



# Higgins Lake Property Owners Association<sup>SM</sup>

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**President:** Charlene Cornell, **Vice Pres:** Greg Semack, **Secretary:** Herb Weatherly, **Treasurer:** Bruce Carleton  
**Directors:** Wayne Brooks, Jack Cornell, Curt DeVoe, Becky Gibson, Bob McKellar, John Ogren, Fred Swinehart

Higgins Lake Property Owners Association  
February 19, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes  
Zoom Virtual Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President Charlene Cornell at 9:00 A.M.

**Board Members Present:** Charlene Cornell, Greg Semack, Bruce Carleton, Herb Weatherly, Wayne Brooks, Jack Cornell, Curt DeVoe, Bob McKellar, John Ogren, and Fred Swinehart. Becky Gibson was absent.

**Agenda:** Greg asked to move his committee reports to the beginning of the meeting, as he may have to leave early.

**President's Comments:** None.

**January Minutes:** The January 15, 2024, Minutes were accepted as written.

## **Committee Reports:**

**Secretary/Office:** Herb verified John's May 15<sup>th</sup> Roscommon County Safety Meeting date and will reserve the conference room.

**Treasurer's Report:** The January 31, 2024, financials were presented and there were no questions. Bruce advised that our CPA just sent him a draft copy of our annual compilation with the final version expected to be published in a couple of weeks.

**HLSIO:** Greg reported the following:

The suspension of our trap and relocate program has been lifted. We are currently discussing the details of our program and potential research projects for the summer of 2024 with Swimmers Itch Solutions. Updates to our web site will be made shortly so they are in place by the time the summer season begins.

**HLPAC:** Greg reported the following:

In local politics, Dave Udy has announced he will step down as Gerrish Township Supervisor as of the end of March. The Gerrish Township Planning Commission has begun discussion of a potential septic ordinance and a potential short term rental ordinance.

During a special meeting about Roscommon Lake dams last Wednesday, 2-14-24, Chase Schepke commented that talks are now taking place about apportionment for the Houghton Lake dam SAD (Special Assessment District). He also mentioned that he had new weir gates installed so the dam can now be used to adjust the water level and he has a permit to remove the 5 x 15 ft plate currently blocking the dam. There have been

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questions about non homestead people getting input on Lake level. Chase will request that these people be given a position on the lake control board. Chase will reach out to the townships involved about their financial responsibility for road end assessment.

As regards Higgins Lake, Chase will request a permit to create new gates for the Higgins Lake dam at a greater height and will have rocks (8 to 12 inches) reinstalled in front to dam opening so that it will be more like original permit and should cut down on excess water through the opening by a third. Chase also tried to determine the status of random pilings he discovered under the dam and was prevented from learning much by the preponderance of rock in the lake / riverbed. But he did say that arbitrary piling concrete is present. Could be from the old dam.

The first assessment for the Houghton Lake SAD should be on late 2024 tax bills. There will be a 5-year temporary fix at the Houghton Lake Dam because it will take that long to prepare for long term fix.

After Houghton Lake assessment is complete Chase will turn his attention to Lake St Helen. Assessment is to be the same as Houghton Lake. This indicates that any potential assessment at Higgins Lake would also follow whatever is decided at Houghton Lake.

In the future, Chase intends that there be drone flyovers of LLCS (Lake Level Control Structure) for observation purposes.

**SB 662** There is a bill in Senate (SB 662) currently to allow municipalities to be flexible in treating court ordered water levels and also makes creating SAD for dam management easier. We asked our lobbyist to present a letter of opposition on behalf of the HLPOA and also enter a lobbyist's card of opposition.

**Membership & Communication:** Wayne reported we have 366 members vs 336 1 year ago, adding that we are budgeted for 510 members. Wayne, Becky, and Charlene met this week and will contact members that have not yet renewed.

**Riparian Committee:** John reported the following:

**Meeting with DNR (Department of Natural Resources) on January 25, 2024**

The meeting was hosted by Josh Pellow, Roscommon Regional Manager of Parks & Recreation along with Rachel Roberts, Manager SHLSP (South Higgins Lake State Park); Logan Graff, Manager NHLSP (North Higgins Lake State Park) and West Access, Christina Baugher, DNR AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) Regional Manager and Lt. Mark DePew, Regional Conservation Officer. Charlene, Greg, Fred, and John represented HLPOA. Rick Meeks represented HLF (Higgins Lake Foundation).

Josh and Rachel summarized their performance versus 2023 goals and their goals for 2024 that are about the same as for 2023. The DNR hired a chemical treatment company for \$15,000 to treat their three accesses. No EWM (Eurasian Watermilfoil) was found at the North State Park or West Accesses; there was some at the South State Park. MTT DASH boat harvested mostly SSW in the lagoon for two weeks at a cost of \$55,000. Conservation Officers were present at the South State Park access for two man-hours per week.

Christina Baugher reported that her boat wash demonstration team had been funded for the next five years and would be available for demonstrations at Higgins Lake.

John Ogren reported on the 2023 data collection project at the three DNR access and made recommendations for operational improvements at the three accesses including the replacement of the lagoon at the South State

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Park with direct lake launching and peak period inspection of arriving boats. In response, Josh agreed to “Request funding to hire a consultant to look into the redesign of SHLSP Boat Launch and Cost Analysis.” Given that recognition of the lagoon issue by Josh, a board resolution on the need for replacement of the lagoon is not recommended at this time.

Subsequent to the meeting, John is working on plans for continued data collection at the South State Park for 2024 with a goal to work in cooperation with the DNR and HLF to reduce the percentage of arriving boats with visible weeds down from the 9.5% in 2023. Better enforcement help from the Conservation Officers will likely be a key element.

**Environmental Committee** – Fred reported the following:

**Forecast GLUA (Gerrish Lyon Utility Authority) Spending Requirement for Fiscal Year 2024**

A meeting was held with John DeVol and Gary Bartow of Fleis and VandenBrink (F & V) on 2/10/24. A number of issues were discussed, including what spending rate would be required to achieve the currently deemed possible goal of sending out significant construction bids by GLUA Q4 FY 2025, about 22 months from now, or in calendar January 2026.

To summarize:(in \$1,000s)

Required Spending in GLUA FY 2024/2025

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	GLUA FY 2024/2025
(04/01/2024)			(01/01/2025)	(04/01/2024)
to			to	to
(06/30/2024)			(03/31/2025)	(03/31/2025)
50	228	382	1,200	1,860

These numbers include Site Permitting, Site Acquisition, Phase 1 and Phase 2 Engineering Estimates for the Waste Water Treatment Plant and the Effluent Collection System within the public Right of Way.

**Actual GLUA Spending History Fiscal Year 2023**In general, these are the collected invoices paid by the townships and reimbursed by two Higgins Lake Foundation grants. HLPOA and Individual contributions are paid directly.

FY	2021	2022	2023	Total
Total per fiscal yr	56,101.38	26,153.27	48,619.00	(130,873.65)
Reimbursable HLF Grants to 02/11/2024				134,000.00
HLPOA Cash Contribution				10,000
Individual Cash Contributions				7,000
Already committed to FY Q1 2024				(17,000.00)
Net Uncommitted Cash a/o 02/11/2024				~ 3,000.00

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Fred led a discussion about the possibility of donating another \$10,000 to GLUA, for their support needed for 1st quarter site-related expenses. It was discussed that additional information is necessary, such as whether or not the remaining funding can be obtained before we make a decision.

#### **Availability of Grant and Ear Mark Funds**

A considerable time was spent discussing F & V's long experience with the timing of funds availability following a State or Federal grant award. The news was not good. It can take a long time. Earmarked funds are assigned during the budgeting process to particular Departments for distribution. Each Department has its own regulations and policies to which the recipient must adhere. The time lapse between budget approval and actual funds receipt will vary from perhaps one year to as long as two years.

For the next year, GLUA is going to require extensive Foundation and Individual financial contributions to maintain their desired schedule. These funds are typically more quickly available if granted.

**New Business:** It was agreed that the annual meeting will be July 13, 2024. Charlene also reminded everyone that the fundraiser, *Chips, Sips & Dips*, is scheduled for July 6, 2024.

**Adjournment:** Herb moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Bruce. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 10:33 A.M.

**The next meeting will be March 11, 2024, at 9:00 A.M.**