Minutes

MERRILLVILLE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT BOARD
TUESDAY, APRIL 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 April 7th, 2026, Stormwater Management Board (SWMB) meeting to order at 3:31 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
President Crist led the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL
Members in attendance were, President Bud Crist and Vice President Jim Kendig, two 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: Stormwater received all our equipment except for one.

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

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE REGISTERS APPROVAL
Included in the agenda packet were copies of the Accounts Payable Register from March 10th, 2026, and March 24th, 2026. President Crist entertained a motion for approval Vice President Kendig entered a motion to accept the Accounts Payable Registers from March 10th, 2026, and March 24th, 2026, seconded by Vice President Kendig. No questions asked. A voice vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed with a 2/0 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:

Christopher B. Burke Engineering, LLC Hickory Ridge Flood Control Improvement Phase 3. Professional services from February 01st, 2026, to February 28th, 2026, in the amount due this invoice for $3,680.00 **(VOICE VOTE) –** *Notation, prior ARP Appropriation*). President Crist entertained a motion for approval, Vice President Kendig motioned and it was seconded by President Crist. There was no discussion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed with a 2/0 vote.

STATUS /Updates: Matt Lake

- Hendricks Drainage Analysis – Executive Director Lake said we have plans submitted by VS engineering. Jeff Haw is here from VS for comments and synopsis. Matt looked at the plans and did not have any future concerns or issues and if we need to make minor adjustment during construction given any unforeseen circumstances we can. Jeff explained that Hendricks Street Drainage Analysis was essentially and attempt to resolve drainage issues that were occurring on the west side of Hendricks Street roughly between the Grand Trunk Railroad and Turkey Creek. Those drainage issues have been resolved by re-grading the ditch for pretty much its entire length along the run on the west side and 150 ft on the east side of Hendricks. Then they also resolved a drainage issue that is occurring to the rear of some private yards on the east side as well, that should resolve some ponding issues that were happening in back yards as well. All of that taken together has taken about a year and a half to get through design with the varying pieces involved. At this stage following Matt's approval of the plans last month, they have put together the full bid package front ends and contracts and hope to have the package submitted to Matt and the Town Attorney next week for final review and approval prior to going out to bid.

President Crist asked if the culverts were being changed under the road from east side to west side, Jeff responded no, they are not being touched because they are newer and in great shape, only re-grading the ditch such that those have an easier way to flow. Jeff wanted to be clear that they are not lowering the west side, they are re-grading the ditch so that there is better flow toward the discharge points. Executive Director Lake said we are not conducting reconstruction within seventy-five feet of the regulated drain so that we do not require a permit from the Lake County Surveyors office but will still keep them posted, Jeff said they managed to avoid doing that. Matt noted we may have to contend with the Railroad in that aspect of the area. Jeff said that they are not entering the railroad easement "at all" we are using the existing pipe that was put there as an outlet for the ditch and simply redirecting that drainage toward it in a smoother fashion, Matt said that area drains to Bon Aire Lake.

Jeff had a question for Matt, he asked if he would like VS to apply to Little Calumet River Basing for funding on the project. Matt responded that this was on our Master Plan that has been there and was a project last on the list in terms of what we have done. Matt would like to think about it as there are others he would like to apply for. Matt has not seen something resubmitted after it has been through the process so we will look at our budget and work it out from there.

- Hickory Ridge Flood Control Project – Hickory Ridge, – Executive Director Matt Lake said everything, even without the new pump station being operational yet is working excellent. At this level Matt is impressed with its performance. There were some peripheral improvements made by Dyer Construction around and in the area to improve flow and drainage, especially coming from Cleveland Street. We are just waiting for the pump to be reinstalled and to be tested and at that point the final punch list is very short. We will maintain the pump station and will brand it with our logo. With the rain that we have has it has performed as designed. With the pump being active at that point it is going to supercharge the drainage through there as needed. President Christ stated that we should send a letter to Dyer Construction, they used a lot his time to clean all the way down on through there with no charges to us. Matt said he did a lot of voluntary earth work, grading, and clearing. We should send an appreciation letter from the Town to him.

- 97th and Grand Boulevard Drainage Improvements (DLZ) – It is on the agenda, all the contract documents are in place, we do have a schedule, it is aggressive because we want to get things done quickly. The project has been lingering because the property owner acquisition aspects for the easements and right-of-way acquisition took a while. Little Cal asked us if we were still good and moving forward, we reassured them that yes, we are and gave them the schedule that we will be adhering to, from that standpoint they are satisfied. This is the only project left that we will be getting reimbursement on, we are then caught up. The engineer's estimate has gone up a bit since then just given time and inflation; we will see what the real numbers come in at. The project will be done this summer.

- Stormwater Master Plan – Executive Director Lake said he met with Daren Olsen and Dave Buckly from Christopher Burke on Friday and went through the finalized projects and all the aspects of the plan, so they have all of the rest of the data that they need in order to finish the plan. They asked for the As-builts, Matt provided the 69th and Connecticut drainage details, there were also some key projects identified, some very costly projects that we will have to deal with like replacing a major 60" interceptor line for Turkey Creek and additional regional storage projects. All of these are critical projects. Some of these will be up for consideration that we will be submitting to Little Cal for cost share as they become available and there are some opportunities that we want to take advantage of with new development. We have several strategies that we have to stretch our dollars as much as we can. This will be good to have an updated document. Again, it recaps all the projects that we have completed as well. We are showing extensive progress over the years from all these major capital improvement projects that we have done for retention and conveyance along Kaiser Ditch and Turkey Creek Laterals as well aa many other areas over the years.

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

Matt Lake – Grand Boulevard Ditch Relocation, Merrillville Stormwater Utility Project. Approval to authorization DLZ to advertise and solicit sealed bids. Bid Proposal Packages for this project, including all Contract Documents and Plans and Specification for review and bidding purposes will be made available through DLZ. Approval by the Board authorizing DLZ to proceed with advertising and soliciting sealed bids for this project, with sealed bids to be opened at the next Board meeting with contingent approvals at that time. President Crist entertained a motion for approval Vice President Kendig entered a motion for approval, and it was seconded by President Crist. There were no questions. A voice vote was taken, and the motion unanimously passed with a 2/0 vote.

OTHER BUSINESS
Bud Crist – President Crist commented and asked if Matt notified Best Equipment, we are having some trouble with a piece of equipment (Freight Liner Truck).

Matt Lake – Executive Director Lake said it is the Freightliner portion of the Jet Vac, the transmission/PTO, there is a communication warning light that comes on and it puts the truck into a safe mode, so there is a programming glitch in the new Jet Vac. President Crist said bypass the salesmen and need to go directly to the headquarters of Best. Matt said we want Best Equipment to be liable for everything so they can't point to Freight Liner or some other sub-contractor or some other manufacturer that furnished some of the equipment. Mike had Best Equipment pick it up and they said it was fixed and was delivered back today, Mike tried it out, and said the light was on again so we will have them come out to re-program and resolve. Overall Best Equipment is liable and responsible. I have a request to have the CEO of the company call me to ensure it will be back in service soon.

The lift for the garage is coming tomorrow. Midwest Electric was out earlier today a 220 outlet will be installed to power the lift. The lift will be moveable within the garage. We will store equipment and/or vehicles on and under it. We possibly will also have the John Deere Tractor/Tiger mower delivered tomorrow.

We did get all new computers delivered and installed, including software. Executive Director Lake, said he just had ARC Pro just installed today, ARC/GIS desktop has been discontinued. There is a process now just to purchase software, it took a while to get through ESRI and their purchasing process. An ESRI representative is going to come out and go through training because the GIS software is different from the desktop version. The new software package is a subscription model so we will also look into getting Adobe Pro.

Matt submitted our MS4 Annual Report to Stacy Goodwin for MS4 compliance, she did reply back. No deficiency found, all good. Also, she emailed that she will be doing audits in the region and gave a list of dates as options, Matt selected October. Matt does not mind the audits; he wanted to see how others are doing. It will be for MCMs I & II, public education/outreach, public participation, illicit discharge detection/elimination, MCM 3 and MCM 6 which is good housekeeping for municipal operations.

Matt was at the NISWAG meeting earlier today at Little Cal office in Munster. Some good presentations on aquatic plants, some about the audits and updates, legislative updates that could impact us in terms of stormwater, compliance and the states stormwater quality manual and a few other items.

Matt would like to meet with Karl Cender to initiate a draft fee study and get updated sweeper operational cost data, and data from Michale Griffin regarding the PILOT as well as any additional data that he feels needs to be incorporated into our calculations for projected costs.

Matt also reached out to Karl Cender regarding earned interest on stormwater funds and wanted to get a figure from the last five years. Matt has not heard any official correspondence to date. Karl said that the Town agrees to start getting the utility's earned interest next year and Matt is unsure if that is from that point forward or from some point backward. We have been asking about this for a while. Attorney Meyer said Michael Griffin agreed last year, Matt said he agreed verbally but there wasn't any memo or a document we can reference. Executive Director, Lake recommends getting something official so that we have something in writing that affirms that. Whether they do it from this point forward or they go back a set number of years. Matt is looking for some accountability to ensure all is resolved.

Executive Director Lake inquired about the Baker Tilley Salary Study and when to expect a final draft from the town. We met with some of the Baker Tilley Staff and received preliminary results. I know we can make commitments as a Utility regarding compensation, but he just wanted to get the final report for reference. It seems like the final report should be completed by now.

We have a draft agreement that we will be presenting at the next Board Meeting from SCH, is it just on-call engineering services, very standard, Jim looked at it and they agreed to what you had pointed out. Executive Director Lake just wanted to have them accept all changes and send I back. Then we can have it at our next meeting as an agenda topic to vote on.

President Crist asked Matt to address the topic of street sweeping next year. Executive Director Lake said the Town requested to have us look at taking over the task of street sweeping which we have to figure out financially and how we are going to manage that physically in terms of housing the sweepers, at a separate facility meaning we would have to rent something out for a few years or we add on to our existing building. Matt would also like to emphasize the protocols/SOP to make sure we adhere to those that make sense. The policy that makes perfect logical and logistical sense is the one drafted by our attorney and signed by former Public Works Director/Town Manager Bruce Spires in 2019, it worked for many years. This response was the standard before the signed policy was drafted, we did this for 16 years. It worked just fine, so that if someone calls about ponding the street, they call the street department they would clear the top of the castings. If the structure did not drain down, they would reach out to us to jet within the structure to clear out any internal obstruction. There was a proactive approach to prevent debris from accumulation through proper leaf pickup and clearing castings in the ROW. President Crist said we addressed this on 5/10/2019 so we should stay with that protocol.

Because of SB1 the Town is looking for ways to supplement the General Fund. Matt has presented ideas, including franchise agreements for fiber utilities in town ROWs and selling town-owned properties that have value, but not useful for the town as well as outsourcing select tasks. Matt did reach out to a few companies to look at outsourcing sweeping operations and will assess if this can be done to cover a percent of that task for potential cost-saving opportunities while completing the rest in-house. We currently do this for our detention pond mowing tasks. We can then adjust the ratios as we go, if we feel we need to do more in-house then we get more staffing, if we feel we could do more outsourcing and there are more companies in the area we can outsource more and reduce our liabilities and equipment needs. The first step is going to be the fee study, getting accurate information so we can get that off the ground. Then it is physically looking at how we are going to manage it with staffing and facilities.

Executive Director Lake said we have the MS4 Annual meeting coming up in May and will be attending.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

Attorney Jim Meyer– None

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bud Crist – Next SWMB meeting is set for Tuesday, **May 5th, 2026**, at 3:30 pm at the Stormwater Resource Center. President Crist entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting Vice President Kendig made a motion to adjourn the meeting and President Crist seconded.

ADJOURNMENT TIME –

The meeting was adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Adra Breclaw-Csanyi, Staff Secretary