

Pigeon Creek Watershed (PCWDC)
Minutes
December 19, 2024
Stringtown Library
10:30 am

Attendees:

Commissioners Linda Freeman, Karan Barnhill, Cheryl Musgrave, Kristi Johnson, and Craig Emig, legal counsel. See attached list for guests.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:30 am.

Action Items:

Approval of Previous Minutes: The motion to approve the minutes was made by Karan Barnhill, seconded by Kristi Johnson, and adopted unanimously.

Levy of Special Assessments for PCWDC for 2025: The motion to approve the maximum assessment provided by statute, excluding all parcels assessed for legal drain fees, was made by Cheryl Musgrave, seconded by Karan Barnhill, and adopted unanimously.

Discussion Points:

1. Statutory Maximum Rates:

The following statutory maximum rates were adopted:

- Agricultural: \$1 per acre
- Unimproved Commercial: \$2 per acre
- Improved Commercial: \$50 per parcel
- Residential: \$7 per parcel
- Industrial/Utility: \$360 per parcel

The assessment is anticipated to commence in 2025. The Surveyor/Chair will provide a list of parcels to the Vanderburgh County Auditor within one week, at which point a final revenue total will be available.

2. Watershed Partnerships:

It was noted that the Watershed operates independently from other governmental entities. To facilitate collaboration, Interlocal Agreements will be necessary with relevant agencies.

1. The Watershed expressed interest in partnering with the Vanderburgh County Drainage Board and other entities on Pigeon Creek projects.

2025 Budget Proposal: The motion to approve the 2025 Budget was made by Kristi Johnson, seconded by Cheryl Musgrave, and adopted unanimously. The budget is as follows:

2025 Watershed Budget

Administrative

Accounting Contract	\$	40,000.00
State Board of Accounts	\$	5,000.00
Office, Copying, Postage	\$	1,000.00
Board member and staff bonding	\$	750.00
Legal	\$	15,000.00
Meeting Expenses	\$	500.00
Legal Advertising	\$	500.00
Executive Director	\$	75,000.00
Payroll Taxes (FICA)	\$	5,737.50
Workers Comp	\$	750.00
Health Insurance	\$	37,000.00
PERF	\$	8,400.00
Long term disability	\$	4,500.00
Unemployment insurance	\$	2,250.00
Board Member stipend	\$	420.00
Hardware and Software	\$	5,000.00
Rent	\$	-
Telephone	\$	600.00
Mileage/Travel	\$	7,500.00

Projects

Contractual Services for Work Plan	\$	100,000.00
Water Projects	\$	156,040.81
Land purchases	\$	100,000.00
Logjam management	\$	135,000.00
Forestry Management	\$	50,000.00
Repay County Commission loan		
Reserve	\$	72,790.00

Discussion Points:

1. Revenue is estimated at \$818,238.31, including funds made available by the Vanderburgh County Commissioners. This number will be reduced when the final parcel list is completed by the Vanderburgh County Surveyor. The list will exclude any parcel currently assessed for Legal Drains within the Watershed.
2. Discussion included the timing of receipt of the assessments. Funds will become available in June 2025 and December 2025. Between January and June of 2025, the Watershed has no funding. Borrowing funds from the Vanderburgh County Commissioners was discussed including from unrestricted Opioid Settlement funds. The Vanderburgh County Board of Commissioners authorized the borrowing of unused funds appropriated for the Watershed application process in the amount of \$52,939.47 on December 17, 2024.
3. Discussion included the potential need to purchase land for access and for conservation, especially supporting wetlands.
4. Discussion included the present and historic need for log jam management.
5. Discussion included adding liability insurance for the board to the budget.
6. Discussion included that the budget numbers for some of the line items will be revised later.

Possible Funding Sources Prior to Special Assessment Receipts (moved up from #11 on original agenda): The motion to Authorize Chair Linda Freeman to begin negotiations with the Vanderburgh County Commissioners to borrow unrestricted Opioid relief funds and to approach to secondly to approach council to borrow unappropriated funds of any type should the first option be unsuccessful was made by Cheryl Musgrave, seconded by Karan Barnhill, and adopted unanimously.

Interlocal Agreement for the Advancement of Appropriated Funds: The motion to approve the Interlocal Agreement with the Vanderburgh County Board of Commissioners to allow the Watershed to borrow funds appropriated for the Watershed application process was made by Karan Barnhill and seconded by Cheryl Musgrave. The motion was approved by Barnhill, Musgrave, and Freeman; Johnson abstained.

Discussion Points:

1. Discussion included identifying the amount available as \$52,939.47 and confirmed its use is tied to the budget already adopted and statutory authority.
2. Discussion included the anticipation of further interlocal agreements between the Watershed and the Vanderburgh County Drainage Board. The Watershed will forgo work on legal drains leaving that obligation to the Drainage Board as has always been the case. Discussion included the right of entry to Pigeon Creek and the difference between main channel and tributaries.
3. Discussion included that legal agreements should be distributed in advance of the meetings to allow thorough review by all board members.

Request for Proposals for Banking Account and Credit Card: The motion to allow requests for proposals from local banks for Watershed accounts including a credit card was made by Karan Barnhill, seconded by Kristi Johnson, and adopted unanimously.

Discussion Point:

1. The Watershed needs to adopt policies for credit cards and claim processing. Attorney Emig suggested using state policies.

Authorize Grant Applications to be completed by Chair/Surveyor (i.e., LARE, IDEM 205 J grant): The motion to grant authority to research and prepare grants, but file upon approval of the Watershed was made by Karan Barnhill, seconded by Kristi Johnson, and adopted unanimously. The possibility of applying for a DNR LARE grant was discussed. Application deadline is January 15th, and it is 80/20 match. The grant could possibly be used to help fund the work plan through the watershed diagnostic study category. The possibility of applying for an IDEM 205J grant was discussed. Application deadline is February with money being received around October 2026. The grant would pay for installation cost of USGS gage (\$22,500) with no match required.

Authorize the Agreement for Legal Services between Jones & Wallace, LLC, and Pigeon Creek Watershed Development Commission: The motion to authorize the Agreement for Legal Services between Jones & Wallace, LLC and the Watershed was made by Cheryl Musgrave and seconded by Karan Barnhill. The motion was approved by Barnhill, Musgrave, and Freeman; Johnson abstained.

Authorize the payment of claims in a timely manner and then get subsequent approval from the Board: No motion was made on this matter; it was determined that legal counsel Craig Emig will research statutory authority and report at the next meeting.

Adopt Meeting Dates for 2025: The motion to adopt additional meeting dates for 2025 was made by Cheryl Musgrave, seconded by Karan Barnhill, and adopted unanimously. The dates are as follows, with all meetings to take place at Stringtown library at 10:30 am, unless otherwise noted:

January 9, 2025, at 1 pm
January 23, 2025
February 27, 2025
March 27, 2025
April 24, 2025
May 22, 2025
June 26, 2025
July 24, 2025
August 21, 2025
September 25, 2025
October 23, 2025
November 20, 2025
December 18, 2025

Discussion Points:

1. Discussion of possible future conflicts with the dates as adopted. Members will review their calendars and adjustments will be made accordingly.
2. Discussion of Stringtown Library, while near to Pigeon Creek, is a less desirable location than the Oaklyn Library. The Chair will research if that location is available for future meetings.
3. Discussion of the possible need for video attendance. Attorney Craig Emig will bring forward an electronic or virtual attendance for adoption by the Board as policy.

Request for Proposal for Consultant for Work Plan. Motion to establish an ad hoc committee to research RFP language for Consultant for Work Plan and to bring forward a draft at a future meeting was made by Karan Barnhill, seconded by Kristi Johnson, and adopted unanimously.

Discussion Points:

1. Discussion of adding the Soil and Water Conservation District (“SWCD”) and obtain examples of RFPs from other watersheds for use as templates.
2. Discussion of the need for a USGS Stream Gage and its location. The need for a Pigeon Creek stream gage was called out in the Christopher Burke study recommendations. The last gage placed was in 1986 on the U.S. Highway 41 bridge at Pigeon Creek. It was negatively affected by backwater. Lynch Rd was discussed as a better spot. There are USGS grants \$22,200 initial cost, \$14,300 annual cost. The grant covers 50% of installation and 40% of operations. The time frame would likely be in the second half of 2025, dependent on a successful grant application and Watershed funding. Funding for the match would come out of the Water Projects line item in the budget. The gage would capture concentration of nitrates, turbidity, temperature, etc. with data in real time. It could potentially be an early warning for flooding and give benefits to lower insurance costs for property owners.

The IDEM 205-J Grant is due in February. This grant opportunity would potentially give the match funding for the gage.

3. Report of Legislative Contacts
 - a. Linda Freeman reached out to State Representative Tim O’Brien. He has not returned the call.
 - b. There may be state legislature discretionary funds available.

New Business: none

Old Business: none

ADJOURN: The motion to adjourn was made by Cheryl Musgrave, seconded by Karan Barnhill, and unanimously adopted.

Next meeting

January 9, 2025, 1:00 p.m. at Stringtown Library (**note: Meeting later canceled and rescheduled for Monday, January 13, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 301 of the Civic Center, 1 NW MLK, Jr. Boulevard, Evansville, IN**)

PIGEON CREEK WATERSHED DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

December 19, 2024 - Sign In Sheet ~ PLEASE PRINT NEATLY

	NAME	PHONE	ADDRESS & E-Mail Address
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9	Bill Jeffers	812-568-0751	2691 MALIBU DR. 47725
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