

*****MINUTES*****

***Kankakee River Basin and Yellow River Basin Development
Commission***

**Thursday, September 25, 2025
10:00 a.m. CDT/11:00 a.m. EDT
Porter County Commissioners' Chamber
155 Indiana Avenue, Suite 205
Valparaiso, IN 46383**

FOR MEMBERS PARTICIPATING ELECTRONICALLY

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/319606517>

John McNamara, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. CST, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Craig Cultice, Secretary, called the roll.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Members present physically: Craig Cultice, Bill Emerson, Chelsey Gordon, John McNamara, Dick Welsh, Vince Urbano, Todd Huntley (IL)

Approve proxies physically present: Dan Gumz for Bill Crase; Beau Watkins for Rob Churchill

Staff present: Scott Pelath, Executive Director

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 20, 2025, MEETING

Mr. Cultice moved that the Commission approve the June 20, 2025, minutes. Beau Watkins seconded the motion.

Cultice – Y
Emerson – Y
Gordon – Y
Gumz for Crase -- Y
McNamara - Y
Urbano – Y
Watkins for Churchill - Y
Welsh – Y

MOTION ADOPTED.

FINANCE REPORT, CLAIMS, AND CHANGE ORDERS

A written finance report and recent claims were distributed prior to the meeting as part of the formal Executive Director's report [ATTACHMENT 1].

Bill Emerson moved that the Commission approve the finance report and the claims in the amount of \$1,034,511.85. Vince Urbano seconded the motion.

Cultice – Y
Emerson – Y
Gordon – Y
Gumz for Crase -- Y
McNamara - Y
Urbano – Y
Watkins for Churchill - Y
Welsh – Y

MOTION ADOPTED.

Channel maintenance fund augmentation

As stated in is Finance Report, Mr. Pelath explained that the 2025 Channel Maintenance Fund was somewhat underbudgeted in favor of \$200,000 for State Line Bridge site preparation. Since State Line Bridge work is not expected to begin until 2026, Mr. Pelath recommended that \$100,000 be moved from the State Line Bridge preparation line-item to the channel maintenance line-item.

Dick Welsh moved that \$100,000 be moved from State Line Bridge site preparation to the line-item for channel maintenance. Dan Gumz seconded the motion.

Cultice – Y
Emerson – Y
Gordon – Y
Gumz for Crase -- Y
McNamara - Y
Urbano – Y
Watkins for Churchill - Y
Welsh – Y

MOTION ADOPTED.

Accounting contract

Mr. Pelath presented a new contract with Duneland Accounting [ATTACHMENT 2] to continue accounting services to the Commission. He said the current agreement would expire on December 1 and the Commission already exercised its option year. He recommended that the Commission continue to retain Duneland Accounting's services and specifically lauded Stephanie Kuziela for her service to the Commission.

Because it was possible the Commission would not meet again before December 1, Mr. Pelath asked the Commission to approve the contract now in order to avoid risking a break in service.

Mr. Urbano moved that the Commission approve the new, revised agreement with Duneland Accounting. Mr. Emerson seconded the motion.

Cultice – Y
Emerson – Y
Gordon – Y
Gumz for Crase -- Y
McNamara - Y
Urbano – Y
Watkins for Churchill - Y
Welsh – Y

MOTION ADOPTED.

OLD BUSINESS

Jasper County bank stabilization

Mr. Pelath and Mr. Urbano reported on the status of the project. Final placement of top soil, seed, and straw blanketing is expected to be at the end of September and conclude in early October.

Kankakee FWA water control structure redesign

Mr. Pelath conveyed that survey work and an analysis of levee boarings to support the design are the next steps.

State Line Bridge relocation

According to Mr. Pelath, the Commission has received its DNR permit. Although the IDEM permit was expected soon, he cautioned that the Corps of Engineers would entail an historic review process.

Newton County bank reconstruction

Mr. Pelath presented Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Recommendation 2-2025 [ATTACHMENT 3] regarding proposed bank stabilization in Newton County.

Mr. Urbano moved that the Commission adopt TAC Recommendation 2-2025 as Commission policy. Mr. Watkins seconded the motion.

Cultice – Y
Emerson – Y
Gordon – Y
Gumz for Crase -- Y
McNamara - Y
Urbano – Y
Watkins for Churchill - Y
Welsh – Y

MOTION ADOPTED.

Yellow River Reconstruction, Phase III

Mr. Pelath announced that major work on the Phase III project is substantially complete and that he was pleased with the early results.

Yellow River Reconstruction, Phase IV design

Mr. Pelath updated the Commission on the status of permits. He said the USACE permit would take the longest to obtain, but that the project remained on pace to begin next year.

Island repurposing pilot project

Mike Novotney of Wessler Engineering reported that Keil and Associates were completing survey work. He said the next step would be to complete design work sufficient to initiate permit applications.

Personnel committee recommendations

Mr. Emerson said he had distributed a proposed agreement with the director to the members for review. He said he hoped to recommend a final product at the next meeting.

River gauges

Mr. Pelath reminded the Commission that before the end of the year, he expected to present a new contract with the US Geological Survey to continue all of the Commission's current river gauges. He said he expects any cost increased to be small and certainly less than originally expected.

NEW BUSINESS

Bank stabilization within the City of Plymouth

Mr. Pelath presented TAC Recommendation 1-2025 [ATTACHMENT 4] regarding bank stabilization within the City of Plymouth.

Mr. Urbano moved that the Commission adopt TAC Recommendation 1-2025 as Commission policy. Chelsey Gordon seconded the motion.

Cultice – Y

Emerson – Y

Gordon – Y

Gumz for Crase -- Y

McNamara - Y

Urbano – Y

Watkins for Churchill - Y

Welsh – Y

MOTION ADOPTED.

Specific locations in need of remedial bank repair

Mr. Pelath encouraged public and member reports of potential bank repair locations.

Maintenance priorities for existing sediment traps

Mr. Pelath presented TAC Recommendation 4-2025 [ATTACHMENT 5] regarding sediment trap maintenance.

Mr. Emerson moved that the Commission adopt TAC Recommendation 4-2025 as Commission policy. Mr. Welsh seconded the motion.

Cultice – Y

Emerson – Y

Gordon – Y

Gumz for Crase -- Y

McNamara - Y

Urbano – Y

Watkins for Churchill - Y

Welsh – Y

MOTION ADOPTED.

Areas in need of access maintenance and construction

Mr. Pelath encouraged public and member reports of access maintenance needs but specifically mentioned the Lake County bank across from DNR's Blackberry Marsh as an intended priority.

Flood response plans/State Disaster Relief Fund

Mr. Pelath presented Draft Resolution 3-2025 [ATTACHMENT 6] assigning the topic of flood response planning to the Technical Advisory Committee.

Mr. Cultice moved that the Commission adopt TAC Recommendation 1-2025 as Commission policy. Chelsey Gordon seconded the motion.

Cultice – Y

Emerson – Y

Gordon – Y

Gumz for Crase -- Y

McNamara - Y

Urbano – Y

Watkins for Churchill - Y

Welsh – Y

MOTION ADOPTED.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Pelath gave a formal PowerPoint presentation [ATTACHMENT 7].

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Urbano updated the Commission on the efforts of Jasper County trail advocates to establish non-motorized boat launch on the Kankakee River.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

NEXT MEETING

To be determined.

ADJOURNMENT

The Commission adjourned at 11:03 a.m. CST.

THIS MEETING MAY BE VIEWED ONLINE AT:

<https://transcripts.gotomeeting.com/#/s/8b5cd76a3b55f0bd3d68a76d1d77c82b27b0f2eb053e8dd097bdc86c1f4f190b>

APPROVED BY COMMISSION DECEMBER 15, 2025

Signed by:

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Secretary

12/15/2025

Craig Cultice