

1 EAST CHICAGO WATERWAY MANAGEMENT
2 DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
3 CITY OF EAST CHICAGO, ENGINEERING/ANNEX BUILDING
4 4444 RAILROAD AVENUE
5 EAST CHICAGO, INDIANA
6 September 18, 2025
7 THURSDAY 5:00 P.M.

8
9 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS had in the
10 above-entitled matter on the 18th day of September 2025
11 at 5:00 p.m. held at the City of East Chicago
12 Engineering/Annex Building, 4444 Railroad Avenue, East
13 Chicago, Indiana.

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A P P E A R A N C E

MR. JOHN FEKETE, PRESIDENT

MR. JOHN BAKOTA, BOARD MEMBER

MR. HENRY RODRIGUEZ, BOARD MEMBER

MR. RAY LOPEZ, BOARD MEMBER

Mr. Jalan Robinson, Board Member

MR. FERNANDO TREVINO, FMT CONSULTING

MS. ELLEN GREGORY, ELLEN GREGORY LAW

ALSO PRESENT:

MS. VANESSA VARGAS, CLA

MR. VAUGHAN COOLMAN, ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

MS. CAROL NEESON, PROJECT MANAGER OF TETRA TECH

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. FEKETE: I'd like to call to order of the
3 East Chicago Waterway Management District Board
4 Meeting, Board members, Director's regular Public Board
5 Meeting. Today's date is September 18, 2025. And the
6 time is 5:04 p.m. Before business, is a roll call.

7 MR. FEKETE: Jalan Robinson?

8 MR. ROBINSON: Here.

9 MR. FEKETE: John Bakota?

10 MR. BAKOTA: Here.

11 MR. FEKETE: Henry Rodriguez?

12 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Here.

13 MR. FEKETE: Ray Lopez?

14 MR. LOPEZ: Here.

15 MR. FEKETE: John Fekete, here. We have a
16 quorum.

17 Next order of business is the Executive
18 Director's Report. Mr. Trevino?

19 MR. TREVINO: Yes. Fernando Trevino with FMT
20 Consulting would like to start off by going over the
21 contents of your Board packet. One second. Let me
22 borrow your Board packet. Oh, there's one. I just
23 texted one. Yeah, I saw that. Ray, can I use your
24 Board packet real quick?

1 MR. LOPEZ: What?

2 MR. TREVINO: The Board packet.

3 MR. LOPEZ: Yeah.

4 MR. FEKETE: All right.

5 MR. TREVINO: You have a copy of today's
6 Board meeting agenda. You have a copy of the public
7 meeting notice that was sent out for today's meeting.

8 You have First Merchants Bank statement for
9 account ending in 608 and 616. You have a copy of
10 Claim Docket today's date.

11 You have a copy of BMO Trust Report dated
12 August 31, 2025, and copy of the CDs that are being
13 held at BMO as well.

14 You have a copy of the FMT Consulting Inc.
15 2025 additional hours approval level that is dated
16 September 18th.

17 You have a copy of Tetra Tech's monthly
18 Progress Report dated September 12th.

19 And you have a copy of Attorney Ellen
20 Gregory's report to the Board with a revision date of
21 September 16th.

22 And last but not least, you have a copy of
23 the U.S. Army Corps report to the Board dated
24 September 18, 2025.

1 And I also have since shared with you the
2 CliftonLarsonAllen financial statement dated August 31,
3 2025, which was emailed earlier today and hard copies
4 provided at today's meeting.

5 To go over a couple items in my report,
6 regarding action items on today's agenda, you have the
7 two routine monthly action items, the Board minutes for
8 August 21st and the monthly Claim Docket. And you
9 have a third item is the FMT Consulting, Inc.,
10 additional hours approval for calendar year 2025.

11 On another update, I have had a couple
12 meetings with AECOM and Moreno from the City Planning
13 Department to work on an economic and recreational
14 development presentation. And I'm expecting to have
15 the presentation finalized by the next Board meeting,
16 which I'm hoping we'll be able to share with the Board.

17 Regarding finances next month, they plan to
18 submit the District's 2026 Operating budget for Board
19 approval consideration. Regarding the 2025 User Fees,
20 that work is ongoing. Tetra Tech recently completed
21 their 90% design. So I plan to use those quantities
22 and costs on the 2025 Communicator.

23 I've also received comments from the Army
24 Corps on the Communicator and I should be getting the

1 EPA comments any day soon. And then my plan is to
2 submit the User Fee packet no later than the end of
3 this month.

4 Regarding the Great Lakes Legacy Act project,
5 the design for the South Tank Barrier Wall Groundwater
6 Management System is ongoing. ARBP has reported that
7 the design is at 60%.

8 Regarding the Lake George Canal east section,
9 the Corps is managing that part of the project and work
10 on the dredging design is ongoing. Phase II of the
11 Lake George Canal East dredging is scheduled to be done
12 in 2026.

13 The Cleveland Cliff SEP dredging is now
14 forecasted to be done in 2027.

15 Regarding the lake George Canal Middle CAP
16 project, the Army Corps of Engineers is managing that
17 part of the project as well. The CAP project has been
18 completed and ECO Construction activities are
19 periodically ongoing. The latest observations of the
20 constructed CAP indicate that the CAP is not
21 effectively containing sediment oil as intended. In
22 response, the project team is developing an adaptive
23 management plan to evaluate and address the CAPS
24 containment issues.

1 The Corps recently circulated a draft of this
2 plan for review and I submitted the District's comments
3 on Monday, September 15th.

4 Regarding the Lake George Canal West
5 Remediation Project. That work is ongoing. And that
6 project is between BP and EPA. Based on the latest
7 site characterization data of that section of the
8 waterway, BP recommended that no further action is
9 necessary.

10 The Corps and EPA continued to assess BPs no
11 further action recommendation, which will include
12 additional sampling.

13 Regarding the Grand Cal River Junction
14 Reaches Remediation Project, Tetra Tech continues to
15 work under remedial remediation design. As I
16 mentioned, they just completed the 90% design and that
17 was submitted for project team review. We continue to
18 meet weekly to review remedial design issues. Property
19 access coordination, coordination with the Junction
20 Marsh, the former City Dump, the Marquette Trail. EPA
21 recently informed us that they have changed their
22 policies on signing permit applications, manifests and
23 access agreements. So I'll be working with EPA, Tetra
24 Tech and Attorney Gregory on how to best manage that

1 change.

2 As far as schedule goes, in 2025 we're
3 forecasting to complete the remedial design and project
4 agreement. The District recently submitted to EPA a
5 proposed updated draft of the project agreement for the
6 Grand Cal River Junction Reaches. And I plan to submit
7 a draft of the Statement of Work sometime next week.

8 Also in 2025, we're forecasting to start the
9 construction solicitation process with the construction
10 starting in 2026 and is expected to go through 2027.
11 Tetra Tech Project Manager, Carol Neeson, is in
12 attendance today and will provide additional updates
13 later on the agenda.

14 Regarding the Great Lakes Legacy Work in kind
15 Reporting, on August 29th I submitted the District's
16 Work in Kind report for the first half of this year,
17 which includes a period of January 1st through the end
18 of June. ARBP recently submitted their 2025 semiannual
19 report as well. And we have not received any written
20 feedback on the District's 2024 Annual Working Time
21 Report, which was submitted March 31st of this year.

22 Also, I've been working with the City on
23 gathering scope and cost documentation for the City's
24 combined sewer overflow project and the City Dump

1 project to present that to EPA for cost share
2 consideration.

3 Regarding the Omnibus Project Agreement, the
4 Board might recall that we agreed to pause the
5 mediation process with ARBP as we pursue the Omnibus
6 Project Agreement. The Omnibus Project Agreement scope
7 of work includes the Grand Cal River Junction Reaches
8 and certain areas of the Lake George Canal.

9 Recently, EPA submitted for team review a
10 draft of the Omnibus PA and the Statement of Work. We
11 plan to meet internally next week to review EPA's draft
12 and I should have an updated report on how that effort
13 is progressing at our October Board meeting.

14 Our preference is to go the Omnibus Project
15 Agreement route because it includes a lot broader scope
16 of our waterways. But if that doesn't work out, we'll
17 have the Grand Cal River Project Agreement ready to go.

18 Regarding the former Canal Street Bridge, the
19 Corps has scheduled periodic stakeholder meetings to
20 address the sinkhole that was discovered near the
21 former Canal Street Bridge and that work on resolving
22 the issue remains ongoing.

23 No updates on the Old Cline Avenue Bridge
24 demolition project.

1 Regarding the Corps work, that report is in
2 your Board packet and Project Manager, Vaughn Coolman,
3 is in attendance today and will be providing an update
4 to the Board. And Attorney Ellen Gregory will give an
5 update on various legal matters. That concludes my
6 report.

7 MR. FEKETE: Any questions for Mr. Trevino?
8 No.

9 MR. LOPEZ: Yes, I've got a question. You
10 mentioned something about the CAP leaking or something?

11 MR. TREVINO: Yes.

12 MR. LOPEZ: This is the first I've heard
13 about it. What are you taking about?

14 MR. TREVINO: So part of the remediation
15 construction of the work that was going on was to CAP
16 the Lake George Canal middle, which is --

17 MR. LOPEZ: Lake George?

18 MR. TREVINO: Yeah. Which is mostly in
19 Hammond. But the current observations are that the CAP
20 is not containing the oil as intended. So they put
21 together an adaptive Management Plan which basically
22 tries to pinpoint what's the source of that oil. Is it
23 coming from underneath? Is it coming from the banks?
24 Is it coming from Lake George Canal East, you know,

1 depending on prevailing winds. So there's a lot of
2 potential sources. And then the other possibility was
3 that the CAP wasn't constructed properly. So they're
4 evaluating that as well.

5 MR. LOPEZ: That's on the Hammond side?

6 MR. TREVINO: Yeah. It's 90% in Hammond.
7 There's a small portion that's on the east track site.

8 MR. FEKETE: Yeah. The small portion is kind
9 of in between the land bridge and the trail, right?
10 It's about halfway in between.

11 MR. TREVINO: Yeah. It's maybe 100, 200 feet
12 west of the railroad bridge.

13 MR. BAKOTA: But the waterway's still
14 connected. Oh, yeah.

15 MR. TREVINO: Right.

16 MR. BAKOTA: That oil film you see by the
17 bridge could actually be coming from the Hammond side,
18 right?

19 MR. TREVINO: It could be. And some of the
20 oil can be migrating from the east side as well to the
21 west. But that's what this Adaptive Management Plan is
22 intended to do is to try to pinpoint where the source
23 of this oil is coming from.

24 MR. FEKETE: Any other questions?

1 (NO RESPONSE)

2 MR. FEKETE: Thank you. Next order of
3 business is the approval consideration of the Board
4 meeting notes for our last meeting, which was
5 August 21, 2025. Motion to approve?

6 MR. LOPEZ: Second.

7 MR. FEKETE: We have a motion and a second.
8 All in favor signify by saying "aye".

9 (A CHORUS OF AYES)

10 MR. FEKETE: Any abstentions or objections?

11 (NO RESPONSE)

12 MR. FEKETE: Hearing none, the motion is
13 approved. The Accountant Consulting Report.

14 MS. VARGAS: Hi, everyone. Can you hear me
15 okay?

16 MR. FEKETE: Yep.

17 MS. VARGAS: All right. Vanessa Vargas with
18 CLA. In front of you, you have a copy of the financial
19 statements on a cash basis dated August 31, 2025. If
20 you turn to Page 2, we will begin with the statement of
21 cash receipts and cash disbursements for the eight
22 months ended August 31, 2025. You've received interest
23 income in the amount of \$344,409.94 and had a trust
24 transfer in the amount of \$7,437.30, bringing your

1 total receipts to \$351,847.24.

2 Your total cash disbursements has been
3 \$507,165.85. This brings you to a decrease in cash in
4 the amount of \$155,318.61.

5 You began the year with a cash balance on
6 January 1, 2025 in the amount of \$14,760,488.82. Your
7 cash balance as of August 31, 2025 is \$14,605,170.21.

8 If you turn to Page 3, we will continue with
9 the schedule of cash account activity for the eight
10 months ended August 31, 2025. Your Operating account
11 began the year with the cash balance on January 1st in
12 the amount of \$892,511.65. Your total deposits have
13 totaled \$1,013,419.28. Your cash disbursements have
14 totaled \$507,415.95, which brings your Operating cash
15 balance as of August 31, 2025 to \$1,398,514.98.

16 Your User Fee account began the year with a
17 cash balance on January 1, 2025 in the amount of
18 \$13,867,977.17. You've earned interest in the amount
19 of \$192,362.10 as well as had cash disbursements of the
20 purchase of CDs of \$11,500,000, bank fees of \$50, and a
21 budget transfer in the amount of \$974,643.53 bringing
22 your User Free account balance as of August 31st to
23 \$1,585,645.74.

24 You began the year with no CDs, but did

1 purchase CDs in the amount of \$11,500,000 which have
2 earned you interest of \$121,009.49. This brings your
3 CD balance as of August 31, 2025 to \$11,621,009.49.

4 If you turn to Page 4, we will continue with
5 the schedule of 2025 available budget as of
6 September 18th, 2025. Your 2025 budget appropriation
7 totaled \$1,718,525. Adding back in accounts payable
8 dated 12-31-2024 in the amount of \$61,067.48 as well as
9 the budget amendment totaling \$95,000 brings your 2025
10 total appropriation to \$1,874,592.48.

11 Cash disbursements for the eight months ended
12 August 2025 totaled \$507,115.85. In front of you, you
13 have a Claims Docket dated September 18, 2025 in the
14 amount of \$51,312.64, which brings your unused budget
15 for 2025 to \$1,316,163.99. Are there any questions?

16 MR. LOPEZ: Thank you.

17 MR. FEKETE: Thank you, Vanessa. Job well
18 done.

19 The next order of our business is an approval
20 consideration for the accounts payable voucher register
21 dated September 21, 2025.

22 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Make a motion to approve?

23 MR. FEKETE: Is that a second?

24 MR. ROBINSON: Second.

1 MR. FEKETE: We have a second. Have a roll
2 call vote.

3 MR. FEKETE: Jalan Robinson?

4 MR. ROBINSON: Yes.

5 MR. FEKETE: John Bakota?

6 MR. BAKOTA: Yes.

7 MR. FEKETE: Henry Rodriguez?

8 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

9 MR. FEKETE: Ray Lopez?

10 MR. LOPEZ: Yes.

11 MR. FEKETE: John Fekete. Yes. That motion
12 is approved.

13 Next up is the approval consideration for the
14 FMT Consulting Incorporated 2025 additional hours memo.

15 MR. LOPEZ: Motion to approve?

16 MR. ROBINSON: Second.

17 MR. FEKETE: And a second. Roll call vote.
18 Jalan Robinson?

19 MR. ROBINSON: Yes.

20 MR. FEKETE: John Bakota?

21 MR. BAKOTA: Yes.

22 MR. FEKETE: Henry Rodriguez?

23 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes.

24 MR. FEKETE: Ray Lopez?

1 MR. LOPEZ: Yes.

2 MR. FEKETE: John Fekete, yes. That motion
3 is approved.

4 Great Lakes Legacy Act Grand Cal River
5 Junction Reaches budget update.

6 MR. TREVINO: You with us, Carol?

7 MS. NEESON: Hi. Yes. Good evening,
8 everyone. Here's the design update from Tetra Tech.
9 We completed the 90% design and we addressed the
10 comments on the preliminary design from the Army Corps
11 and EPA. We submitted the response to comments
12 document, the 90% design with the drawings and the
13 specifications. And we also prepared a very detailed
14 cost estimate for the project.

15 Currently, we are awaiting review by EPA and
16 East Chicago. And we completed the modeling of the
17 rivers to find out if there's going to be flooding.
18 And unfortunately we see that we do need to make a few
19 design changes because of potential flooding in IHC.
20 So questions?

21 MR. FEKETE: Thank you, Carol.

22 Next order of business is the U.S. Army Corps
23 of Engineering Board Report.

24 MR. COOLMAN: Hello.

1 MR. FEKETE: Hello.

2 MR. COOLMAN: How's everyone doing today? I
3 feel like it's been a while. For the CDF Construction
4 we'll skip to B. We're still working on some documents
5 and things to get that closed out. And for the
6 Wastewater Treatment Plant, they are mobilizing,
7 assembling that right now as we speak. I was there
8 earlier this week and they are out there working. And
9 so as soon as they have that fully set up, then they'll
10 start treating water. That looks like it's probably
11 going to be mid October or late October.

12 For the dredging, we have a bid opening for
13 the upcoming dredging contract on September 29th. And
14 so the solicitation period is currently open for that.
15 And the results from sediment sampling and the borings,
16 we use those to help inform us on the plans and specs
17 for that contract. And I think we had mentioned before
18 that we had the team up here from ERDC and the Dredging
19 Operation Technical Support Center and the University
20 of Florida with support from some of our personnel.
21 And we did some sonar readings, free vault penetrometer
22 tests and some more sampling to see if we can start to
23 really identify some of the different layers and how
24 far they go, how deep they go, different things, so

1 that we can continue to work with the dredging
2 contractors so that they don't run into unexpected
3 spots and then possibly leave high spots there in the
4 canal somewhere.

5 And we don't have all the results on that,
6 but they should be forthcoming pretty soon. I got an
7 email not too long ago from the guy at the dredging.
8 Operation Technical Support Center.

9 The oil boom coordination is working as
10 planned right now. And we are still inspecting and
11 maintaining the parkway. Any questions?

12 MR. FEKETE: I have a question.

13 MR. COOLMAN: Sure.

14 MR. FEKETE: Just kind of, of interest. Are
15 we, for the most part, basically into maintenance
16 dredging?

17 MR. COOLMAN: Yes. We have cleared the
18 original backlog of however --

19 MR. FEKETE: Navigation.

20 COURT REPORTER: Yeah. I can only take one
21 voice at a time.

22 MR. FEKETE: Do you want me to repeat the
23 question?

24 COURT REPORTER: Yes.

1 MR. FEKETE: I'll be happy to. Are we
2 basically in what could be considered maintenance
3 dredging?

4 MR. COOLMAN: Yes. We had cleared the
5 previous backlog from all those years of no dredging.
6 And we have pretty much cleared any of the buildup
7 during the construction of the dike raises three to
8 four years.

9 MR. FEKETE: I think that's an important
10 distinction, to be honest with you, because when we
11 first started this project is we have to clean out the
12 canal and waterway. And then after we do all of that,
13 then the CDF is basically good for another 30 years of
14 maintenance dredging. So we're in that phase. So then
15 if I see people that I know that were involved or
16 interested in this particular project, I can make that
17 statement. Thank you.

18 MR. COOLMAN: You're welcome. No other
19 questions?

20 (NO RESPONSE)

21 MR. FEKETE: All right. Attorney Ellen
22 Gregory's Report.

23 MS. GREGORY: Yes. Ellen Gregory with Ellen
24 Gregory Law. As Mr. Trevino mentioned, we are

1 continuing to move forward on the Great Lakes Legacy
2 Act projects using on a parallel path, the lean
3 omnibus, which will include the Grand Cal River
4 Junction Reaches as well as the Lake George Canal,
5 other Lake George Canal work. And proceeding with the
6 Grand Cal Junction -- River Junction Reaches. Separate
7 PA and Statement of Work to make sure that we are
8 prepared to move forward on that separately if the
9 omnibus, lean Omnibus PA negotiations don't end up
10 working out.

11 Another matter, I was looking through my
12 Board, my regular Board Report, and was reviewing my
13 section, my Board Report that deals with the Indiana
14 State Public Retirement System. As a reminder, in
15 2016, we had considered withdrawing from that program,
16 but realized that it was going to cost the District
17 close to \$9,000 to do so. So we elected not to
18 withdraw from the program. And because of that, we
19 needed to assign an authorized agent to be available to
20 respond to any matters that related to in pers, what
21 it's referred to.

22 And at that time, we appointed
23 CliftonLarsonAllen as the authorized agent. But on the
24 paperwork at the time, Tim Anderson was the person

1 named as the individual contact. So we're going to
2 need to probably work with CliftonLarsonAllen to
3 appoint somebody else, since Tim Anderson is no longer
4 at CliftonLarsonAllen or helping us. So Mr. Trevino
5 and I will be communicating with CliftonLarsonAllen and
6 doing whatever additional submissions are necessary.

7 And at this time, I'd recommend that the
8 Board pass a motion to give Mr. Trevino and myself a --
9 authority to make whatever submissions would be
10 required. It will probably be something very minor.
11 As I said, the authorized agent is the company,
12 CliftonLarsonAllen. The only thing we're going to be
13 changing is the individual contact person at
14 CliftonLarsonAllen.

15 So I'd recommend that a motion be passed
16 regarding that.

17 MR. FEKETE: Entertain a motion.

18 MR. LOPEZ: I second it.

19 MR. ROBINSON: Second.

20 MR. FEKETE: Okay. All those in favor
21 signify by saying "aye".

22 (A CHORUS OF AYES)

23

24 MR. FEKETE: Any opposition? Objections?

1 (NO RESPONSE)

2 MR. FEKETE: Hearing none, the motion is
3 approved.

4 MS. GREGORY: Thank you. One last item. Ray
5 Lopez had asked me to research whether or not he would
6 be allowed to use a rubber stamp for his signature on
7 documents. I'm going to be looking into the Indiana
8 law on that and hope to have an answer at the next
9 Board meeting. And if there are any, you know,
10 documents or policy changes that we'll need to make, I
11 will be prepared to make a recommendation to the Board
12 at that time. And that's all I have for today.

13 MR. FEKETE: Okay. Thank you. Any other new
14 business to come before the Board? Any announcements,
15 any public comments?

16 (NO RESPONSE)

17 MR. FEKETE: The next Board meeting is
18 October 16, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. in this facility. I'll
19 entertain a Motion to Adjourn.

20 MR. BAKOTA: Motion to adjourn?

21 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Second.

22 MR. FEKETE: Second. All those in favor
23 signify by saying "aye". Any objections?

24 (NO RESPONSE)

1 MR. FEKETE: Hearing none, motion is
2 approved. Thank you.

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(WHEREUPON the meeting was
adjourned at 5:37 p.m.)

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1 STATE OF INDIANA)

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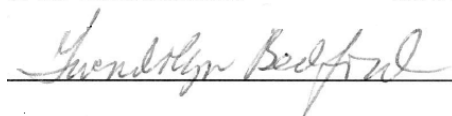
3 COUNTY OF LAKE)

4
5 C E R T I F I C A T E

6
7 The within and foregoing meeting was taken
8 before GWENDOLYN BEDFORD, Certified Shorthand Reporter
9 in the City of Gary, County of Lake and State of
10 Indiana.

11 The undersigned is not interested in the
12 within meeting, nor of kin or counsel to any of the
13 members.

14 IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
15 hand this 18th day of September, 2025.

16 
17

GWENDOLYN BEDFORD, C.S.R.

No. 084-003700