

**Montgomery County
Drainage Board Meeting**

February 12, 2025

The Montgomery County Drainage Board met on Wednesday, February 12th, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. at the Montgomery County Government Center at 1580 Constitution Row, Crawfordsville, Indiana.

Chairman Dave Rhoads called the meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board members in attendance were, Dave Rhoads Chairman, Doug Mills, Jake Bohlander, and Secretary Lance Sennett. Present were Surveyor Tom Cummins and Attorney Dan Taylor.

Also present were Breanne Deaver, Brian Smith, Marc Bonwell, and Meredith Manges.

Approval of Minutes

Doug Mills moved, seconded by Jake Bohlander, to approve the January 8th, 2025 Drainage Board minutes. Motion carried, 4-0.

Hearings

Samuel Humphrey #526 Assessment Hearing

Tom Cummins – gave a report describing the drain and current fund balances. The drain is currently assessed \$4.75 per acre with a \$5.00 minimum assessment. The watershed consists of 291.35 affected acres, which collects \$1,397.78 annually. The proposed assessment is \$8.05 per acre with a \$5.00 minimum assessment. The proposed watershed consists of 302.53 affected acres, which will collect \$2,448.28 annually. The watershed was recently revised during reconstruction design. Currently, the drain is carrying a deficit in the General Drain Improvement Fund of -\$17,207.05. Based on the current assessment, the drain would be in debt for more than twelve years. The proposed assessment reduces that payoff period to seven years. Board policy limits indebtedness for regulated drains and requires assessment increase hearings to ensure that no one drain is unnecessarily burdening the Improvement Fund. Based on that policy and the fact that the Samuel Humphrey #526 is scheduled for reconstruction in 2025, the recommendation is to approve the proposed schedule of maintenance assessments and watershed, as submitted.

Dave Rhoads inquired if there were any landowners present that wished to speak.

Brian Smith, landowner, inquired about the upcoming reconstruction, but said that he has no objection to the proposed assessment. Tom Cummins advised that information would be sent out once the hearing is set, and Mr. Smith should call the office and set up an appointment to discuss at that time.

Dave Rhoads inquired about the debt in the Improvement Fund, if the Board has the right to increase a drains assessment without a hearing. Tom Cummins explained that the Drainage Code allows for a one-time increase of no more than 25%, without a hearing.

Doug Mills moved, seconded by Jake Bohlander, to increase the assessment rate to the proposed \$8.05 per acre with a \$5.00 minimum, with a watershed of 302.53 affected acres, for the Samuel Humphrey #526. Motion carried 3-0, with Lance Sennett abstaining.

Fred White #609 Assessment Hearing

Tom Cummins – gave a report describing the drain and current fund balances. The drain is currently assessed \$5.98 per acre with a \$5.00 minimum assessment. The watershed consists of 683.95 affected acres, which collects \$4,177.63 annually. The proposed assessment is \$11.96 per acre with a \$5.00 minimum assessment, which will collect \$8,228.85 annually. Currently, the drain is carrying a deficit in the General Drain Improvement Fund of -\$22,264.09. There is ongoing maintenance with a significant project scheduled for 2025. Based on the current assessment, the drain would be in debt for more than six years. The proposed assessment reduces that payoff period to three years. Board policy limits indebtedness for regulated drains and requires assessment increase hearings to ensure that no one drain is unnecessarily burdening the Improvement Fund. Based on that policy and the fact that the **Fred White #609** requires further maintenance, the recommendation is to approve the proposed schedule of maintenance assessments, for 2025, 2026, and 2027, as submitted. The proposal is to lower the rate in 2028.

Dave Rhoads inquired if there were any landowners present that wished to speak. No landowners present.

Doug Mills inquired if this drain is one that was taken off assessment in the 1960's? Tom Cummins confirmed.

Lance Sennett moved, seconded by Jake Bohlander, to increase the assessment rate to the proposed \$11.96 per acre with a \$5.00 minimum, with a watershed of 683.95 affected acres, for 2025, 2026, and 2027, for the Samuel Humphrey #526. Motion carried 4-0.

James Servies #703 Assessment Hearing

Tom Cummins – gave a report describing the drain and current fund balances. The drain is currently assessed \$5.00 per acre with a \$5.00 minimum assessment. The watershed consists of 1,023.43 affected acres, which collects \$5,145.40 annually. The proposed assessment is \$10.00 per acre with a \$5.00 minimum assessment, which will collect \$10,251.60 annually. Currently, the drain is carrying a deficit in the General Drain Improvement Fund of -\$41,006.19. There is ongoing maintenance with a significant project scheduled for 2025. Based on the current assessment, the drain would be in debt for more than eight years. The proposed assessment reduces that payoff period to four and a half years. Board policy limits indebtedness for regulated drains and requires assessment increase hearings to ensure that no one drain is unnecessarily burdening the Improvement Fund. Based on that policy and the fact that the **James Servies #703** requires further maintenance, the recommendation is to approve the proposed schedule of maintenance assessments, for 2025, 2026, 2027, and 2028, as submitted. The proposal is to lower the rate to \$5.59 per acre with a \$5.00 minimum in 2029.

Dave Rhoads inquired if there were any landowners present that wished to speak.

Marc Bonwell, landowner, stated that his family owns most of the watershed acres; doesn't have issue with the assessment on the drain, but the timeframe of repayment. Mr. Bonwell gave history on the drain, and stated that it always has water in it, because of the outlet. Asked if the rate would be lowered after repayment.

Tom Cummins reported on the maintenance that has been completed and described the work that is scheduled in the coming months. Mr. Cummins agrees that the outlet is an issue, and we should be looking at options for extending the regulated drain further downstream.

Dave Rhoads inquired where the regulated drain ends, and the private ditch starts. Tom Cummins showed on the map and showed the large private drain watershed that outlets at the same point as the regulated drain.

Doug Mills stated that maybe we should investigate the possibility of addressing the large watershed that includes multiple private drains. A landowner information meeting might be appropriate. Mr. Cummins clarified that the Board does not have the authority to assume jurisdiction of a private drain, without a landowner request.

Doug Mills moved, seconded by Lance Sennett, to increase the assessment rate to the proposed \$10.00 per acre with a \$5.00 minimum, with a watershed of 1,023.43 affected acres, for 2025, 2026, 2027, and 2028, and lowered to \$5.59 per acre with a \$5.00 minimum in 2029, for the James Servies #703. Motion carried 4-0.

Petitions

Tom Cummins – reported receiving a petition to vacate the Thomas Clark #619. The Drainage Code requires that the Board set a hearing on the petition to vacate at their next meeting, scheduled for Wednesday, March 12, 2025.

Dave Rhoads moved, seconded by Lance Sennett, to set a hearing on the petition to vacate the Thomas Clark #619 on Wednesday, March 12, 2025. Motion passed 4-0

Tom Cummins – reported receiving a petition to attach to the Claude Moody #583 from Mr. Jeff Messer, 5597 E. US 136. This request is for a perimeter tile for a new septic system. Mr. Cummins showed on the map where the proposed outlet will attach to the regulated drain.

Lance Sennett moved, seconded by Jake Bohlander, to approve the attachment to the Claude Moody #583. Motion passed 4-0.

Old Business

Tom Cummins – reported that the Board discussed the John McLaughlin #097 joint board at their last meeting and asked that this item be added to today's agenda. John Frey sat on the joint board, and as he no longer serves on the Board, we should appoint another member to take his place, should the need arise for a joint board meeting.

Dave Rhoads moved, seconded by Doug Mills, to appoint Jake Bohlander to serve on the joint board for the John McLaughlin #097. Motion carried 3-0.

New Business

Tom Cummins – submitted the OFF list for 2025, reported that 94 drains will not be assessed in 2025. Clarified that four drains will be kept on assessment, even though they have reached their four year cap, based on work that is scheduled; Rankin Walkup #579, Moses Maxwell #603, Charles Warren #605, and Servies-Carter#647.

Doug Mills inquired how many drains will be assessed in 2025, about half? Mr. Cummins reported 91 will be assessed.

Doug Mills moved, seconded by Jake Bohlander, to approve the 2025 OFF List as submitted. Motion passed 4-0.

Tom Cummins – submitted a report detailing a proposed assessment rate reduction. Recommends reducing the Phillip Dewey #584 maintenance assessment from \$15.63 per acre to \$5.39 per acre with a \$5.00 minimum.

Doug Mills moved, seconded by Dave Rhoads, to reduce the maintenance assessment from \$15.63 per acre to \$5.39 per acre with a \$5.00 minimum, on the Phillip Dewey #584. Motion passed 4-0.

Dave Rhoads – reported that we haven't given a Drainage Board report to the County Council in a few years, and with new Council members, it might be a good idea to prepare a presentation. Mr. Cummins advised that this summer would be a good time to give the Council an updated report. Attorney Dan Taylor agreed. Mr. Cummins will make sure that we are on the Council's June meeting agenda.

Dave Rhoads – reported the next Drainage Board meeting will be on March 12th, 2025.

Doug Mills moved, seconded by Jake Bohlander, to adjourn the meeting at 10:51 a.m. Motion carried, 4-0.

Tom Cummins,

Surveyor

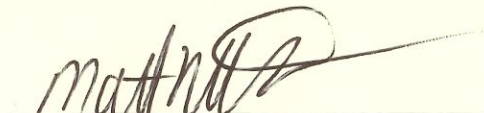


Dave Rhoads, Chairman

Doug Mills, Vice Chairman



Lance Sennett, Secretary



Matt Mitchell, Member



Jake Bohlander, Member