

# GRANT COUNTY DRAINAGE BOARD

401 South Adams Street  
Marion, Indiana 46953

The Grant County Drainage Board meeting was held February 27, 2024, in the Grant County Council Chambers. Chairman Mark Bardsley called the meeting to order at 11:02 am. Other members present were Vice-Chairman Richard Cox, Gordon Gough, Pat Pinkerton, Grant County Surveyor Jim Todd, and Drainage Board Secretary Mary Weesner. Kenny Cates was present via WebEx.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Richard Cox made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 13, 2024, meeting as presented; seconded by Pat Pinkerton. Motion carried 5-0 with 4 inhouse votes and Kenny Cates voting via WebEx.

## APPROVAL OF CLAIMS:

Jim Todd read the claims as follows:

Chronicle Tribune \$27.72 South Prong of Dry Fork; \$3,858.83 in the fund  
Chronicle Tribune \$30.60 Dry Fork-Peterson Casey; There is no fund

Gordon Gough made a motion to approve the claims as presented; seconded by Pat Pinkerton. Motion carried 5-0 with 4 inhouse votes and Kenny Cates voting via WebEx.

## OLD BUSINESS:

Little Crane Pond

There is nothing new to discuss.

## NEW BUSINESS:

There is no new business to discuss.

## OTHER BUSINESS:

## Echelbarger Zirkle – Public hearing

Jim Todd stated that the Echelbarger Zirkle is currently on a \$10.00 per acre assessment with a rate of \$50.00 per homesite. The Echelbarger Zirkle contains 882 acres. A petition was filed consisting of 209 acres, which is 23.79% of the watershed by holding a public hearing to raise the current rate. Due to the cost of maintaining the drain, the Grant County Drainage Board would like the drain assessed at \$50.00 per acre with a \$100.00 per homesite and a minimum assessment of \$50.00 for a four year collection cap. Jim added that there were two of the homesites that filed an objection with a total acreage of 79.62, which totals a 9% benefited acreage of the watershed. He said that he has talked to the two gentlemen that are at the end of this subdivision. They provided a map showing that in 1992 Bob Rogers tiled all those properties. It now goes to an 8" that goes to the south. Jim said that he explained to Charles Edgington and Max Edgington that they would have to be assessed on the Matthews Ditch, which is also \$50.00 per acre. He added that he feels that both Edgington's should not be on the Echelbarger Zirkle assessment. Jim Todd added that with the proposed rate, this will bring in \$45,249.00 per year. He went on to explain that he has two estimates, one from L&W Excavating for \$477,880.72. L&W has 6366' of smooth-corr and then it downsizes to a 24" and continues to downsize to an 8". The estimate from Scott Rogers of Rogers Farm Drainage for \$427,406.16. Jim added that the solar that has signed up on this one is at the end of the open ditch, stating that if the landowners and the solar company worked it out then that open ditch could be extended to where the 30" is going to go, which would make it a lot cheaper project. The solar water would get away immediately instead of sitting on the ground and saturating the surface. Kenny Cates stated that when this crosses over County Road 100 it goes into the open ditch, that is a stone bottom all the way to Taylor Creek, so you cannot go any deeper. Jim Todd said that he does not have a figure where the tile is going to go, there will need to be some elevations and engineering. Jim Todd added that there will be \$10,000.00 for the engineering from the solar plants, part of that could go the engineer picking out a proper design. Mark Bardsley opened the floor to the public to speak for or against the proposed assessment.

Loretta Graham has approached the Board, reminding them that she has sent a letter of objection. She added that she had questions that she needed answers to, and Jim Todd was very helpful to her. She agrees that the current assessment that brings in around \$45,000.00 annually does nothing but the lack of a plan and time frame concerns her. She said that she understands that as the money comes in, they will do what they can and then have to stop. She feels that will not help people like her that have contributed \$50.00 per acre. Richard Cox explained to her the four year collection, adding that the total fund would need to equal four times its annual assessment before shutting off. If monies are used from the fund and it does not reach the potential shut off, it will continue to collect. She

understands and agrees that there is a drainage problem. She stated that she does realize that the solar farms will be an economic boost for Grant County, but it is not going to serve the purpose for drainage. Mrs. Graham stated that she agrees that the rate needs to be raised. She asked the Board if they have the power to say that any certain property is not suitable for solar, based on the drainage situation; the Board responded that they do not have that power. Mark Bardsley stated that technically the landowners have control, the state has certain guidelines, and by ordinance if they have drainage problems, we may be able to limit it there. Jim Todd said that they have to get approval through the Drainage Board. If there is heavy rain, the panels cause surface water, and the ground becomes saturated; Pat Pinkerton added that it really depends on what the ground cover is under the solar panels. He said that there are a lot of things that effects drains and run off and it all depends on what the design is.

David Devore is now before the Board stating that he would like to speak in favor of this reconstruction. He said that they have mainly talked about the very front part of the ditch, but there are many hundreds of acres as you go south that are also affected. The tile is vastly undersized for the number of acres going into it. Mr. Devore stated that Scott Rogers told him that a 24" should handle 500 acres, but this has almost 900 acres on it. As we go further away from the open ditch, there are serious problems as you go back. As the tile is going through the Zirkle part is quartered, and what used to be a 24' in now about a 20" where it is broken down, it is in terrible shape. This tile is over 100 years old and at some point we are going to have to fix it. Mr. Devore thinks that if we could make an open ditch at the front, that would be an incredible idea. He added that they do have a plan in place, they just need to raise the money. Chairman Mark Bardsley closed the public discussion portion of the meeting. Richard Cox pointed out that the Board did not hear much against the proposed rate. Mark asked Jim Todd about the individuals that have their water going to a different watershed. Jim told Mark that it was Max Edgington and Charles Edgington. They have been in to talk to Jim twice and has brought a map in and their water is being drained to the south to Matthews Ditch. Mark Bardsley stated that it would need a separate motion to remove these parcels from the Echelbarger & Zirkle watershed. Gordon Gough made a motion to approve the proposed maintenance rate to \$50.00 per acre with a \$100.00 per homesite and a minimum assessment of \$50.00 for a four year collection, as advertised. Seconded by Richard Cox. Pat Pinkerton asked if Jim Todd was going to run a level and see if the open ditch is a probability to reduce the overall cost; Jim responded that he could take some ground shots out there. Gordon's motion carried 5-0 with 4 inhouse votes and Kenny Cates voting via WebEx. Richard Cox made a motion to remove both Max Edgington and Charles Edgington from the Echelbarger Zirkle to the Matthews Tile, seconded by Gordon Gough; motion carried 5-0 with 4 inhouse votes and Kenny Cates voting via WebEx.

Jim Todd informed the Board that Chadd Baker of Right of Way Management would like to attend the March 12<sup>th</sup> meeting regarding ditch bank spraying.

**ADJOURN:**

Pat Pinkerton made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:52 am; seconded by Gordon Gough. Motion carried with support, 5-0 with 4 inhouse votes and Kenny Cates voting via WebEx.

The next scheduled Drainage Board meeting to be held will be March 12, 2024, at 11:00 am will be held in the Grant County Council Chambers.

Minutes recorded by:  
Mary R. Weesner  
Drainage Board Secretary

*The Grant County Drainage Board has approved the minutes for February 13, 2024, as presented:*

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**Mark Bardsley**

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**Richard Cox**

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**Gordon Gough**

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**Kenny Cates**

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**Pat Pinkerton**