

Lake Minnewawa Lake Improvement District (LMLID)

Board of Directors' Meeting

June 26, 2020 10:00 a.m.

Minnewawa Sportsmen's Club

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m. by LMLID President, Cathy Larson. A quorum was confirmed.

Board members present were: James Bradley, Dan Westberg, Pat Rath, Steve Olson, Bruce Patterson, and Cathy Larson. Sue Woodard was absent. Also present was recording secretary, Dora Potts. Several guests were in attendance: Sue Westberg, representing the LMA; Tim Rinowski, from the LMA; and Jeff Johnson.

Meeting Agenda

The agenda for the meeting was presented by Larson. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Bradley and seconded by Westberg. The agenda was approved unanimously.

Status of LMLID Board Member Terms

Sue Woodard's Board Seat

Effective immediately, Sue Woodard has resigned from the board due to health concerns. According to LMLID bylaws, the board has the authority to fill her position for the remainder of its term, which ends in 2021.

Jeff Johnson has expressed interest in serving on the LMLID board and agreed to assume Woodard's position, if requested to do so. It was determined that Johnson meets all LMLID bylaw qualifications for the office.

Bradley noted that another option would be to wait until the August membership meeting and elect someone to fill Woodard's term. Board consensus was to not pursue that option since there was a willing volunteer present who would provide the opportunity to have an additional property owner immediately involved.

Westberg moved that the board accept Johnson's offer and appoint him to fill Woodard's spot. Larson seconded and the motion passed unanimously. Jeff Johnson will serve out Woodard's term on the LMLID Board of Directors, effective immediately.

Upcoming Board Election

At the annual meeting on August 22, two LMLID Board of Directors seats will be up for re-election: those of Cathy Larson and Jim Bradley.

Notification of August 2020 Annual Membership Meeting

The annual membership meeting of the LMLID will be held at the McGregor Community Center on Saturday, August 22, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. Postcard notification will again be mailed to all LMLID members (property owners) at least one month before the meeting. As was the case last year, there is a provision for absentee ballots. The first step in obtaining an absentee ballot is to contact Dan Westberg. His contact information will be on the postcard sent as well as on the LMLID website.

Review of LMLID Newspaper of Record

At the May 2020 LMLID board meeting, the board voted to keep the Voyageur Press as its newspaper of record. However, during the process of contacting this newspaper, it was discovered that the Voyageur Press no longer includes a free community announcement section and that legal notices are no longer free. By LID regulations, announcements of all meetings must be published 2 weeks prior to each meeting and a legal notice of the annual meeting must be published for 4 weeks prior to it. This would bring the cost of publishing the required LMLID meeting announcements in the Voyageur Press to at least \$282.00 per year.

The LMLID consulted with the Aitkin Age about similar costs and was told that short community event ads are free and that the legal ad would cost \$44.76 per year when run for the required 4 weeks.

Dan Westberg brought up the possibility of checking publication fees in an insert, such as the *Bargain Hunter*, which is delivered to all households. While this would provide greater reach to members, the board agreed that inserts may not be read as closely as subscribed-to newspapers, so that would probably not be an effective option.

After discussion, the board agreed to retain the Voyageur Press as its newspaper of record, despite the new costs. Reasons cited were:

- Local residents would tend to look for McGregor area notices in the Voyageur Press more so than in the Aitkin Age and more people probably have access to the Voyageur Press on a weekly basis.
- The additional fees would be supporting a local business that is important to our community.

Since this decision had already been passed at the May meeting, no vote was needed.

Financial Report

Pat Rath presented the financial report. He noted that, since bank statements are received at the end of the month, *official reports* only extend through the end of the previous month, in this case, May 2020. However, additional activity is also presented.

- LMLID checking account balance at the end of May 2020: \$ 16,791.25
- CD maturing August 2020 10,000.00
- CD maturing June 2021 10,000.00

- Deposit from Aitkin County (6/23/20) 18,370.99

Additional note: There were no transactions during the month of May 2020.

Dan Westberg moved to approve the financial report. It was seconded by Bruce Patterson and passed unanimously.

Update on Snails in the Lake

At the last meeting, both Sue Westberg (LMA) and Jim Bradley agreed to procure additional information about the snails that are appearing in the lake and on shorelines.

Westberg reported taking pictures of the Chinese snails and contacting the DNR. The DNR replied that, yes, the snails are considered an invasive species but that the DNR is not presently pursuing any action regarding them. The DNR does not see the snails as a threat when compared to other AIS, such as zebra mussels, which they are actively working to eradicate in several lakes. The DNR's position is that it is up to property owners to remove the snails and possibly compost their remains.

Bradley spoke with Sea Grant of the University of Minnesota and received the following information about the Chinese snails:

- They do carry disease which can be passed on to waterfowl.
- They can eat fish eggs.
- Sea Grant does not presently have any information on the impact of the snails.
- Sea Grant struggles for AIS funding and snails are not currently a top priority.
- Sea Grant has begun a snail impact study in St. Louis County and the popularity of securing information about snails is growing.

Bradley will continue to keep the board informed about this issue.

Dan Westberg reported that there have been studies lasting about 20 years at two other lakes concerning the death of geese and ducks. He also said that previous research had shown that the only way to control snail populations is by using chemicals.

Update from the LMA

Sue Westberg asked Tim Rinowski to give a report on the state of the main lake landing/access (opposite the old Growlers on Route 6). Rinowski stated that the lake bottom at the end of the ramps has become extremely uneven due to the practice of "power-loading." This procedure is not illegal, but it causes great damage to the lake bottom and makes launching and loading more difficult and, perhaps, dangerous. He said that this practice has created "blowholes" on both sides of the ramp which can cause a person walking there to suddenly sink from ankle-deep to chest-deep water in a step or two. The remedy for this is either for the DNR to use a backhoe to even out the bottom or for them to install an additional cement plank at the end of the ramp. Meanwhile, the DNR will post an additional sign at the landing regarding power-loading.

All new cleaning units are now available at the Growlers landing and there is an inspector serving that landing. Sue Westberg reported that the DNR spends a lot of time and effort on Lake Minnewawa.

Sue Westberg also relayed information from LMA treasurer, Robbie Danko, who could not attend the LMLID meeting. The LMA wishes to inform the LMLID of two upcoming expenses:

- The lease for the land used to dump weeds is coming due soon. The payment will be \$1000 but will be good for 10 years.
- Hydraulic fluid needs to be purchased at a cost of \$675. This is not a usual expense, but necessary at this time. The fluid used is lake-friendly in case of any spillage.

The annual LMA Barbecue has been cancelled due to the continuing concern about COVID. In an effort to reach out to property owners and guests in another way, the LMA will be on the lake in several decorated boats on the Fourth of July. They will distribute shirts to kids and other small items to adult boaters.

Open Discussion

Jim Bradley asked about the current status of stocking the lake with fish. Sue Westberg presented the recent stages of this process by the DNR, including electrofishing studies over the past couple of years. Over a million fingerlings were added in 2018. There was no stocking in 2019 or 2020 to give time to evaluate the success of previous stocking events. They will test again in 2021 to check the growth/survival of the Pine River walleye used in 2018. The DNR is not stocking any lake this year due to COVID. The board was reminded of the new limit for keeping walleye (3). The DNR is recommending that the limit for sunfish be lowered in 2021, possibly to 10.

Sue Westberg was asked about the progress on the Weirs Dam. She reported that the dam was still progressing and in the hands of engineers in Duluth at this time. The expected time frame has had to be lengthened due to COVID.

Pat Rath attended a webinar concerning our watershed and reported on a survey being taken by Aitkin County. The county is investigating the culverts in the county with the goal of repairing them and otherwise improving their flow. This can be done by reducing pollution and erosion which assists in the fish flow. There are similar projects in Grand Rapids and Cloquet.

Cathy Larson welcomed Bruce Patterson to the LMLID board. Patterson was elected at the 2019 membership meeting.

Submitted by Dora Potts, as recording secretary
June 28, 2020

Approved by Dan Westberg, LMLID Secretary
June 29, 2020

Approved by Cathy Larson, LMLID President
June 29, 2020