

October 6, 2025

The Wabash County Drainage Board convened at 10:00 a.m. for a regularly scheduled meeting. Board members Jeff Dawes and Cheryl Ross were present. Others in attendance included: Surveyor, Cheri Slee; Assistant Surveyor, Braden See; Wabash County Highway Superintendent, Ryan Smith; and Assistant Tonya Blair; Joe Miller, Banning Engineering

Drainage Board Minutes

Chairman Tyler Niccum initiated the review of the minutes from the September 15, 2025 Drainage Board meeting. Mr. Dawes moved to approve the minutes as written, and Mrs. Ross seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with a 3-0 Board vote.

Henry Keaffaber Drain # 584 Reconstruction

Mrs. Slee presented four bids that were received for the Henry Keaffaber Reconstruction. Joe Miller, Banning Engineering, was in attendance along with the Surveyor and Assistant Surveyor to open bids on October 2, 2025 (1:30 pm). Mr. Miller reviewed the bids and recommended Smith’s Excavating be awarded the contract since it was the lowest bid at \$228,006.36.

The following bids were received:

Ingram Excavating;	\$280,485.37
Smith’s Excavating LLC;	\$228,006.36
Brainard’s Snow Removal ;	\$560,685.75
Eads & Son Bulldozing, Inc;	\$320,965.00

After review, Mrs. Ross motioned to accept the bid for \$228,006.36 to Smith’s Excavating for the Henry Keaffaber Reconstruction as presented. Mr. Dawes second. Motion passed. Board Members signed the bid acceptance. Bids will be awarded once the performance bond is received.

Mrs. Slee stated she spoke with State Board of Accounts regarding early payments and plans to meet with the county attorney to get his input on the matter.

Staver Eckman Drain #641A Drain Relocation Project

Mrs. Slee presented four bids that were received and opened on October 2, 2025 (1:30) for the Staver Eckman reconstruction project. Joe Miller, the Surveyor and assistant Surveyor were present to open bids. Mr. Miller after review after of the bids, recommended that Board Members consider Ingram Excavating for the Staver Eckman drain relocation project since they were the lowest bid at \$65,481.45.

The following bids were received:

Ingram Excavating;	\$65,481.45
Brainard’s Snow Removal;	\$166,658.00
Eads & Son Bulldozing, Inc.;	\$541,069.04
Smith’s Excavating;	\$76,910.00

After review, Mrs. Ross motioned to accept the Ingram Excavating’s bid at \$65,481.45 for the Staver Eckman reconstruction drain relocation project. Mr. Dawes second. Motion carried. Board Members signed the bid acceptance. Bids will be awarded once the performance bond was received.

The Surveyor noted that she received an appraisal for the additional ROW from Metz & Denney and are still waiting on one from Lundquist Appraisals.

John Maiden Drain

Scott Pier was in attendance and told Board Members that he has had water issues along the John Maiden Drain that runs through his property since he purchased it. While mowing and cleaning up the property he noticed the drain was in poor shape and stated that the previous owner did not maintain the drain by reporting the water problems. He asked if there were any guidelines for him to follow if he repaired the drain on his own. Mrs. Slee stated that since the drain is in the process of reconstruction, she did not recommend any repairs to the drain. The office is in the process of reconstructing the drain. Preliminary information has been sent to Banning Engineering for a design project. There is a large amount water that comes into outlet so it’s important that we get the adequate sizing of the tile so the drain works correctly. Joe Miller asked that the reconstruction process be explained. Mrs. Slee stated that a survey will be completed and then acquire an estimate and specifications from the engineer. A hearing date will be set for the landowners within the watershed and rate per acre will be determined by the Board with schedule of assessments. After the hearing, the Drainage Board will determine if the project is in the best interest of the landowners to move forward with the reconstruction. If the Board deems the reconstruction is necessary, bids will be taken. Landowners will have up to five years to pay and interest will be included in the bank loan. Mr. Pier said his biggest concern was getting the tile fixed and understood the repairs would have to be completed through the reconstruction process. Mr. Miller added that the reconstruction will take care of the sub surface water but there will be times that water will run on the surface. The reconstruction process is normally 4 – 6 months from the start until the hearing.

Present: Scott Pier & Quinten Pier

Thad Reynolds Reconstruction

Mr. See updated Board Members on the Thad Reynolds reconstruction. The 8” county line was installed by Bowman’s and the Office was not notified until after it was completed. Single wall plastic was used instead of smooth core which was addressed in discussions prior to the installation. Mrs. Slee stated this portion of tile comes into the north side of the Osborne property. Records indicate the existing 8” main flows south and easternly onto the Osborne pr exiting to the north east corner of the property. Mr. See noted that the Bowman’s claim that the tile flows the opposite direction of the description. They connected the existing 8” tile from the Osborne property north to the new 21” main that was newly installed. The Office expressed concerns regarding the change in tile flow, and in a previous meeting, Evan Bowman said that if there were any issues regarding the tile and drainage for the Osborn’s in the future he would fix it.

Mrs. Ross asked if we have that in writing. Mr. See replied that Mr. Bowman gave his word but we have nothing in writing. Mrs. Ross inquired if county has a form for this situation. Mrs. Slee suggested it would be a good idea and something we need to work on for future projects like this.

Concerning the open portion of the drain the Surveyor contacted Army Corp and IDEM. Sarah Keller (Army Corp) confirmed that there were no records for any proposed work on the open portion of the drain. Therefore, the Corps did not participate in any meetings, inspections, phone conversations, or review of permit applications for this project. A nationwide Permit 40 would be required and submitted to Army Corps for review. Emersyn Harriman, IDEM, also responded and does not have any record of a permit on their end which they would require. Evan White should be contacting the office as he has been communicating with the landowner previously.

Mr. See noted that when he was onsite to take shots of the laterals and found that taps were installed on each side of a stick (no more than 1 foot apart) but from previous discussions they were to install 1 lateral per stick.

Bachelor Creek Drain

Mrs. Slee stated that the office is in the process of obtaining quotes for log jam removal along the drain. There were no comments or questions from the Board.

County Highway ROW

Mr. Smith explained to the Board that a complaint was filed regarding a damaged pipe on September 30 by a property owner on Co. Rd. 300 East. The pipe was damaged while mowing the side ditch within the county's ROW. Upon investigation the landowners had installed a 6" eds pipe down the ditch approximately (50 feet) and was not buried. It was also discovered that permits were not obtained for the two driveways, one has a culvert and the other does not. It is thought that the 6" pipe is coming from the house. Mr. Smith asked how to proceed. Mrs. Slee stated that the previous superintendent would require the correct size of pipe if the ditch would be filled in and it would then have to be approved by the Commissioners. The Plan Commission director is aware of the situation. After discussion, Mr. Miller suggested that the County could use the existing road cut application for this kind of situation. Mr. Smith stated he would work on the application.

Private pond issue – William Meinert

The Surveyor explained that Mr. Meinart was in attendance and had contacted the office last week concerning the low water level of the pond on his property. Pictures of the pond from 2020 and those recently taken were presented to Board Members. Mr. Meinert was concerned that the Grossnickle Drain (phase 1) reconstruction had something to do with the pond low water level. There was a private drain pipe installed approximately 2017 which helped alleviate basements and crawl spaces in homes close to the pond that were flooding, but there have been no issues since the pipe was installed. A year after the second phase of the Grossnickle reconstruction (phase 2) he noticed the water has never reached the over flow pipe and for the first time in 40 years farmers in the area have been able to farm after the ditch was reconstructed. The landowner claims the low pond level has become a hazard for children and anyone that comes around. Mrs. Slee stated that Blocher's installed laterals which were needed to be able to farm their ground and since the weather has been dry. Mr. Meinert said that even in dry years previous to the reconstruction the water level did not get this low. Mrs. Slee replied that she had no idea what was causing the low water level other than the drought conditions. Mr. Miller mentioned that the gravel pits over by Peru are also low, and since this was a private pond and not a county regulated drain, the Drainage Board would not be responsible for investigating or maintaining the pond issue. Mr. Meinart stated that he just wanted the Board to be aware of the issue.

Present: William Meinert

North Ridge Estates – North Manchester

Mrs. Slee stated that this property was presented years ago for a sub division and was turned down because of the drainage issues. A few years ago, a new plan was presented to the Drainage Board by the Town of North Manchester for review as part of the sub division approval. The drainage plans were sent to Banning Engineering because the town of North Manchester wanted the Drainage Board to review the storm water portion of it. A revised plan was approved by the Board and then emailed to the Town of North Manchester. She noted that Steve Carlisle, the developer, signed the drainage plan approval form which would provide as-built plans along with a 20% bond for maintenance which a copy was never provided to the office. Later the Town approved a replat of the sub division without notifying the office. Since that time, houses have been built in the sub division and now landowners are unhappy because of issues with the project not being completed. Landowners have gone to the Town of North Manchester and the town is telling them to call the Drainage Board.

Mr. Dawes asked if there was a contract with the contractors. Mrs. Slee replied that not that she's been made aware of.

Mrs. Ross asked if the houses were using the town's water and storm sewer system? Mrs. Slee thought they were.

Mr. See mentioned that he saw sewer manholes and hydrants installed within the sub division.

Mr. Miller said that there was an approval at one point, but did not follow the plan. Mrs. Slee said that most (two of three) detention ponds are there but not complete and have not installed the castings or finished the seeding. She and the Assistant Surveyor met with Ian Macfarland who told them that he has addressed the Town of North Manchester about these issues and they keep referring him the Drainage Board. It was her opinion that the Town of North Manchester needs to adopt a stormwater plan and questioned the Town's two mile jurisdiction.

Mr. Miller stated the Town should have a planning department who oversees and enforces the drainage plans in an effective manner and not the responsibility of the Drainage Board.

Mrs. Ross asked if the town plans to annex the sub division. Mrs. Slee thought they were at one time but since there have been issues they have not accepted it. Board Members agreed that this issue should be the responsibility of the Town of North Manchester and that Mrs. Slee contact the County Attorney for further direction.

Miscellaneous Drainage business

Information presented by the Plan Commission for a pond permit for Lexis & Aaron Frahm (85-10-01-300-013.000-010, PT N1/2 E1/2 SW1/4, 1-28-6) was brought before the Board for their consideration. It was noted there was no involvement with any county regulated drains. After review, Mrs. Ross motioned for a favorable recommendation. Mr. Dawes second. Motion passed 3-0.

Building Permits

Building permits meeting the requirements established by the County Drainage Board at the January 17, 2023 meeting to allow the County Surveyor’s approval for minor impact construction were presented to the Board for their acknowledgement. The varied requests were for the following; Lindzy Shepherd, 85-02-20-400-012.000-012, new home; Jones Estates Salamonie, 85-20-05-200-006.000-005, new manufactured home; Ryan Lester, 85-10-03-100-001.000-010, pole barn; Colton & Jill Ringel, 85-11-21-200-005.000-003, old pole barn/porch unpermitted & new pole barn/lean to/porch; Chris & Keri Schultz, 85-10-24-400-014.000-007, pole barn; Micheal & Deborah Dyson, 85-06-16-300-010.000-012, electrical bldg. for grain bins; Travis & Katrina Dyson, 85-06-16-300-001.000-012, home addition/porch; Gregory & Amanda Goodpaster, 85-11-35-200-012.000-003, carport; Alan & Emilie Cook, 85-03-19-300-014.000-001, addition to pole barn; Tim Zumbaugh, 85-10-13-200-015.000-010, inground pool; Mrs. Ross motioned to approve the building permits as presented. Mr. Dawes second. Roll call vote, motion carried 3-0.

(Claims)

The Board reviewed drainage maintenance invoices: Reconstruction: Staver-Eckman #641A, \$2372.50 & Ray Figert #552, \$5410.00 to Banning Engineering; Frank Truss #654, \$1200.00 to Smith’s Excavating; EDIT funds: Staver Eckman #641A, \$600.00 to Metz & Denney.

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

Tyler Niccum, Chairman

Jeff Dawes, Vice-Chairman

Cheryl Ross, Member