Minutes

MERRILLVILLE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT BOARD

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1st, 2026, at 3:30 PM

Merrillville Stormwater Resource Center, 7404 Broadway, Merrillville, IN

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

President L.J. "Bud" Crist called the September 1st, 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

MINUTES

Stormwater Management Board Minutes (SWMB) from September 1st, 2026, approved. President Crist entertained a motion for approval, Secretary Ghoston entered a motion to approve the minutes from the SWMB meeting on September 1st, 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 August 11th, 2026, and August 25th, 2026. President Crist entertained a motion for approval Secretary Ghoston entered a motion to accept the Accounts Payable Registers August 11th, 2026, and August 25th, 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 – There is a series of pay requests that are primarily associated with the tornado and the derecho, we will be submitting this for our best chance of reimbursement from FEMA. We will try to get reimbursed for as much as we can.

Pay Request from M&J Underground Inc for services performed June 18th and 20th, in the amount due this request, invoice 997 for $8,790.00 for 62 Indian Trail storm sewer tie in, to manhole **(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.

Pay Request from Delta III, Inc for services performed August 11th thru August 14th, for cleaning drains and public complaint issues due to storms where needed, in the amount due this request, invoice 13393 for $3,040.00 **(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.

Pay Request from Delta III, Inc for services performed August 3rd thru August 7th, for cleaning drains, trash racks, and public complaint issues due to storms where needed, in the amount due this request, invoice 13389 for $3,705.00 **(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.

Pay Request from Delta III, Inc, for services performed July 27th to July 28th and July 30th to July 31st, for cleaning drains and public complaint issues due to storms where needed, in the amount due this request, invoice for $3,040.00 **(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.

President Christ asked if these concerns were these existing problems or special storm related? Executive Director Lake said we had a lot of debris from the storm and a high number of calls. An assessment needed to be done to systematically evaluate. The majority are wind related; it is not a recurring incident. Our phones through Xfinity were also out of service and when service was restored there were additional calls from concern on voicemail. Additional issues that occurred were washouts and sinkholes, we are documenting these, lining them up for repairs and tracking them so that they can be eligible for FEMA reimbursement. We have a lot of work ahead of us as the recovery process continues. We have waterways where trees have fallen in, some of these are properties we own and others are private properties and regulated drains. We have direct accountability for properties that are town-owned and the other areas we assess and respond accordingly and appropriately. All of this takes time and personnel, we are down to Adra, and I since Mike Mahy has been out on medical leave for the past six weeks. We are trying to fill in the gaps with Brandon from Delta III for some labor on small tasks. Secretary Ghoston asked if there was a hinderance with private property and trying to get around it. Executive Director, Lake said the hinderance is when there is a ditch on private property and people have branches in their yard but place them in the ditch instead of by the front curb for contactors or Street Department to pick up. We are trying to work around and work through all these challenges. Some property owners understand that their property can impact adjacent properties with regards to drainage. We are working with Lake County Surveyor contractors for all activities around regulated drains as they clear waterways and try to educate residents along the regulated drains as they are clearing it out and saying don't dump it back in here. They already know what they cleared out and illegal dumping is a violation. We have had two large natural disasters, one being the EF2 tornado on June 11th and about a month later the derecho. We are still trying to recover from one while the other one is happening.

Executive Director Lake did present on disaster response and challenges during the NISWAG meeting earlier today with the Lake County Surveyor Bill Emerson. We discussed our response and what we have done and what we can learn from it. There are a lot of things, and it has been an experience. It was all hands-on deck, non-stop.

Pay Request from Delta III, Inc for services performed July 13th to July 17th, for cleaning drains, helped televising and jetting storm sewers, manhole work, worked on vac truck, and public complaint due to storms where needed, in the amount due this request, invoice 13368 for $3,800.00 **(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.

The next four invoices are from Tierra who does jet vacing, televising, root cutting, within the drains. We had a lot of debris that was accumulated. With Mike being off, a lot of this had to be outsourced. This is all being documented, tracked, and submitted for FEMA reimbursement.

Tierra Environmental and Industrial Services pay request for cleaning storm sewer lines at various locations (August 7, 10th to 12th, and the 14th) from storms and areas of concern, invoice T-26-9283 in the combined amount of $22,905.26 **(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.

Tierra Environmental and Industrial Services pay request for cleaning storm sewer lines at various locations (July 20th to July 24th and July 27th to 31st) from storms and areas of concern, invoice T-26-8820 in the combined amount of $52,763.17 **(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.

Tierra Environmental and Industrial Services pay request for cleaning storm sewer lines at various locations (July 1st, 2nd, 6th to 10th, and 13th to 17th) from storms and areas of concern, invoice T-26-8328 in the combined amount of $58,466.13 **(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.

Tierra Environmental and Industrial Services pay request for cleaning storm sewer lines at various locations (June 24th to 30th) from storms and areas of concern, invoice T-26-7646 in the combined amount of $29,970.38 **(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.

Butler Fairman & Seufert, Inc, On-Call Services 54th and Tyler Detention Assessment. They are looking at different options to extend a berm along an area where there is already detention. A couple of adjacent properties have had ponding. Secretary Ghosten asked if anything needed to be repositioned. Matt responded that the detention was put in over 20 years ago and this pond outlets to a nonregulated drain that connects to Turkey Creek Lateral Six which is a regulated drain. One of the areas has an existing berm and the engineers are looking for options to extend the berm to the south and not trap runoff on adjacent parcels. Matt will meet with BF&S next week and go over details and see which option is feasible to pursue. Tyler Street is dead end and the structure on the far north end is vulnerable to blockage. Many times, we have seen debris dumped there covering the drainage structure and that drains west so needs constant maintenance. We also are soliciting quotes to clean the non-regulated ditch later this fall. Once we get to the regulated drain then it will be the County's and they will have to maintain it from there.

Butler Fairman & Seufert, Inc, On-Call Services 54th and Tyler Detention Assessment. Professional services from June 25th, 2026, to July 31st, 2026, in the amount due this invoice for $5,758.75 **(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.

DLZ, Professional Servies for Grand Boulevard Ditch Relocation Project Professional Services July 11th, 2026, through August 7th, 2026, in the amount due this request for $2,574.39 **(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.

Matt stated he was out there and it is substantially safer. The ditch is shifted over and put a polymer coated CMP in so the road will be opened soon. They should be done approximately in two weeks. Then we will submit for reimbursement having one pay request at the end.

STATUS /Updates: Matt Lake

- Hendricks Drainage Analysis – The easement agreements are drafted. Matt sent them to Attorney Meyer to review. There are two sets, two for Hendricks and two for Independence Street. Once they are done, they can be certified and mailed, then they get signed, notarized, and recorded and we will have the easements. Jeff Haw is here for any updates. For utilities the poles themselves are not AT&T they are NIPSCO, confirmed by Jeff Haw. We are trying to get utilities relocated. A generic message was sent to Jeff that they are very busy right now and will get back to you as soon as they can, he will keep following up on a weekly basis.

- 97th and Grand Boulevard Drainage Improvements (DLZ) – The project is going quickly and are working on the south end of the project. It is just earthwork, all the culverts are in. This is a major improvement as far as safety, the edge of the road was a straight drop off. This will be noticed by a lot of people. We are going to get reimbursed 50% and get one pay request in we can send it in to Little Cal for reimbursement. M&J was the substantial low bidder.

- Stormwater Master Plan – Executive Director Lake said Christopher Burke is still working on it. We will have Darren Olsen here to present on the findings and highlight the projects. This is a ten-year Master Plan.

NEW BUSINESS - (Discussion and Roll Call Vote)

Bud Crist – Approval of the 2027 Stormwater budgets **(VOICE VOTE)**. Budget includes 6501-Operations (main budget) of 1.7 mil, 6504 Construction-2.1 mil, 6505 Grants-5 K. Approval of the 2027 Stormwater budgets. Karl Cender said this will be included in the Town Council packet. You are making a recommendation to them for approval when they consider the Towns budget. Our numbers will be included in the ordinance for approval. President Crist entertained a motion for approval

Secretary Ghoston motioned and it was seconded by Vice President Kendig. No additional questions. A voice vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed with a 3/0 vote.

Matt Lake – Merrillville Stormwater Management, Stormwater Compensation for Employees adoption of RESOLUTION No. 26-04_ STORMWATER SALARY RESOLUTION FOR 2027 YEAR **(VOICE VOTE)**

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING COMPENSATION FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE UTILITY TO BE PAID FROM THE PROPER FUND OF THE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT OF THE TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA DURING THE YEAR 2027.

Executive Director Lake said that we pass a resolution then the Town passes a Salary Ordinance. The Salary Ordinance points to the fact that our Board passed a Resolution. President Crist entertained a motion for approval, Secretary Ghoston motioned and it was seconded by Vice President Kendig. There was no further discussion and no questions from the audience. A voice vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed 3/0.

Drainage Easements for Independence Street - Emergency Sink Hole Project, parcels 45-12-17-377-015.000-030 and 45-12-17-377-014.000-030. Up for discussion and approval **(VOICE VOTE)**. Executive Director Lake sent these to Attorney Meyer to look at and sent the Hendrick Street ones as well so there are two batches to look at. Attorney Meyer confirmed that easements need to be approved by the Board. This is for Independence Street where a pipe goes through private property under a driveway, close to a house. Matt is unaware how this was ever approved. We are trying to bypass this and originally as part of phase two of Independence Street regardless of this and move this along. President Crist entertained a motion for approval, Secretary Ghoston motioned and it was seconded by Vice President Kendig. There was no further discussion and no questions from the audience. A voice vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed 3/0.

Stormwater Management User Fee Comment:

Resolution 26-03 and Ordinance 26-22 to recommend that the Town Council adopt the ordinance and approve the adjustment to Stormwater Utility Fees was sent to Town Council for the August 11th, 2026, meeting. Due to storms and power outages the Town Council meeting was cancelled and placed on August 25th, 2026, Town Council agenda where approved and signed. The fee increase Ordinance was approved by the Town Council and signed off by them. Signed copies were sent to the Stormwater Board. We can change our fee schedule accordingly when we send the data to County so it can be added to the tax bill for next year. This is an increase to cover the Payment in Lue of Taxes (PILOT) and hopefully cover the street sweeping operations.

Tomorrow there is a meeting with an Architect to look at what we can do for an addition to the building, it will be onsite.

OTHER BUSINESS
Bud Crist –

Matt Lake – Executive Director Lake said this is related to architectural firms, we have Pangere and we have another one coming so we can compare and contrast the two.

There is an addendum that you can take action on or wait; this is for additional work that Robinson performed under out base contract for contractual services. This is an addition to the base contract that

was used up for the remainder of the year. They may not use it all, but it is a not to exceed amount. This is Addendum Number 2, Exhibit A-1-Fall 2026. Attorney Meyer pointed out it is their Standards Terms and Conditions, not the Utilities Standards Terms and Conditions have to be. Attorney Meyer thought that on the front it said 2016 and it should be referenced and it does on the first page but then attached the terms and conditions. Attorney Meyer said to just remove the last two pages. 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.

Matt attended a NISWAG meeting earlier today at the Water Conservation District Building next to the Lake County Government Center, and it was the Lake County Surveyor who hosted. Bill Emerson and Matt presented together on what happened with the tornado and derecho and on things that they learned, there was a list. Reggie from NISWAG asked Executive Director to speak, he pointed items and was surprised that he had five pages of items. Having emergency contracts in place and having line items in your budget for emergency services so that everything lines up is important, it's not will it happen again but when. It is about what could we have done better and how we can prepare ourselves better as a town. Matt stated hopefully we will have a final debrief and as an ongoing thing, also how we respond to natural disasters. What resources do we have, what resources do we need, everything from back-up generators to fuel that is needed to run all your emergency services. Gas stations are shut down so there is a lot to think about and go through. Working with contractors and having permanent areas for processes, we were fortunate to have that.

The FEMA reimbursement process and how that works, when there are tracking professionals who do that every day and their time can be reimbursed should be left to those consultants for non-bias tracking. Tracking is important and if you don't track something properly, it may be a challenge to get FEMA to reimburse 75%, they are like an insurance company. They are coming in and there is a lot of fraud, waste, and abuse so it is understandable since FEMA has limited funds too and they are trying to deal with natural disasters all over the country. Also, with personnel and time it's only overtime that is eligible for reimbursement. You can spend all day on the incident and if you don't have any overtime, they're not reimbursing the Town for that time, it's just for overtime. Again, it is a learning experience, but Director Lake thinks it would have been wise to hire a company right off the bat and track everything professionally because that is what they do and their time would be reimbursable. It was recommended to the town at the beginning of the incident. Attorney Meyer stated that yes, you do have to be very particular in tracking and the information they recorded and the data. Matt stated that with debris you must track from where its origin to final processing the entire chain of custody to where it lands and ends up, you can't just accept something coming in here is the tickets. If they don't track and document where it came from, photo and written, it may not be reimbursed.

Little Calumet River Basin did offer, and it is a good offer for debris removal that they will allow and give communities up front $200,000.00 and once you get reimbursed, they only want back 75%. That is like a 0% interest lone plus. This was sent out to the Stormwater Board, and we are going to see if it is applicable to our tasks as we had ditches blocked with debris on property that the Town owns. Matt did reach out to Dan Repay to express our interest in this opportunity. What most likely will happen is that they will draft up an interlocal agreement and resolution that will come to Stormwater and we will sign it after a board vote. The question is what if we don't get FEMA reimbursement do, we still pay back 75% and even if we must pay back 100%, it is still 0% interest loan. Attorney Meyer said it all depends on the wording of the Agreement, Matt responded that it would go to him for review. This buys you time, you have to pay your contractors right away, this is a no-lose situation. It appears their Board realized it is Little Cals' way of stepping in to help this situation. We need to know parameters and limitations. Matt wants Stormwater to be included as interested and they can pursue it accordingly and we will wait and see what they come back with.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

Attorney Jim Meyer– None

ANNOUNCEMENTS –

Next SWMB meeting is set for Tuesday, **October 6th, 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 4:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Adra Breclaw-Csanyi, Staff Secretary