Minutes

MERRILLVILLE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT BOARD

TUESDAY, JULY 7th, 2026, at 3:30 PM

Merrillville Stormwater Resource Center, 7404 Broadway, Merrillville, IN

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

President L.J. "Bud" Crist called the July 7th, 2026, Stormwater Management Board (SWMB) meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

President Crist led the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Members in attendance were, President Bud Crist, Vice President Jim Kendig, and Secretary Barbara Ghoston three board members are present, a quorum was established. The staff member present were Executive Director Matt Lake and Secretary Adra Breclaw-Csanyi.

COMMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Comments: President Crist wanted to thank Stormwater Executive Director Matt Lake and Fire Chief Ed Yerga for their help in the tornado relief efforts and for going above and beyond in their duties.

MINUTES

Stormwater Management Board Minutes (SWMB) from June 2nd, 2026, approved. President Crist entertained a motion for approval, Secretary Ghoston entered a motion to approve the minutes from the SWMB meeting on June 2nd, 2026, and motion seconded by Vice President Kendig. There were no questions. A voice vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed with a 3/0 vote.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTERS APPROVAL

Included in the agenda packet were copies of the Accounts Payable Register from June 9th, 2026, and June 23rd, 2026. President Crist entertained a motion for approval Secretary Ghoston entered a motion to accept the Accounts Payable Registers June 9th, 2026, and June 23rd, 2026, seconded by Vice President Kendig. No questions asked. A voice vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed with a 3/0 vote.

OLD BUSINESS - (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)

Bud Crist – None

Matt Lake – Executive Director Matt Lake read invoices for approval for the following projects/contracts listed below:

Matt Lake – Christopher B. Burke Engineering, LLC MSU Master Plan Update. Professional Services from April 26th, 2026, to May 30th, 2026, in the amount due this invoice for $13,340.00 **(VOICE VOTE)**. President Crist entertained a motion for approval Secretary Ghoston motioned and it was seconded by Vice President Kendig. There was no discussion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed with a 3/0 vote.

Robinson Engineering Ltd., MSU 2026 Stormwater Utility Miscellaneous Engineering, for Professional Services through May 29th, 2026, in the amount due this invoice for $5,173.00 **(VOICE VOTE)**. President Crist entertained a motion for approval Secretary Ghoston motioned and it was

seconded by Vice President Kendig. There was no discussion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed with a 3/0 vote.

DLZ, Professional Servies for Grand Boulevard Ditch Relocation Project Professional May 9th, 2026, to June 12th, 2026, in the amount due this request for $3,448.75 **(VOICE VOTE)**. President Crist entertained a motion for approval Secretary Ghoston motioned and it was seconded by Vice President Kendig. There was no discussion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed with a 3/0 vote.

STATUS /Updates: Matt Lake

- Hendricks Drainage Analysis – Matt talked to Jeff Haw who provided a briefing, he is here with Ben Eldridge also from VS Engineering. Jeff stated that they are nearly complete with their easement documentation/procurement for the project, there are more easements than they originally anticipated given the confluence of the drainage dealing within the rear yard of the Kendig property. Currently they are putting together easements for two possibly three easements for the rear yard area more than was originally talked about initially, so they are going to need more time in terms of bidding and have move bidding dates now to publication in August and official bidding dates to the first week of September for the project. Utility coordination is proceeding and are trying to get their electric company to go out there and do the pole relocations as necessary before the actual start of construction, he said, "we are doing what we can." Matt Lake said your timing of utilities and relocation is important because we don't want to pay for utility relocations that we do not own. Attorney Meyer asked if he said the bidding date is the first week of August, Jeff said first week of September, is that the date returned or the date it gets put out on the street? Jeff said it will be published before that and have a date we will get bids in, Attorney Meyer said the bids have to be returned at a Board meeting. Jeff responded that it would be at the first Board meeting, the first Tuesday, but wasn't sure what that exact date is.
- Hickory Ridge Flood Control Project – Matt talked with TJ from Christopher Burke Engineering and will be doing a final walkthrough tomorrow and it will be the final task to close the project. It was submitted to INAFSM for an outstanding stormwater project award. During the intense rain events everything worked ideally. Other than their own parking lot which is their own drainage system, everything was where it needed to be and working perfectly. Gasvoda came in, set everything up, set the floats, reset and checked everything, it is good and online, they are in great shape in terms of that and with all the supplemental improvements in that area. The County now has one of their contractors out who is clearing branches in the area and taking out some things that have been leaning along with clearing the trash rack further down Turkey Creek Lateral 6. We work pretty good together when it comes to drainage.
- 97th and Grand Boulevard Drainage Improvements (DLZ) – Road closure signs are up by TMC, and we had notified those entities on our list, it was advertised on the town website thru Chas Reily along with our detour plan and details. We are getting some calls from Winfield residents because they routinely pass that way. There are some other projects that the County Highway Department has, a bridge replacement project for Deep River and Colorado Street, making the detour routes for the north/south corridors challenging. There is some intermittent ponding on Clay Street south of 97th Ave and Matt has some ideas about elevating the roadway and adding a culvert due to lack of ROW in this area that has limitations. Matt is going to have DLZ look at this while they are out for 97th and Grand Boulevard. Matt is going to get an updated schedule from M & J Underground.

- Stormwater Master Plan – Executive Director Lake talked to Daren Olson who is setting up a list of new projects with all the engineers estimates so we gauge where we are at and there will be a prioritization of that. Once the plan is done, we will post it on the Town's website, then we will start targeting those projects and we will share this with Little Cal and let them know where we are with it, so they know what to anticipate. Matt likes to let them have a copy of all the information of what we have, and again we are willing to share any of our analysis with surrounding communities so they can take that output data and do their own analysis for the communities.

NEW BUSINESS - (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)
Bud Crist –

Matt Lake – We have finished our User Fee Report that Karl prepared. Essentially, we are going to adjust our fee, for example look at single family residential it will go up to twelve dollars up from ten dollars, so a two dollar a month increase for most residents. This is not only for the amount of money the Town will be acquiring for the PILOT that they passed, the Ordinance $100,000 but also for the operations of the street sweeping, Matt said they were very conservative on their estimates just trying to keep everything as low as possible in terms of costs. With that a Resolution was prepared and is up for your consideration for first reading and then we will have after that it will advertised have a public meeting at the next meeting, then vote on it, have a second reading, then after that it all goes to the Council not only the Resolution but we also prepared an Ordinance for it to go to Council so they can pass that. After that passes then we can submit all this to the County for our new rates effective next year (2026-2027). Executive Director Lake said we do have a Resolution to approve. Karl Cender said it will be just under the Boards consideration for a first reading on the Resolution. Matt Lake read the Resolution Title, as follows:

APPROVING AN ADJUSTMENT TO STORMWATER UTILITY USER FEES FOR THE TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA AND RECOMMENDING THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL ADOPT AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THOSE ADJUSTED FEES

President Crist entertained a motion for approval for first reading only of the Resolution to adjust Stormwater Utility Fees, Secretary Barbara Ghoston seconded. A voice vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed with a 3/0 vote.

President Crist mentioned it had been talked about automatically increasing fees 3% yearly and felt this was a better way to keep costs lower with residents in mind.

OTHER BUSINESS
Bud Crist –

Matt Lake – SW Lake County Assessment (Fall 2025 Installment payable in 2026), 40/60 split, 40%-fund 6504 (Construction) and 60% 6501 (Operation/Maintenance). Our projects and budget are right on and pretty well balanced out.

Lake and Pond Biologist performed treatment on Bon Aire Lake of pond shade on 6/29/26. They have been doing a great job, no algae and zero calls, Matt feels we have the right combination.

Executive Director Lake is still working with Pangere Corporation on the proposal; there are things we went over a couple of times and have gone back and forth a few times. We will have to revisit this and see what direction we want to go in terms of adding on to the building.

2027 Budget Meeting discussion is tomorrow with Karl at 10:00 am. The only thing that is going to change is the sweeping operation. Matt mentioned that we will probably want to do a transfer of money for the emergency fund for the tornado disaster recovery, we have expenses associated with that and we want to keep track. There is a new line-item in the system for stormwater already created for that purpose. Any of our time and resources already dedicated for the tornado relief efforts, not only our initial response but recovery efforts will be part of this and once we get bills associated with that, we will try to funnel through, so we try to get reimbursement from the State and or Federal government. Matt also thought the Town is waiting for the Federal Disaster Declaration as well.

Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) 2026 Indiana Integrated Water Monitoring and Assessment Report was published. The assessment report showed what was expected in terms of the impairments of waterways in Indiana. E.coli is at the top of the list along with a generic category of impaired bio communities which means macroinvertebrates meaning sensitive ones are gone but tolerant ones are there meaning there may be issues with dissolved oxygen which could be any number of things from sediment loading and different stream morphology.

It would be nice if they Geo-referenced locations that are associated with the data so that we could target these things and with E.coli you could do further testing and analysis to determine if it is animal or human, which would be useful information. If it is human it is coming from septic's or from contractors that pump out septic tanks, we caught one years ago, Eagle Engineering he was stationed at a storage facility, pump someone's tank and then park one truck unload it and empty it into what he had as a sanitary drain and there would a storm drain right next to it and would toggle between the two. He got caught, was sent to IDEM and it went from there, most likely he is not the only one. There are other things such as septic failures that occur. If it is animal then it comes from other sources, they could do such things as DNA testing. Attorney Meyer said that DNA testing is very common now, Matt said that taking it further would give a lot of information that could be utilized and target to be used to delist waterways and get down to that level. Attorney Meyer asked if IDEM ever responded to Matts comments, he responded that he asked during the conference because they had a presentation on it and wanted to bring it up to others and encourage further testing and analysis. Attorney Meyer thought it probably wouldn't happen during this administration maybe next time around it could be asked to split samples and the communities, whoever is involved hire their own lab, do the testing, and get the Geo locations and DNA testing, it's not that expensive now a days. Matt responded it would be money well spent; it's the whole goal to figure things out, you know the impairment and you sample and you know then the directive locations then you need to find the sources, from there you can target for example if agriculture you go to the agriculture side of things, if urban then you go to the urban side.

Executive Director Lake said that we have been extremely busy with the tornado relief efforts and recent flood events. and assisting residents. There have been rainfall events that we haven't seen in a long time with the intensity, volume and duration. We always check on completed drainage projects and hot spot areas that we focus on and see what is happening with the results of our projects and how they perform. From that standpoint we faired very well. This also shows us our weak points and areas we have to work on and that's were the Master Plan is strategically important. So, we will have list of projects, we will have to prioritize them, and we will submit them systematically to Little Cal for cost share so that we try to get 50% of it paid for. Currently 97th and Grand is 50% covered by Little Cal, we will be submitting and presenting the Southmoor Park Phase II project and that will be hopefully at their next meeting, and we will have a list of other projects. Again, there are always more projects than money, that's why we have to prioritize our efforts.

President Crist asked Karl Cender it the Lake County Assessment was similar to last year, he responded that it looks similar, possible slightly higher, he does not have last year's number. Karl noted that it's usually slightly higher than 50% on the first draw because some people pay their full bill in May or June. Matt stated that as more parcels develop and subdivided, we will get slightly more revenue, and it will increase accordingly.

Matt talked to Drive Clean Indian and there is an opportunity for us to get some electric vehicles. They will pay up to $33,000, which is a good deal. The Town of Dyer has some and Matt was able to see what they had, it was promising, so if we can manage to get into their program, they will send us all the information once the eligibility is there, they will send an email directly.

Executive Director Lake had the Stormwater budget meeting with the Budget Committee for the Town and went over projects anticipated for next year. The Town is looking to add cuts in different areas because of SB1. We are looking at where to streamline but we also have to look at where we can bring in more money to supplement budgets, that is what we do.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

Attorney Jim Meyer– None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bud Crist – Next SWMB meeting is set for Tuesday, **August 4th**, **2026**, at 3:30 pm at the Stormwater Resource Center. President Crist entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting Secretary Barbara Ghoston made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Vice President Kendig seconded. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed with a 3/0 vote.

ADJOURNMENT TIME –
The meeting was adjourned at 3:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Adra Breclaw-Csanyi, Staff Secretary