Higgins Lake Property Owners Association℠

PO Box 55 211 N. Main Street Roscommon, MI 48653
Website: hlpoa.org email: hlpoa0@gmail.com
Phone: (989) 275-9181

August 2026 HLPOA Board Meeting
August 17, 2026
Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: 9:00am End: 11:48am

Attending: Greg Semack, John Ogren, Wayne Brooks, Bruce Carlton, Fred Swinehart, Charlene Cornell, Becky Gibson. Guest: Susan Semack

Absent: Patty Dennis, Curt DeVoe

President's Comments -

Charlene noted that Dennis Corte has resigned as Board Member. Kathleen's last day was 8/13/26. A new Admin hire was made, Billie Moore. She has excellent business professional experience, in writing and technology. She will work 1 day/week until after Labor Day, then will work 3 days, 15 hrs/week. The office did receive 1 other resume. Will hold that resume for the time being. Susan Semack worked with Kathleen over past 2 weeks to understand her role and help train the new hire.

Susan shared a 1-page summary of the key tasks done by the Office Administrator. Will serve as starting point for training. In addition, Susan has full typed details of how the office is run and how the key tasks are accomplished.

Secretary's Report –

John has recently agreed to take on the Secretary role, taking over for Herb Weatherly, who resigned from the Board recently. John will reach out to meet Jory (of RARA) soon.

Review of prior Minutes:

June 15, 2026 – There is one edit to a date (incorrectly listed as 2025, should be 2026). Bruce moved to accept, Second by John. All agree.

July 18, 2026, Special Meeting – no changes

July 18, 2026, Annual Meeting Minutes – one topic in the section about HLSIO needs to be clarified. Approval of minutes tabled until the HLSIO section is finalized.

President: Charlene Cornell, **Vice Pres:** Greg Semack, **Secretary:** John Ogren, **Treasurer:** Bruce Carleton
Directors: Wayne Brooks, Patty Dennis, Curt DeVoe, Becky Gibson, John Ogren, Fred Swinehart, Julie Dunn

90 Years dedicated to preserving the quality and beauty of Higgins Lake

Treasurer's Report –
The July financials were reviewed. Bruce noted that the "Member Dues' shown in the July income statement appears to be incorrect as the 2026 dues amount does not reconcile with the latest membership report. Bruce and Wayne will work offline to resolve. Bruce has requested that Phil Ellison send any invoices to HLPOA for recent work; have received none in 2026.

Membership Report –
Wayne reported Membership now at 521, was 444 one year ago. Charlene notes there is a list of about 40-50 who have not renewed for 2026. There are 3 members who paid via PayPal when that option was available (briefly). Those funds are frozen at PayPal currently. Alma working to get the money released.

Wayne and Charlene met with Alma and Paul from Dealer Supply to discuss needs related to the Directory for 2027. Advertising rates are increase 5% from 2026, except for the "big 3". Advertisers get "early discount" if they sign up by Dec. 31, 2026 for 2027 Directory. Wayne will coordinate main mailing for late Oct/early Nov, with a second mailing to non-responders about March 1.

Communications Report –
Becky is beginning work on the Fall Newsletter. If any Committee heads want an article in the Newsletter, have the content to her by September 10. The Newsletter will be sent by Sep. 21.

Riparian Report –
John provided the Riparian Committee Report to the Board members:

- **West Access Data Collection:** A total of 270 arriving boat operators interviewed and boats and trailers inspected for visible weeds. We expect to complete the planned total of 500 before Labor Day. So far 83% were local Higgins Lake boats and 17% boats visiting from other lakes. 5% of Higgins Lake boats arrived with visible weeds and 2% of boats visiting from other lakes.

  Parked trailers have a higher percentage of visible weeds indicating that they are picking up weeds during the launching process.

- **Greg and John met with Under Sheriff, Ben Lowe and Deputy Dakota Darsow** to discuss recent road end issues and possible improvements in policing. No specific plans were identified, but it was recognized that most of the issues are in Lyon Township where County Sheriff has prime responsibility. Sheriff Deputies are often stretched thin by higher priority work.

Environmental Report –
Fred provided the following written Committee Report to the Board on 8/17:

"The major activity for the committee this month has been to participate in the Health of Higgins Lake Expo at the Gerrish Township Marina on August 10th. An edited 20-minute video of the May 30th Volunteer Diver's Video's two hour long complete record was shown as a repeating loop. Jamie and Melanie Brown and Ed Panyard developed the edited version. It may be viewed on the web at the address below:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fobDkBJ6wFRAtYE4PoElN7h-R8vQBWBm/view?usp=drive_link

Another multi day dive session will be held with the same group of volunteers on the weekend of 08/28, 08/29 and 08/30. The Higgins Lake Foundation will under right the costs for this portion of the survey. Consequently, the 2026 Bottoms Lands Survey project will be about a 50/50 shared effort between our two organizations."

In addition, Fred spoke during the meeting and shared that the HOHL Expo on Aug. 8 was well attended. On May 30, the volunteer divers took 2 hrs. of video. A 20 minute compilation was shared at the Expo, to show the bottom of the lake. Fred described Ponar Sampling, which scrapes the bottom surface of lake.

Cost for 1st dive activity was $788; to cover debrief dinner and equipment/fuel; staff is voluntary. HLPOA has authorized $1500 for the dive efforts. Nancy Lamb, HLF Chair, has offered to cover the full cost of the 2nd planned dive. Fred suggested that HLPOA pay half the cost of the 2nd dive. Discussion but no conclusion.

Fred also spoke at length about Nitrogen in the lake and the problems associated with the Nitrogen level. John Ogren commented on a possible solution to address phosphorus in the lake via treating homeowner septic systems.

HLSIO –

Greg shared comments prepared by Duncan Lawrence about Swimmers Itch.

"We are still reeling from the denial of our permit to remove mergansers in 2026. It has been very disappointing. While we appear well positioned for 2027, it is of little comfort at this time. Swimmer's Itch (SI) cases are up dramatically from last year.

o Merganser Removal Status — Permits for removing mergansers or treating with an anti-parasitic were both denied by Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS)

o DNR visit to Higgins Lake – Shannon Lott and Kristin Phillips with Michigan DNR visited Higgins Lake. Greg Semack, Nancy Lamb, Mark Luttenton and Duncan Lawrence discussed various aspects of how DNR can help us with invasive species and SI

o Discussions are ongoing with Joelle Gehring (FWS) and Earl Krom (USDA) on how to better position for permit approval in 2027. The strongest messages are health care and economics.

o There is an email where we can direct our residents to register complaints about the current SI status: info_R3MB@fws.gov. We intend to send out emails to our database of supporters, as well as those reporting cases on our website.

o We also have initial relationships with US Representatives Jack Bergman and John Molenaar, as well as Senator Elissa Slotkins office that we will use as we maneuver next years permits.

o SI cases are up quite a bit on our website, the highest levels recorded since we started tracking SI reports on the website (8 years). There are also more mergansers on the lake, with at least one brood/possibly two, as well as several immature adults. SI cases are also up in our longitudinal study, highest since the start of this program. While the situation is not as bad as 2015, we are losing regressing. Specific details to follow in future months.

o Fundraising Dinner, Thursday August 13, 2026 –A good time was had by all 120 or so attendees at Witt's Barn with music by Derek Boik, catering was handled superbly by Cut River Grill. The weather was about perfect, so people were able to spread out and engage in conversations. Randy DeJong gave a brief overview of the current status of SI reports and fielded questions from guests.

o Goose Nest and Egg Destruction: As previously mentioned, John Ogren applied for a permit on January 26 for HLPOA. In 2026, 7 nests and 51 eggs were removed (two trips to Higgins Lake), this is an increase over 2025 where 6 nests and 29 eggs were destroyed.

o Communications – We will be making additional changes to the website. In particular, to better address the primary concerns – what is it? How do I avoid it? What do I do if I get it? And where to report it. Additionally, we are in the process of developing responses to common questions regarding SI. These will likely be used both on our website and in response to social media posts on Higgins Lake Facebook groups (and possibly others, as appropriate)."

HLPOA HLPAC report 8-17-26

Roscommon County Lake Level/Dam meeting. Greg reported that the County held a meeting held on July 8th (well attended by HLPOA members). While it was initially thought they were going to take action on a new dam or repair, the Board of Commissioners concluded that there was not yet enough information to decide on a course of action. It is possible that a few recent changes made to the dam (making gates a bit taller and adding rip rap rocks) may have slowed the flow of water out of Higgins as the level is still above the legal summer level with all gates open. The county is trying to confer with the California company that inspects the dam every three years about what might be needed for the current dam as far as repair or maintenance and get their opinion concerning creation of a new dam, but has been unable to talk to this company.

Both County Commission Chair Darlene Sensor and Controller Jodie Shaltz have told me that there will be no SAD assessment on this year's winter tax bills.

All mileage issues passed in the August 4 election. HLPAC had sent out summaries to our members the week before the election.

Lyon Township It was reported that the petition language to recall the Lyon Twp. Supervisor has yet to be approved. The petition decision has until August 31s to be approved by the election committee. It is thought to be OK.

Gerrish Township - Is proceeding with a Septic Ordinance and is working with the planning commission and the Health of Higgins Lake. No specifics on the timing are available but it is estimated it will be about the end of the year as it needs to go through certain notice requirements and hearings. It will also contain language that if the State establishes a statewide ordinance that has lesser requirements, the Gerrish ordinance can override and supersede that of the State.

The Gerrish Planning commission is working on a 5-year Masterplan. Such plans are essential if applying for grants in the future and also for organizational purposes for the township. The Latest draft is being moved shortly to the GT Board. It a 100 + page document, has been back and for 3 or 4 times for

modification with the company helping to write the plan. It is close to completion which will be subject to public hearing and GT board approval before being implemented.

The HLPAC overview presented at the annual meeting highlighted our efforts working with our lobbyist and lobbying ability to engage State representatives. Our lobbyist helped connect us to representative Borton who aided in getting new relationships established with the DNR leadership which I believe is moving us in the right direction.

I have talked to each of the current HLPAC members and Charlene and the response was very positive so I'm asking the HLPOA board to authorize Pat Springstead to be added to the HLPAC Board. Motion made by Greg Semack, seconded by Wayne Brooks. Motion passed.

HLPAC has run ads for public office candidates both in the Resorter and on social media. Ads have been scheduled again for August. Thus far we have had three respondents, I have talked to each. One was a GT resident, one was a Lyon Township resident, and one was inquiring about a school board position. No one has committed to running and each asked for our conversations to be kept close until they are closer to elections.

This week we are having a fundraiser for State Representative Ken Borton on Thursday night at the Cut River Grille. An email will go out tonight to our members advertising the event (2x). Mr. Borton has been extremely helpful in getting us to higher level personnel in the DNR than we have been able to talk to previously. We had a good turnout in our fundraiser last year and we hope this year 's event will be at least as successful.

Ongoing Business – Higgins Lake SAD Report
The next stage in the Higgins Lake Special Assessment District court case against the county is scheduled for 10-15-26 in Roscommon circuit Court with Judge Bennett.

New Business:

Annual Meeting Recap – Good venue, suggest a hard copy of agenda for attendees, Becky will check with Pam at RAM re: virtual option for 2027.

Board Vacancy – Board accepted resignation of Dennis Corte, moved by Charlene, 2nd John. Julie Dunn elected for board position, moved by Charlene, 2nd John.

Miscellaneous Open Issues:

- Election co-chair tabled.
- Keeping aware of local government issues moved to PAC.
- John Ogren will be the 2nd signer at the bank.
- Moving forward, Billie will reserve room when needed, compact minutes re needed, perhaps with Topic discussed with Action Plan
- We need someone to report ice cover/ice out dates

Motion to adjourn made by John, 2nd by Wayne. Meeting adjourned 11:48 am