

June 1, 2026

The Wabash County Drainage Board convened at 10:00 a.m. for a regularly scheduled meeting. Board Chairman Jeff Dawes; Board Members Cheryl Ross and Tyler Niccum were present. Others in attendance included: Surveyor, Cheri Slee; Assistant Surveyor, Braden See; Deputy Surveyor Tonya Blair and County Attorney Mark Frantz.

Drainage Board Minutes

Chairman Jeff Dawes initiated the review of the minutes from the May 18, 2026 Drainage Board meeting. Mrs. Ross moved to approve the minutes as written, and Mr. Niccum seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with a 3-0 Board vote.

John Maiden Drain
Reconstruction Hearing

The Surveyor reported that Scott Pier had contacted the office concerning several holes throughout his property. After investigation, it was determined that the John Maiden Drain, Amanda Thomson branch, should be classified as in need of reconstruction. Banning Engineering was contacted and they have prepared the plans and a report. The estimated reconstruction costs total \$80,243.00, which includes a 15% contingency. Additional expenses are loan interest, advertising and engineering fees which brings the total estimated reconstruction cost (that was sent to landowners) to \$111,584.25. The revised watershed contains 513.587 acres which encompasses the open portion and the branches to the northwest. A landowner questioned whether their property could be excluded since they were not benefitted by the reconstruction. She suggested the landowner write a letter of objection but one was never received.

Mrs. Slee stated she had discussed the reconstruction project with Evan Bowman and he would like to present a reconstruction plan that includes the entire branch (upper and lower portion).

Mr. Dawes opened the floor to discussion.

Mr. Pier questioned if the old tile would be destroyed.

Mrs. Slee stated that the old tile will be destroyed except for where it is in the trees he didn't want removed.

Evan Bowman explained that there were four main issues in his opinion with the watershed. Beginning at the upper end south of State Rd 124 there are erosion issues in their field that water comes to a pinch point to get under the highway across to the neighboring property which has created a surface water issue. Second is erosion across other properties. Third issue is the surface water on Scott Pier's property along with the broken outlet. Trees that have grown up along the drain is the fourth issue. He thought the best solution is to establish WASCOS (terraces that slow water down and pull it underground) south of State

Rd 124 on their property. This would take care of the surface water and the erosion. A new outlet and removal of the trees would also be necessary. Incorporating the WASCOS into the plan would require increasing the size of the tile in order to handle the extra water being pulled underground. Instead of the 15"/18" which he agreed is adequate without putting the additional surface water underground, he suggested by his proposed plan, a 21" tile installed at a flatter grade. The flatter grade is the same as the Engineer had recommended for the 15"/18". The slope would be increased as it crosses the highway to the second half of the Pier property. Mr. Bowman stated that the county tile stops before the proposed location of the WASCOS making them private WASCOS. They just need a large enough outlet to drain them adequate a 4" coefficient.

Mrs. Slee asked if the WASCOS are a replacement for a waterway.

Evan replied that a waterway would help with erosion but not the surface water. We just need a large enough outlet to drain the proposed WASCOS.

Mr. Bowman stated that the engineer designed this with limited information concerning his private erosion plan so they did not recognize the erosion and the surface water upstream that needed to be factored into the design. Evan Bowman stated that since they are the primary cost bearer of this project it will be beneficial to them to incorporate reconstruction for the entire branch crossing 124.

Mrs. Slee stated that INDOT will require engineered plans through State Rd 124 which will increase the cost of the project. The State will reimburse 100% of the cost but will also need to notify them ahead of time and that could delay the project for up to a year or so.

Mr. Pier stated that he did not mind waiting as long as the project was done right.

At this point, it was decided the proposed reconstruction plans from Banning Engineering needed to be disregarded and now need to figure out what is needed for the proposed project from Mr. Bowman. The Surveyor noted after completing further research with the engineer it was recommended the 15"/18" tile proposed be upsized to a 24" instead of a 21" upon further review of their plan.

Evan did not think upsizing to the 24" would be beneficial to the project and if he could get the 21" there would be no reason to increase tile size.

Mrs. Slee mentioned that there are also several laterals on Mr. Pier's property that will help with drainage issues once they are repaired.

Mr. Niccum questioned if some of the design plans could be incorporated into a new plan?

Mrs. Slee thought the old plans would have to be thrown out completely and new design plans would be needed to replace it.

Mark Frantz agreed that a new design plan would need to be drawn up with the substantial changes proposed.

Mrs. Slee said she would look into having more surveying completed on the watershed and contact INDOT.

Mr. Niccum motioned to decline the proposed reconstruction design plan from Banning Engineering and start over with a new design. Mrs. Ross second. Motion passed 3-0.

The Surveyor explained that maintenance is now set at \$3.00 acre and \$5.00 minimum. The proposed increase is \$8.00 acre and \$10.00 minimum. The increase is necessary to cover the increased costs of maintaining the open and tile portions of the drain at today's costs. With no objections, Mr. Niccum motioned to approve the increase of maintenance to \$8.00 acre and \$10.00 minimum. Mrs. Ross second. Motion passed 3-0.

Evan Bowman initiated conversation on the cost of the project and increasing the tile size. Discussion was also held on whether to subdivide the watershed.

Present: Kevin & Evan Bowman; Scott & Quentin Pier

Spray 2026 - Update

Mr. See updated the Board on the ditch spraying. The Dalton's brought in an additional crew using a Hummer to help with the spraying and the 2026 maintenance spray cycle has been completed. There have not been any complaints other than a noise complaint which was resolved by Mr. See visiting the homeowner.

Southwood High/Grade School Renovations

The Surveyor stated that she and the Assistant Surveyor did not have a lot of time to review plans for the proposed renovations at Southwood. We are allowed up to 60 days to review plans, but they would like to begin the project (the grade school) as soon as possible. After talking with their engineer and reading the reports she did not see any major issues with the plans. According to the information provided, there will be no more run off than what is existing. She recommended that the Board grant approval for the Southwood High/Grade School renovation plans as presented. Mr. Niccum motioned to approve the Southwood High/Grade School renovation plans contingent on receiving a drainage maintenance plan. Mrs. Ross second. Motion passed 3-0. Board Members signed the approval.

Henry Keaffaber Drain

Mrs. Slee reported that Taylor Smith has finished the leveling on the Henry Keaffaber Drain and the project has been completed. The final invoice will be presented to Board Members once it is received.

Kevin Bowman – Private Drainage Issue

Mr. Bowman stated that he had reviewed the letter from the Army Corp of Engineers lawyer in response to the obstruction removal petition. He was dismayed that in the response Army Corp dismissed that prior to their ownership of the land the drain was not considered a mutual drain. He thought there were several points in the letter that could be disputed. Mr. Frantz stated that since there is no easement or records it's hard to prove that there was consent between landowners of a mutual drain. If the Army Corp challenged the Drainage Board's claim that it is a mutual drain, he would have nothing to back it up to prove it.

Mrs. Slee added that she spoke with Adam Jones from NRCS and anytime they have had drainage that involves Army Corps, they are never allowed access to the property and have to find other routes for drainage.

Mr. Frantz said that finding someone with prior knowledge of prior owners and what was done when could help and without something in writing there isn't anything we can do.

Miscellaneous Drainage business

Building Permits

The Drainage Board agreed at the January 17, 2023 meeting to allow the county surveyor approval to allow for minor impact construction permits meeting the requirements established. The varied requests were for the following; Chris & Pamela Hann, 85-06-27-100-001.000-010, pole barn; Jay & Shelly Reed, 85-12-08-100-004.000-003, tool shed; Doug & Amy Kroft, 85-15-20-200-014.000-007, pole barn; Ian & Eleanor Poston, 85-06-01-400-026.000-012, 3 season room; Greg Moore, 85-11-34-101.-007.000-007 & 85-11-34-101-008.000-007, pole barn; Joshua & Karin Tart, 85-20-18-100-006.000-005, carport & porches; Charles & Tammy Douglas, 85-19-27-403-007.000-006, Joseph Brown; 85-13-11-200-008.000-007, shed & fence; Roy & Cheri Hovermale, 85-15-16-200-013.000-003, shed; Adam & Michelle Holbrook, 85-06-16-300-009.000-012, pool deck & pump house. Mrs. Ross motioned to approve the building permits as presented. Mr. Dawes second. Roll call vote, motion carried 2-0.

Claims

The Board reviewed drainage invoices: Maintenance; Mary Alger #501, \$1,345.00 to Hunter Hauling & Excavating; William Stouffer #644 \$1,285.00 & William Talbert #650, \$1,337.50 to Miller & Son Inc.; Mamie Gretter #564, \$739.83 to Dennis & Sons Excavating; Rebecca Groninger #563, \$2,594.25 to TART Property Services; Mrs. Ross motioned to accept the claims as presented. Mr. Dawes second. Motion passed 2-0.

There being no further business Mrs. Ross made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Dawes seconded the motion. Roll call vote, motion carried 3-0.

Jeff Dawes, Chairman

Cheryl Ross, Vice-Chairman

Tyler Niccum, Member