockages because the river is not going down. Consensus is that the amount of water is just overwhelming. The blockage is mostly likely the sand load in the channel bottom. Alan Cameron said that the 3 I Railroad bridge is blocked with debris. Ken Purze made a motion that Jody Melton work with the Newton County attorney to write a letter to the Norfolk and Southern to ask them to clean that bridge and the letter should be copied to the state legislators. Kevin Breitzke seconded and the motion was approved.

Vince Urbano said that the river bottom needs to be dredged and the riverbanks need to be reshaped and that every county needs to work toward that. Ken Purze said the regulatory agencies need to help. The next agenda

will have an item to talk about each county's plan to repair banks and clean the channel.

Old Business

Newton County has identified 7 weak spots in riverbank in Newton County. Ironically, they can repair the banks back to original design. That is not sensible. Newton County wants to fix the bank not just put it back the way it was. There was an environmentally sensitive design to rebuild that bank in an environmentally sensible way. It must be approved through the various agencies.

Tony Hendricks wants clarification of how much money there is to spend on repairs. There is \$454,000 available now. After all discussion, there is a limited amount available. There is not enough money in the KRBC coffers to pay for all the requests to complete the repairs to the standards being discussed. Ken Purze made a motion that LaPorte County be approved \$85,000, Starke County \$98,000, and Jasper County \$71,000 for outstanding bills as of today. Kevin Breitzke seconded and motion was approved. Ken Purze made a motion to hold a meeting on April 12. Mark Kingma seconded and motion was approved.

Bill Crase reported on the Yellow River project upstream of SR 8. The project proceeded very well. After this flooding event there is about 300 feet of damage to the 2,200 feet project, about 100 feet of toewood and 300 feet of soil were disturbed. The rest is in good shape, even without vegetation. Bill is concerned that the project cost too much. The contractor was too expensive and used no local contractors. This effort on the Yellow River must be continued by local contractors and must be done cheaper. Tony Hendricks complained about the cost of the project and the cost of the consultants.

New Business

Siavash Beik made a presentation entitled 'Funding Options for the Maintenance of the Kankakee and Yellow Rivers in Indiana'. CBBEL used GIS parcel data and identified parcel use in each of the 8 counties comprising the KRBC. A series of scenarios were created showing how a local assessment could be used to raise money for maintenance on the rivers.

The presentation will be available at kankakeeriverbasin.org and the work should lead to further discussion on local assessment possibilities.

Other Business

Jody Melton reminded the KRBC members that they had embarked on creating a ‘Risk Management Plan’ that began with the Yellow River but became a 3 pronged recommendation plan. Watershed protection and land management practices were needed to be enhanced throughout the Basin and the local Soil and Water Conservation Districts are best equipped to continue that. The Yellow River needed to be addressed in two places, upstream of Knox where the pilot project has been installed and downstream of Knox in the dredged portion where the river is wide and sediment filled. The third part of the plan is to prepare a system functional assessment of the Kankakee River watershed in Indiana and perhaps continue into Illinois. To begin the long range planning on this, a committee should begin looking at options. Tony Hendricks, Tom Larson, Mike Novotney, and Chris Knochel will be that committee.

Chris Knochel asked for a committee to begin the process of replacing the Executive Director of the KRBC who earlier had stated that he wanted to retire by or before 12-31-2018. Kevin Breitzke, Vince Urbano, Kim Peterson, Bill Crase, and Chris Knochel will make up that committee.

The next meeting of the KRBC will be April 12, 2018 at the Kankakee Fish and Wildlife Headquarters in North Judson at 9:30 am CDT.