

**LIDA LAKES IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT  
2024 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES  
Saturday, August 17, 2024, 9:00 A.M.  
Lida Township Hall**

**Members Present:** David Hilber, Brian Graftaas, Mike Spangler, Zach Herrmann, Dee Dee Stephenson, Sheldon Poss, David Braton.

**Guests:** Marshall Johnson, Neal Gaugler, Shane and Courtney Peterson, Roseann Lund, John Lund, Joe Hilber, Kathy Arntson, Richard and Carol Lewis, Clark Hohman, Violet Hohman, Steve Lawrence, Carol Nielsen, John Ohman, Laurie Hanson, Stephen Mullen, Twyla Nielsen, Sharon Kline, Connie Schoenack, Byron Nelson, Greg Slotto, Patsey Crooke, Pat Simmers, Doug Dorow, Dave Swang, Daryl and Carla Hanson, Donna Anderson, Ottertail County Commissioner Wayne Johnson, DNR Area Supervisor Jim Wolters.

**Agenda Item I.** Call to Order. David Hilber called the Annual Meeting to order at 9:07 AM.

**Agenda Item II.** Pledge of Allegiance led by Chair David Hilber.

**Agenda Item III.** Introductions and Announcements.

Chair Hilber introduced the Board, guest speaker Jim Wolters, DNR Area Supervisor, and property owners present.

**Agenda Item IV.** Approval of Agenda (**BOARD ACTION**)

**Motion to approve agenda as presented by Graftaas, seconded by Spangler. Carried.**

**Agenda Item V.** Approval of June 15, 2024, Meeting Minutes (**BOARD ACTION**)

**Motion to approve Minutes of June 15, 2024 by Graftaas, seconded by Stephenson. Carried**

**Agenda Item VI.** Treasurer's Report.

Current Financial Report presented by Treasurer Zach Herrmann. The first installment of tax income has been received in the amount of \$24,109.71 from Otter Tail County. The posted 2024 expenses total \$63,323.57. Outstanding Expenses for board approved projects total \$51,414.17. On Hand Checking currently is \$47,463.08. Estimated second half tax collection expected in November is \$17,700. Estimated Accrual Balance is \$13,748.91.

**Motion to approve the August 17, 2024, Treasurer's Report as presented. Motion by Spangler, seconded by Stephenson. Carried**

**Agenda Item VII.** Board Activities Report

**Administration:** Braton reviewed administrative items including updates to website that include meeting minutes, financials, and other information beneficial to property owners. Facebook and communication through our Beach Captains are key to the success of LLID.

**Lake Management:** Graftaas reviewed Lake Management activities in FY2024. This included the hiring of Moriya Rufer as Lake Coordinator. The Lake Management Committee meets monthly. Graftaas reviewed the Spring survey on South Lida and the more detailed survey in June on both North and South Lida. A review of the 2024 Curley Leaf Pondweed and potential treatment in 2025 was reviewed. Graftaas reported the surveying showed our treatment is working. Rufer has provided the Lake Coordinator Report that is separate from the minutes and posted on the website.

Graftaas thanked Robert Nielsen and Mike Spangler for their dedicated water sampling.

The MN Keep It Clean Initiative was reviewed by Graftaas and LLID plans to continue messaging to ice anglers and others to help keep our Minnesota lakes clean.

Graftaas reviewed the Moonlight Bay project that had been delayed. The project has yet to be started and will be reviewed this Fall. Herrmann gave details on LLID financial commitment of about 12% of the overall project with most of the expense paid by the State. Ditch 51 is also being reviewed by the committee and the Soil and Water Conservation District.

Communications: Braton will review updates on the State Park bike trail, HWY 108 reconstruction, and use of LLID logo later in the meeting due to vote counting.

**Agenda Item VIII. 2025 Budget Consideration (MEMBERSHIP VOTE)**

Herrmann reviewed the Proposed 2025 LLID Budget. Estimated income is \$41,800 based on a tax of \$50 per Lida Lake property in the District. Total cash balance entering FY2025 is \$55,500.00. Expenses for 2025 are estimated to be \$55,500.00 with \$5,640 for Administration, \$3,000 for Clean Water Projects, \$16,500 for Recreation, \$26,340 for Aquatic Invasive Species and \$3,750 for Planning and Research leaving \$270 for Contingency. Details are included in the Budget that set aside \$20,000 for Aquatic Invasive Species Treatment and \$15,500 for Fisheries Support.

Hilber opened the meeting up for discussion by attendees. A question on the COLA expense was raised by a resident, Herrmann provided a response regarding the increased expense based on the number of members of the LLID vs members of the former Lake Lida Association.

A resident asked if the LLID has primary control of expenses. Herrmann reviewed that the LLID has control through the board and by a vote of the property owners. A follow-up question was raised regarding the amount of treatment and cost.

Prior to a verbal vote by the property owners present the board of directors made the following motion.

**Motion for Board approval of the 2025 LLID Budget and recommend approval to the property owners was made by Spangler, seconded by Braton. Carried**

**Hilber called for a vote of the membership present to approve the 2025 LLID Budget by a raise of hands. Approved.**

**Agenda Item IX. Election of Directors (MEMBERSHIP VOTE)**

Hilber reviewed this is the last election or reelection of the original board. At the 2025 annual meeting we will be electing new board members for two members whose terms will expire. Hilber reminded attendees if they are interested in serving on the board they need to have a nomination in prior to the April LLID board meeting. A question was asked when and if an existing board member could be reelected. Braton reviewed board member are on staggered terms and our Bylaws require a board member be off the board at least one year after serving two full terms.

**Agenda Item X. Informational/Education Item(s)**

Hilber introduced Jim Wolters, MN DNR Area Supervisor. He was invited to discuss fish surveying, issues and concerns on Lida Lakes fishing. The DNR did a fish survey on North Lida two weeks ago. This winter a detailed report will be provided and posted on our site. Wolters stated it was not good news regarding fish populations. North Lida pike count is stable. South Lida is showing a decline in northern pike population. A low pike population could be good for Walleye counts. Yellow perch has also been low on Lida lakes. The DNR is seeing this statewide. The DNR believes yellow perch are maturing as smaller fish, so they are not seeing larger yellow perch. The question was asked if they are studying genetics of the yellow perch. Currently the DNR is not. Wolters mentioned we have a diverse fishery in the area with up to 28 species of fish. North Dakota lakes by comparison typically have perch, walleye, and pike species present. Ottertail Lake used to be known as a great perch lake, but they too are seeing a decline.

Wolters reviewed the electrofishing study on North Lida. They have not conducted electrofishing on South Lida since 2008 due to the amount of weed growth. Electrofishing in September began on Lida in 1992. Wolters reviewed the data showing we had good natural reproduction up to 2019. The lake association had purchased fingerlings in 2002 and 2006, but the DNR had not stocked walleye since 1988. Zebra mussels were confirmed in Lida in 2015. Since then, the walleye catch rate has plummeted.

The question was asked if the DNR does a comparison of area lakes. Wolters stated they reviewed West Battle Lake and due to the low count adding "carryover" walleye fingerlings. Pelican Lake is an "outlier" as their walleye count continues to be stronger. Being part of a river system lake rather than a watershed lake like Lida may be a factor. A resident asked Wolters about factors impacting natural reproduction. Wolters stated they are seeing a change in wildlife and vegetation they had not seen before. Wolters was asked about Lida's walleye slot limit. He slot went into effect on Lida in 2005. A question was asked about comparing data with fishing tournament officials. He stated they do it on larger tournaments but not the smaller or localized tournaments. The question was asked about survival rates of walleye on "catch and release" or slot release. Wolters stated there is extremely low mortality with walleye on both. Graftaas asked about "fizzing" fish when pulled from deep water. Wolters stated it was practiced years ago but they do not recommend it today.

Wolters stated in 2019 the DNR placed 1.3 million walleye fry in North Lida and 176,000 in South Lida. They jump started the next year with fingerlings and yearlings. Since the electrofishing catch rate continues to be low, the DNR will pursue fry stocking on Lida to annual stocking rather than every-other-year. He also stated they are seeking approval for carryover 2-year old fish (contingency stocking) to be added in Lida Lakes. Wolters thinks the habitat changes are having an impact on the fish count. Braton asked the question why the DNR does not raise larger walleye like fish farms. Wolters stated they stock walleye wetlands but do not raise or feed those walleyes during the summer months. The follow-up question was whether LLID could develop our own fish farm. He stated there is a high upfront cost to set up fish farm operations. Herrmann asked if we are moving the needle at all with the amount of walleye stocking LLID is doing. Wolters thought it could very well be beneficial. He added, Pelican Lake wants to stock every year. Wolters recommends they save their money when electrofishing is good and apply stocking when not. Herrmann reviewed what the LLID is doing and what could be done through the former Lake Association is trying to do to improve walleye fishing.

Marshall Johnson asked if new methodology was being used if past practices are not working. Wolters discussed 1980-1990 stocking practices. Not all lakes are conducive to walleye. Zebra mussel has had a significant impact. He also discussed shoreline practices that have changed that may be better for the resident but not necessarily for the fish habitat.

Spangler reviewed past projects of the Lake Association that had an impact and Herrmann reviewed current projects that are being done to improve the habitat.

A resident asked if there was grant monies available for shoreline restoration. Wolters indicated there might be through the East Otter Tail Conservation District.

A resident who has been on the lake for 25 years shared their concern that property owners have beautified properties at the expense of habitat. She thought LLID might want to consider grants for improvement. County Commissioner Wayne Johnson was in attendance and responded stating the Conservation District has funds for qualifying projects. He added they are focusing on watershed projects. Commissioner Johnson was interested in protecting resources such as Lida Lakes. He recommended working through the LID with the County on opportunities to improve the quality of our lakes. Herrmann added the Association had supported individual property owner improvement projects and would like LID to review the opportunity in the future to provide funds.

Wolters discussed the data prior to and during the slot limit that showed a significant drop harvestable fish after the infestation of zebra mussels. The electrofishing is showing there is less small walleye and most where in the slot limit.

Graftaas asked if pumpkin seed fish consume zebra mussels. Wolters indicated they do along with other fish. Muskrat and ducks also consume them.

Wolters reviewed last winter’s creel study (fishing pressure on lakes). It was much lower this past winter due to the mild winter. Improved technology and advancements in fish houses have increased fishing pressure on Minnesota lakes.

Wolters indicated the DNR will be reviewing the slot limit on Lida. A resident indicated the water depth markings at the tunnel between North and South Lida have been obscured. Braton indicated this was the responsibility of the MN DOT and will check with Tom Pace at the DOT in Detroit Lakes.

**Agenda Item XI. Announcement of Election Results**

Braton and Poss served as election judges and reported the results. A total of 108 certified ballots were cast. The results were:

- Mike Spangler: 90 votes
- Dee Dee Stephenson: 94 votes.
- Zach Herrmann: 97 votes
- Davie Boe: 5 votes (write-in)
- Al Nieber: 2 votes (write-in)
- Byron Nelson: 1 vote (write-in)
- Roger Sundby: 1 vote (write-in)

Braton reported Spangler has been elected to his first 3-year term as a full-time resident Board position. Stephenson was elected to her first 3-year term as a full-time resident Board position. Herrmann was re-elected to his second 3-year term as a seasonal resident Board position.

**Agenda Item XII. Public/Membership Comments**

Graftaas announced the Lake Lida public access is scheduled for makeover in 2025 by the DNR. Property owner John Lund asked if the DNR would consider adding an overhead light by the shore dockside. The LLID will make that request and will inform property owners when the public hearing will be held for the public access improvement.

Turning to public comments, Braton gave an update on the bike paths through Maplewood State Park. Due to twenty inches of rain the project may not be finished this fall. Braton also reviewed that HWY 108 will be reconstructed in 2030 and 2031. They do plan to widen the highway to twenty-seven feet. The highway is currently 25-26 feet wide. We are communicating with the MN DOT in hopes that the shoulder is improved for bikers and walkers on the road from Maple Beach to Maplewood State Park.

Braton reviewed the request to make our LLID logo available for property owners for use on beach wear. The board will review requirements to trademark the LLID logo.

**Motion to have LLID logo available on LLID’s website for use by property owners beach wear following trademark review by Braton, seconded by Poss. Carried**

A resident of Lake Lizzie asked if we had a lake directory. She indicated this was done by a company who provide a contribution of \$500 to their association. Braton reviewed our past directory. This item will be placed on our October board meeting agenda following a review by the Communications Committee.

**Agenda Item XIII. Adjournment at 11:19 AM**

**Future Meeting Dates:**

**Executive Committee Meeting: Tuesday, October 22, 2024, 4:30 PM Teams Call**

**October Board Meeting: Saturday, October 26, 2024, 9 AM Lida Township Hall**

**Executive Committee Meeting: Tuesday, January 14, 2024, 4:30 PM Teams Call**

**January Board Meeting: Saturday, January 18, 2025, 9 AM Lida Township Hall**