

**STEUBEN LAKES REGIONAL WASTE DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
MARCH 25, 2026
26-03R
6:00 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bruce Deters
Judy Rowe
Mike Stephenson
Abby VanVlerah

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Kelly Johnson
Renee Clauss
Craig Rice

Also Present:

Andy Boxberger – Carson, LLP
Steve Henschen – Jones Petrie Rafinski
Steve Brock – Therber, Brock & Associates

Abby VanVlerah called the special meeting to order.

Rate Hearing: Andy Boxberger confirms we are having a rate hearing on the proposed changes to the District's rates and charges. He invites Steve Brock to explain the changes. Steve confirms that we the rates will increase of slightly under 5%. It has been since February 2023 since our last rate change. This increase is in part to get bonds issued for the Pump Station Replacement Project from the SRF and other bond holders. The bond issue is set to close on March 31st however the rates must be in effect as of April 1st. Region's bank will be the trustee bank holding the bond proceeds for us as of April 25th pending the rates being adopted today March 25th. Steve Henschen confirms out of the District's 31 pump stations, the Pump Station Project will focus on the big pump stations that collect wastewater from the various sub-stations. The District has been in the process of upgrading the stations as most are nearing their life expectancy. The District has been experiencing an emergency failure of an average of one pump station per year for the last 3 years. This project will upgrade 9 of the pump stations, some were already rebuilt during the NED II project that is finishing, and the remaining about 9 stations from the original project are the smaller stations and the District's plan for those is to do them one at a time out of the District's operating budget in the future. The worst 9 need to be addressed now.

Public Comments: Judy Zinn at 320 Ln 490A Lk James – Judy saw the post in the paper with the new rates explained. She asked if she is considered a class 1 customer, Andy confirmed. The new rate of \$115.75 is broken down and Judy was asking about the \$1.00 "just because" and \$2.95 for billings. She writes a single check a year to pay her bill by the year and asked why she receives a monthly bill that is a waste of money. She believed the coupon books once a year were more reasonable. She asked what percentage of customers pay by the month; the answer is the majority. She asked how many of those customers pay via autopay. The billing clerk was in attendance and confirmed we must send a bill legally. Bryan Klein clarified to Judy that the \$2.95 that is a portion

of that \$115.75 monthly rate is the charge for all billing, processing, office work, and the basic operation of the office. Judy states she called the office on the 19th due to her alarm going off and she said her conversation was nice, pleasant, and she had a very nice experience with the office staff. She said, “they are paying her to be nice”. Bryan appreciates the positive feedback as a small portion of our customers will get upset and say things they should not say to the girls in the office that have no control over the situation. Judy said she could not have been nicer.

Abby VanVlerah closed the public rate hearing.

Abby VanVlerah called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Abby VanVlerah read the following statement: At the end of the meeting, the public will be given an opportunity to speak. In the interest of time, each person shall be limited to three minutes. Your comments will be part of the public record of the meeting, so we ask that you present them in a professional manner and speak only to the matters at hand.

APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 25TH MEETING MINUTES CHANGES OR ADDITIONS.

The Board presented minutes of the FEBRUARY 25TH, 2026 board meeting minutes for review and approval. Upon motion, duly made by Mike Stephenson, and seconded Bruce Deters, the Board unanimously approved the FEBRUARY 25TH, 2026 board meeting minutes. Each board member voted in approval of the FEBRUARY 25TH, 2026 board meeting minutes as amended.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The financial reports, check register, project check register, bank account report, and claims for FEBRUARY 2026 were presented for review.

The Revenue Report, Appropriation Report, Capital Expenditures, Accounts Payable Register, Fund Report with Investments, and Monthly Budget Report with Capital for FEBRUARY 2026 were presented for review. Bruce Deters moved, and Mike Stephenson, seconded the motion, to accept and approve the FEBRUARY 2026 financial reports as submitted, which motion was unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Encroachment 3345 W Shady Side Rd: Dan VanGordon with VanGordon Construction presents plans for a change of location for a new sewer at 3345 W Shady Side Rd. Originally this was approved to go in the NE corner of the lot, after another site visit with SLRWD maintenance and re-evaluation where NIPSCO is located on that NE side, it makes more sense to have the grinder tank on the NW corner of the lot. It would be 7'

from the center of the tank to the overhand of the structure and 13 from the edge of the pavement. This is 3' from the road right-of-way. There is a 7 ½' easement at this property. Cole confirms that they have had multiple site visits and the relocation makes sense when considering the lot configuration with other utilities and the road. The customer understands that should the District require anything to be moved, changed, or otherwise it is at their cost.

Bruce Deters moved, and Mike Stephenson seconded the motion, to accept and approve the encroachment for 3345 W Shady Side Rd as submitted, which motion was unanimously approved.

- B. Replacement of Collection System and Board Room Computers: The computers that our maintenance technicians and board members use are approaching 7 years old and the new IBM software are all based on Windows 11, which these computers are not compatible with, they are becoming obsolete. In working with our IT people and technicians, we have decided to go with Apple products (iPad) through our Verizon account. This also eliminates a puck for connection which saves time in the field and is an easy connection. The MidSolv quote presented today is in the amount of \$11,466.93. The quote from Verizon is \$12,559.68 for technician workstations. Mike Stephenson experiences the same issues in the field in his line of work and agrees the iPads are better for these specific needs.

Bruce Deters moved, and Judy Rowe seconded the motion, to accept and approve the replacement of the collections system and board room computers with both MidSolv and Verizon as submitted, which motion was unanimously approved.

ATTORNEY REPORT

- A. Rate Ordinance: Andy confirms the adoption of the new rates as of tonight's rate hearing and they will start on June 1st, 2026. Also, with the approval of the rates there is one additional change, which is a \$10 renewal fee for renewing permits. Currently, if someone came in and got a letter of no objection for a building permit it is good 12 months from the date of the letter. Once that letter expires and they come back to renew if the project is incomplete, they will be paying the full permit fee (\$30 or \$100). We are wanting to make it clear that we would charge a \$10 renewal fee if the plans had no changes for residential permits as we currently do for commercial permits.

Bruce Deters moved, and Judy Rowe seconded the motion, to accept and approve the amended and restated sewer rate ordinance including the \$10 permit renewal fee for residential permits with no plot plan changes as submitted, which motion was unanimously approved.

- B. RWFA Resolution: This resolution authorizes the financial assistance agreement with the Rural Water Financing Agency. Abby recaps that we could not get funding from the SRF

as previously thought, which is why we need the rate ordinance for the increase with a more than 0% interest rate. The State promised 0% and we were given nothing.

Bruce Deters moved, and Mike Stephenson seconded the motion, to accept and approve the Steuben Lakes Regional Sewer District RWFA Resolution as submitted, which motion was unanimously approved.

- C. Amendment to Bond Ordinance: We already have a bond ordinance in place for this project, but there needs to be an amendment to change the maximum allowable discount rate to 4%. Steve Brock can explain if you have any questions. We also need to authorize our Vice President to sign the closing documents as our President is not available on the date of closing.

Bruce Deters moved, and Mike Stephenson seconded the motion, to accept and approve the amendment to the bond ordinance and Abby VanVlerah as signer of the closing documents as submitted, which motion was unanimously approved.

ENGINEERS REPORTS

- A. JPR General Project Update Memo:
- B. NED Phase 2 – Construction Update – Steve Henschen updates:

Contract A: PS 9 impellers were replaced.

Contract B: Niblock has completed milestone 2. Now they are past due on Milestone 3 completion which was to be by March 16th, 2026. Substantial completion means all the grinder lateral connections have been made back to the existing sewer lines coming from the homes. They have about 6-8 left to do that they can do right now. There are 10 where the customer has not finished their electrical portion. They cannot make those connections until that electrical is finished on the customer's end as it would leave them without sewer. Andy's team has sent letters to those 10-11 customers. 4-5 of them expect to be completed this week. Steve is hoping to report that both contracts are completed at next month's meeting. Liquidated damages of about \$195,000 with Niblock and it will need formally addressed at next month's meeting. Steve expects Niblock to want to negotiate.

Contract C: Selge has 2 connections remaining and they are the same property owner that is tied up in an estate. It is being coordinated but may be a few weeks out to get the electrical work done.

- C. Pay Apps:

1. NED Phase 2 – Contract B Pay Application #24 in the amount of \$120,522.23. Niblock Excavating is asking for payment in the amount of \$120,522.23.
2. NED Phase 2 – Contract C Pay Application #18 in the amount of \$382,868.05: Selge Construction is asking for payment in the amount of \$382,868.05.

Bruce Deters moved, and Judy Rowe seconded the motion, to accept and approve Contract B Pay Application #24 in the amount of \$120,522.23 to Niblock Excavating, and the Contract C Pay Application #18 in the amount of \$382,868.05 to Selge Construction as submitted, which motion was unanimously approved.

D. Change Orders:

1. NED Phase 2 – Contract C Change Order #15 in the amount of \$10,190.00: Selge Construction is asking for a change order in the amount of \$10,190.00 due to grinder station changes and a couple of small pump stations in the Bearman system that needed to be abandoned. This was not included in the original scope of work.
2. NED Phase 2 – Contract B Change Order #21 in the amount of \$412.25: Niblock Excavating is asking for a change order in the amount of \$412.25 due to minor changes in moving control panels, grinder stations, and shifting some things around.

Mike Stephenson moved, and Bruce Deters seconded the motion, to accept and approve the NED Phase 2 Contract C Change Order #15 in the amount of \$10,190.00 to Selge Construction and the NED Phase 2 Contract B Change Order #21 in the amount of \$412.25 to Niblock Excavating as submitted, which motion was unanimously approved.

JPR has reviewed all pay applications for work completed and change order requests and found them to be appropriate. These are to be paid from project SRF funds.

- E. Pump Station Replacement Project Phase 1 Land Acquisition Update: We are down to two sites. Pump Station 6 (which is at the County Fair Grounds) and Pump Station 24. Everything else is waiting on a check or signed agreement. Ken and Craig were working with the County. Ken was working with the County attorney and Craig with the County commissioner. Worst case we have an appraised value to offer if we have to purchase that land. Pump Station 19, Mr. Winkler, was offered \$18,500 for the original site or \$25,000 for double that amount. He counter offered \$22,500 for the original site. We did not respond to that as the board's decision was if he does not accept the original offer to proceed with eminent domain. The logic behind the original high offer was to avoid legal fees. Andy does not believe the legal fees would cost as much as Mr. Winkler's counteroffer for the original site and advises we move forward with eminent domain. We will need to get one appraisal at an estimated \$1500 and make a bonified offer based on the appraisal and if it is not accepted, we can file a motion to start the eminent

domain process. It is a process we do not want to do and have not done before; however, it is essential for the operation of the system to acquire the property, and it is not diligent of the board to hand over a large amount of money such as \$22,500.00 when the land is valued at \$444.00. Andy states this is roughly 20'x40' portion of land next to our existing pump station. The board agrees his counteroffer is unreasonable.

Bruce Deters moved, and Mike Stephenson seconded the motion, to accept and approve to proceed with the imminent domain process as submitted, which motion was unanimously approved.

F. Section 2 Conceptual Plan Review – Redevelopment of Bledsoe’s Landing – Jimmerson Lk: The District received a Section 2 permit application from the developer of the site formally known as Bledsoe’s Landing. They have submitted for conceptual plan approval per our standards. The first step is the submission of the application for conceptual plan review which triggers the District to look at the proposed plans and then evaluate our capacity. Steve presents a memo. The system does have capacity, and it would put a minor load on pump station 10 and a less significant load on the pump station downstream from them. PS 10 was just updated to accommodate for future growth such as Jellystone, but no one has reserved capacity so it is first come first serve at this time. The force main that goes down 300 was built as an 8n force main which is oversized for its current use. This will help the force main have adequate velocity. The capacity at the treatment plant is limited and JPR does keep track of. We are getting closer to max capacity, but the idea is that we have the facility, so we need to use it to the best of our ability. We take it to design parameters of 90% capacity, not 100%. We would be under a sewer ban of no new connections with IDEM if that 100% is reached. We are looking at if Barton lake and any other connect with this development, we would still have an estimated 350 EDUs available at the treatment plan that would approach to the 90% capacity level. On holiday weekends we do exceed that, but it is short events. IDEM looks at the average for the entire year. Based on JPRs review, the system has capacity and the next step is the board would need to consider issuing a non-objection letter for them to proceed with the plan commission for approvals with them. Approving this is not giving final approval. It simply shows we have the capacity so they can move forward with planning with the County. It is also not reserved capacity for this development. They would need to do that separately for \$500 per EDU. Capacity reservation is at their discretion. Another development could always come through before this one completes and takes up our available EDUs. This will have its own collection system within the development. The proposal is based on approximately 120 townhomes (10 grinder stations total), 115 two-bedroom apartments (1 grinder station total), and a restaurant to be served by a developer-owned and maintained duplex grinder station (1 duplex grinder station total). The pressure sewer network will be discharged into a new lift station built by the developer, but it will be turned over to the District for operation. This is like the plans discussed for Jellystone. The district will not maintain the internal sewer network.

Bruce Deters moved, and Mike Stephenson seconded the motion, to accept and approve moving forward with a letter of no-objection as submitted, which motion was unanimously approved.

G. Last minute addition: The District staff has been running out of space to properly store equipment, materials, and supplies for the collection system. The storage building is packed, and we are running out of space to keep the equipment inside that needs to be stored inside. We are investigating a 60'x80' building and we received a quote from a local builder for the shell. Due to the size of the building, we must get permitted at the State and local level. JPR put together a proposal for the District with a full design package, but the actual bid package would be just for a contractor to build the building, slab, and the other components listed for the District. The District is looking to do majority of the finishing work themselves. The quote from a local builder for the buildout of the shell is \$150,000. We will have to get bids from multiple contractors. JPR assumes we will be putting some features in the building to be compliant with code that may not have been included in the current quote from the local builder. That could affect the cost. Finishes would most likely be another \$100,000-\$150,000. We will take some soil borings to make sure we have a good foundation to build on. \$41,400 is the lump sum fee for JPR to put this all together and an additional \$10,000 if JPR is needed for construction admin/inspections on an hourly basis.

Bruce Deters moved, and Mike Stephenson seconded the motion, to accept and approve the proposal to move forward with the new collections system storage building as submitted, which motion was unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

N/A

DISTRICT BUSINESS & OTHER GENERAL MATTERS

N/A

PUBLIC COMMENT

Judy Zinn at 320 Ln 490A Lk James – Judy asks if the existing infrastructure for the currently Bledsoe's mobile home park is usable for the new development as they are already hooked-up. There are currently an estimated 30 existing hookups in use. Bryan confirms they are too old to be reused and not the right kind of infrastructure for the proposed development.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the meeting, Abby VanVlerah asked for a motion to adjourn. Such motion was made, seconded, and unanimously carried; the meeting was adjourned.