**MINUTES**

Leech Lake Association Board Meeting

Monday, June 19, 2023. Held at Hope Lutheran Church, 305 10th St. S., Walker (Cass Co. Courthouse closed for Juneteenth Holiday)

*Submitted by Jennifer O’Neill as of June 20, 2023*

Meeting called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Bob Gisvold, president. Board members present: Tom McGovern, vice-president; Mark Bovee; Sharyn Nepsha; Jeff Holton; John Eaton; Jennifer O’Neill and Bill Schultz. Absent: Dave Laursen, Steve Mortenson, LLBO; Dana Gutzmann, Cass AIS; Carl Pedersen, DNR; Jason Hauser, COE.

SECRETARY’S REPORT: Tom McGovern moved to approve 5/15/23 meeting minutes. Sharyn Nepsha, seconded. Motion carried.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Jennifer O’Neill reported that the 5/31/23 bank balance was $66,826.00. Of that, $51,203.34 was in the cash accounts and $15,622.66 were in certificates of deposits. As of June 16, $4,665 from 2024 renewing members had been deposited in the checking account.

The two CD’s will be maturing in upcoming months (7/25and 8/24). Jennifer will inquire at the Walker-area banks as to their CD rates, and a decision will be made at the next meeting as to where and how much of our cash should we invest in new CD’s.

John Eaton moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report; seconded by Mark Bovee; all voted in favor.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Jennifer O’Neill: 2024 membership drive kicked off at the end of May with the newsletter mailing and a membership form. Total mailing was 411 pieces. As of June 16, 94 families have renewed membership for 2024; of that 12 are lifetime members ($1,000 each) including 1 new lifetime members; 22 are sponsors or business members. There are 13 more envelopes that are waiting to be opened. Jennifer gave packets, which contained a newsletter, a management report, and membership forms, to each board member and asked them to encourage friends and neighbors to join.

Board members asked for a current membership list, which Jennifer will email to all officers and directors, and mail via USPS to Bob Gisvold.

The meeting day & location for 3rd Monday of the month in June will always conflict with Juneteenth, a state and federal holiday. Public offices are closed and key contributors cannot attend. The board will determine a date for June meetings in an upcoming meeting.

WATER LEVELS:

Via an email, Shawn Weissenfluh, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, reported that the lake level measured 1,294.97 on June 15. The pool at the dam was 1,294.87; tailwater: 1,286.32. The discharge was 302 CFS. “The top of the summer band is 1,294.9 so we are slightly higher than normal right now but not by much with how dry it has been.” In his note he invited other questions, and it was asked “Have we heard anything more about re-building the dam?” This could be addressed at a future meeting.

WATER CLARITY AND TESTING

Tom McGovern reported that the water samplers conducted their monthly sampling chores Sunday, June 18. All samples showed equal to or higher water clarity than in May. Results: 15.5’ in Agency Bay; 20.2’ in Main Basin; 16’ in Kabekona Bay; and 13.5’ in Walker Bay.

The group discussed whether the presence of Zebra Mussels is impacting clarity? How is it affecting fishing? Discussion about effects of sonar depth-finders.

FISHING REPORT: Due to the holiday, Carl Pedersen (DNR) sent his report via email: “Reports on fishing have been very strong but sounds like the ones using forward-facing sonar are doing the best. Clear water so the fish are spooky if you try to troll over them. I’ve seen a few mayflies so fishing might be a little tough for walleye but luckily there are plenty of other species out there.”

TOURNAMENT REPORT: On the topic of fishing, John Eaton and Mark Bovee reported that the Leech Lake Fishing Tournament, held June 2-3 was a big success. John talked about the way the fish are measured and reported, and how the judges reviewed those reports. In addition to being a sponsor, Leech Lake Association members volunteers included John Eaton and Barb Ramquist; Mark and Rita Bovee; Jennifer O’Neill and Marty Cook; Sharyn Nepsha. For our efforts, the Leech Lake Fishing Tournament donated $500 to the Leech Lake Association. As in the past, our donation will be “re-gifted” to other initiatives/non-profits in Walker, including: $90 to the Leech Lake Association to top off the last bit of money that’s needed for the 2023 starry stonewort removal in Steamboat Bay; and $205 to the Walker Area Community Center and $205 to the Walker Area Food Shelf. Jennifer will contact Dave Laursen to write and mail checks to these organizations.

ANDERSON’S COVE-AIS REPORT

John Eaton shared a press release that will be hand-delivered and emailed to the Walker Pilot-Independent on June 20. The purpose of the release is to inform boaters, especially those who use the launches in the Steamboat Bay area, of work that will be done in the area to remove starry stonewort. This news release was acceptable to the DNR as a way to properly inform residents. It was also suggested that we share the release with local news and television stations, using a public safety angle.

Volunteers could be used each day to assist where needed. John will contact all on the board about the times of days potentially needed and jobs that could be done.

Jennifer and John also said that this is not a one-year-and-done problem, and that the association will need to talk about, down the road, our financial commitment to AIS problems on the lake. We cannot expect continuing grant money from the DNR. Bob wondered if we could assert pressure on the DNR?

ROOSEVELT CANAL & BUOYS UPDATE – Jeff Holton. Canal appears to be deep enough for boats, due to high spring water level. Buoys are still hard to see on the lake. Kids are still diving of the Onigum bridge over the canal.

John Eaton said that the DNR put a light in at the Erickson’s Landing launch.

COMMUNICATION: Jennifer O’Neill. Annual newsletter was mailed on May 30, 2023, with a few extra mailed in June. Total distribution was 411. The website continues to be updated.

ANNUAL MEETING – Sharyn Nepsha. After an exhaustive round of calls to potential restaurants, Sharyn reported that the new “Ole’s Bar and Grill” would be happy to host the annual meeting, set for Friday, August 4. Jennifer will connect the Cass Co Historical Society to see if someone can do a presentation stemming from the “Resorts of Leech Lake” book. Jeff Holton suggested (and there was positive agreement) that for a future meeting we consider inviting someone from LLBO to speak on any variety of topics, such as history of the band on the lake, climate-related or forestry topics, land, wild ricing, to broaden our understanding of the community we live in.

We agreed that the meal should cost between $25-$30; LLA would cover cost of appetizers, tip and taxes. Food should be “picnic-casual” such as ribs or chicken.

Jennifer urged all to make decisions so we can get a letter out to association members by July 4. A group will meet at the restaurant on Monday, June 26 at 11 a.m.

Bob will follow up with Dave to find out whose terms are up for election, which will be conducted at the annual meeting.

ACCL Update: Motion was made (Jennifer), seconded by Bill, to purchase 100 ACCL AIS-themed Swedish wash cloths to be used in new member packets. Motion passed. They will be given away at the annual meeting. Jennifer will forward newsletter.

NEW ARRIVALS MEMBER KIT. Mark had no report on this topic, however he updated the board on his attendance at the Cass Co. Planning Commission meeting, held the previous Monday. It was a long meeting with controversial topics, including the Orton property on First Point. Mark will take responsibility for tracking Zoning and Planning, and report to the LLA board on upcoming meetings, issues and decisions made. Jeff Holton said that he is no longer on the Planning Commission.

11:30 a.m. Meeting was adjourned (Motion by Jeff, seconded by Mark. All in favor.)

Next board meeting is on Monday, July 17 at 9:30 a.m. at the Cass County Courthouse.