



Devils Lake Water Improvement District
Work Session via zoom
March 12, 2024

MINUTES

Call to Order

Called to order by Chair Tina French at 5:30 pm

Roll Call

DLWID Directors Present: Tina French, Mitch Moore, Keith Fowler, Keith Fowler, Susan Elworth

Lake Manager: Boone Marker

STAFF REPORT

Harvester Operations

- Estimated Operations
- Contracted Services – NLSS
- Plans for 2024 harvesting, disposal, and timeline

Discussion: Boone asked the board to decide if the district would be taking over operations of the harvester this summer. He estimates cost of \$79,500 for 3 months.

Tina asked if Bill's survey indicated more or fewer weeds this summer. It was stated that the survey is the same as last year. No weeds in winter last winter. Mitch said that the summer survey should reflect what is normally seen in past years. Tina and Mitch said that weeds are not visible at their properties now and observed that not so many weeds last summer than earlier, but maybe because of colder weather in the winter. Recollections were that in May or June, the weeds were rafts, not new growth. Keith said weeds were slow to appear last year due to late snow. If the weather starts warming up earlier, weeds will be visible earlier. Tina thought there was a lot of useability on the lake last summer, unlike the summer before. It was mentioned that using the harvester early is good so that the lake is clear by 4th of July.

Boone said the board shouldn't need any more employees, the crew has been trained. Bill Sexton will add a new hour meter on the harvester, and it was mentioned that he seems to communicate well with Rick (owner of the harvester). Boone said that the board signed into a 3-month contract for each year, with a cost of \$700 / day over the base amount. Tina said she does not want DLWID to own the harvester. Conversation about use of machine vs. time.

Dayton agreed that NLSS could still help with use of equipment and fuel at wholesale rate. Tina would like Boone to schedule the harvester operators. Dayton said that scheduling should be a lot easier this summer, and he is fine to help schedule. It was agreed that a find better way to track yardage harvested is needed. Boone said there is a question about insurance if workers comp not covered by NLSS. There was a question about the capacity to handle payroll, and it was agreed that Cameron could do that. Mitch asked about position descriptions, if these are DLWID employees. Mitch suggested using Chat GTP, listing equipment to be used. Discussion of employees at \$30/hour and use of equipment at \$10/hour.

Tina suggested NLSS do it one more year, but said that Lon is concerned about liability. There was further discussion about reconsidering after this summer.

The big question this year is disposal. Tina said that there was a major weed avalanche on her property, and she cannot accommodate the same volume this year as last year. Discussion about property at the end of Hill Road, very expensive to take to transfer station - \$120/ton. Discussion about alternative locations/methods: the weeds smell for a few days; the piles don't decrease much in height; it would be great soil amendment; could possibly take it at the current disposal site, but it's a drive to dump it. Discussion took place about finding a use for the weeds. Tina suggested Albert Thompson may have space, or pitch it as fertilizer for trees to timber companies. Up Park Lane, past KOA could be some space. Need 2-3 locations with a few acres, with enough space to turn a truck and trailer around. Boone was asked to check Google maps or county geo map to find suitable acreage.

Further discussion included: Green Acres might be interested, maybe Larry Morris' property off Clancy Road, City property in north end or bus area. Nathan Knott has property that might be available. Mitch suggested another method of off-loading. Tina suggested dumping at their property next to the lake, where it could be spread thin. It was mentioned that a conveyor belt is available to use with the harvester. Discussion continued about a place to park equipment closer to the lake, and the need to decide dumping and parking sites. Blue Heron, Tim's, Renee and Craig's property, Wabusha, unloading at Regatta, French's property, Blue Heron, Water Avenue, Wabusha. It was mentioned that a location in the middle of the lake is needed, but not so many weeds there. Mitch asked about the small bay on east side of lake near Loop Drive (3 acres).

Dayton asked about major service on the harvester before it is used again, which could prevent down time in the middle of the summer. Boone was asked to talk to Bill about that, Tina will talk to their shop about scheduling. Machine was down about a month last summer, and it was agreed to try to avoid downtime this summer.

It was agreed that this summer NLSS will keep employees, Boone will do scheduling. Susan said that regardless, the board needs a resolution to continue to use NLSS. Boone asked about no expiration on contract, and that a new resolution may not be needed.

Mitch asked that information about harvesting be reported on the website, and the goal is to get the mass out of the lake. A Facebook post was suggested when harvesting locations change. It was stated that it is hard to project where it will be in the future, but good to report. It was stated that information is more beneficial on Facebook than on website. It was agreed that a really good eye on all points of the lake will help to determine where harvesting is needed.

Boone reported that he met with K&E two weeks ago, and they won't start work until next summer (2025 or 2026). He asked about roll over, since they are already performing in-water work. No discussion with State legislators yet. SDAO should be able to help if RFP needed. Discussion about working with City.

Angela Daniels talked about a needed waiver if city funding. Suggested emergency services funding.

Discussion took place about the need to get to work on looking for funding as soon as possible. \$10,000 for permits can be handled, but project costs could be over \$200,000. Susan suggested grants tied to fish passage, climate change.

2024-25 Budget

- Staffing
- D-River Project

Discussion:

Boone would like to start marina rental, with a reduced rate to register early, and the board agreed to his proposal.

Keith and Tina both will miss Thursday's meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Submitted by Susan Wahlke