

**Lake Williams Beach Association (LWBA)
Board of Directors Meeting
The Acre, Lake Shore Drive
6:00 PM, May 21, 2025**

BOD in attendance: Jon Vigurs, President
Claudette Soboleski, Treasurer
Marty Varhue, Tax Clerk
Kimberly Meanix Miller, Secretary
Joe Jankowski, Director
Christy Kelly, Director (*arrived 6:11 pm*)
Jim Russo, Director
David Theroux, Director

BOD excused: David Gendreau, Vice President

Non-BOD Association Members Present: Andrew Latour of 105 Lake Williams

A CALL TO ORDER *President Vigurs called the meeting to order at 6:00pm*

B APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. April 16, 2025

Motion **By:** *President Vigurs* **Seconded:** *Tax Clerk Varhue*
MOVE LWBA hereby approves the minutes, as presented, for the meeting of
April 16, 2025.
Result: Motion passes unanimously (7-0-0)

C REPORTS

a. Finance Committee

i. Treasurer's Report and Budget Review

Treasurer Soboleski reviewed the report in some detail (attached). Regarding beach and maintenance, she said the cost of the signage has inflated the line item this year. She reiterated that the signage was a requirement for their insurance and should be part of the annual meeting. Director Russo indicated he felt he could beat the price of the installation for the benefit of the association and asked if the installation materials were part of the sign costs. Treasurer Soboleski indicated she thought that the installation was currently about \$1200 and would have to review the information closely

to see where installation materials were included. Treasurer Soboleski said that she also needs to know the status of the broken picnic bench from Beach 1. She suggested they consider accepting the donation of the plastic bench and put it at Beach 3, with the least use, and while the Beach 1 project is developing, the picnic table currently at Beach 3 could be moved to Beach 1.

Motion **By:** *President Vigurs* **Seconded:** *Director Jankowski*
MOVE LWBA hereby directs the Beach and Property Committee to move the existing picnic bench from Beach 3 to Beach 1 and to dispose of the broken picnic bench at Beach 1.

Result: Motion passes unanimously (7-0-0)

Director Kelly arrived at the meeting at 6:11pm.

Treasurer Soboleski referenced the interest in more social activities and asked if she should increase the proposed line item for the coming year. President Vigurs said that not all social activities mean higher costs for the association. The topic of potluck came up. Treasurer Soboleski expressed concern about food safety and coordination. Director Kelly noted that homeowner's insurance will generally cover any issues that arise. Secretary Miller said she understood the aversion of some to potluck, but she wasn't personally concerned and there are free online tools like google sheets, to track who's bringing what to avoid duplication. She also said that they could see if the expressed interest of members plays out in volunteers to execute more events and what those events are, before adding to the budget. Director Kelly praised Marla Varhue and others involved in the superior food and activities for the annual picnic and thought they should raise the budget by about \$150 to avoid people being out of pocket.

Treasurer Soboleski noted that they were short for insurance the previous year and so she increased the line item by 4.5% in anticipation of likely increases. She said the surety policy stayed the same at \$126 and they have notice of increasing rates but no quote yet for general liability at about \$3000. She said board liability is estimated at \$950 for a total budget of \$4100. She said they were very close in the estimates for paper, printing and postage and hoped to continue to use Heritage Printers which had been printing mailings at cost. She said that they likely didn't need much contingency for this line item. Secretary Miller added that the survey results overwhelmingly supported greater use of email and the use of postcard notices instead of mailing full packets for full membership meetings. She also emphasized that as they transition, she thinks they should provide full packets only to those members that want or need them but it should still provide a savings.

Treasurer Soboleski continued noting that she, the tax collector and the vice president need to get together to finish up the research on the disputed bills for two member groups. She spoke to the utilities line item and website, noting the effort to pay directly for their webpage rather than reimburse Paul Dagnello. She reminded all that the budget goes from May 1 to May 1 and she could include double the line item in case they are able to pay directly resulting in two years payments hitting the same fiscal

year's budget. She said with Beach 1 vote in hand, they could do about 65% of the project without raising taxes and would need an assessment of \$210 in order to accomplish it all in the coming year.

Director Russo remarked that the taxes are incredibly low and he frequently works with communities with rates upward of \$800. Secretary Miller cautioned against peaks and valleys in the tax rate calling it fiscally imprudent. She suggested that if increases are necessary, that they look for them to be incremental in nature and sustained. She also noted the survey support for new bulletin boards, ideally smaller with a locking plastic shield, and equipment and zoom membership for virtual access to meetings. She suggested we have pricing for these in the budget documentation for consideration, noting from memory that a Zoom account was under \$200 annually. President Vigurs said he'd get the hardware cost estimates to the Treasurer the next day.

Director Jankowski asked several questions of Treasurer Soboleski to better understand the base budget and the money available for application to Beach 1 remarking there is not much excess to apply to the project. Treasurer Soboleski replied saying that they try to keep the budget tight, so they don't over collect. She reiterated that the beach and maintenance budget does include more money due to the inclusion of the signs in the coming year. Director Kelly cautioned against asking for too much remarking that the tax was \$55 for so many years. Director Russo questioned if they should appeal for voluntary help.

Director Kelly noted that people in the past were ready and willing to help work on the properties. Director Russo said people may be interested in the opportunity to keep taxes down but wondered if it would be the same subset of people every time. Secretary Miller noted that the survey results showed that the highest area where members said they were willing to volunteer was property maintenance and projects. She said that personally, while she would be game for a one-off project like staining or such, she wouldn't be too excited about volunteering to do lawn and beach maintenance multiple times through the season given back issues, instead preferring to pay a contractor. Director Kelly mentioned that the tax clerk, treasurer and secretary used to get a stipend. Secretary Miller said these roles tend to have an unavoidable workload but she was conflicted. She said one of them could not do a very good job one year or the circumstance like this year, for example, with Director Jankowski doing so much work on Beach 1, but no ability to provide a stipend. She said they should leave the ability in case it makes a difference between being able to attract someone to the role and not filling the role but didn't really want to implement it otherwise.

Treasurer Soboleski noted there is a sliver of property between her property and Beach 3 that belongs to the association but isn't maintained by the contractor. Tax Clerk Varhue noted that the homeowner used to maintain a portion along the association property but was accused of trying to take it over, so he stopped. Director Kelly said that she put in plants to try and improve the property, but they were stolen. Director Jankowski went through the budget some more to determine what portion they may be

able to do after the engineering. Director Kelly suggested fundraising at the picnic like basket raffles or having a table at the FLW tag sale. Secretary Miller said she would be willing to do a basket, and they could do both that and a direct appeal. Director Russo questioned a tax write-off. Treasurer Soboleski said that it isn't that simple as they don't really have the right status.

Director Jankowski said that for the Beach 2 project, they had ad-alternates that allowed them to execute portions of the project when the funds were available to do so. Mr. Latour confirmed that the work would be done in the fall to ensure Beach 1 was available for use during the summer. President Vigurs liked the ad-alternate idea and suggested Treasurer Soboleski come up with an option in the middle of flat taxes and the amount needed to do the project all in the following year. Treasurer Soboleski said she'd send them out to the board. Director Russo reiterated that he could likely do the sign installation for half of what the sign vendor quoted.

ii. Tax Collector Update and Discussion

Treasurer Soboleski explained that she attended the auction for 88 Lake Shore, and it went for \$104,000 with a current owner of a vacant lot winning the bid. She said they have to wait 6-months in case the current owner of 88 Lake Shore can come up with the money before the bid winner can take ownership, and only then can they can get their past due taxes. She reiterated that there are two properties with disputes that she, the tax clerk and the vice president need to complete the research to resolve. She said that it's an annual requirement to submit their list of members to the town. Director Kelly noted that the town clerk told her that it was the association that would be the ones to merge properties but all agreed that's not the case.

iii. 2024-2025 Audit Updates

Director Jankowski said he and Emily need a little more time to finish the work but expect it to be done by week's end.

b. Beach & Properties

i. Update on 2025/2026 Spring Cleanup/Mowing Quotes

Director Russo asked if they got the contract back yet and Treasurer Soboleski said no. Director Russo conveyed that the contractor said they would get the lawn cut by Monday or Tuesday at the latest. Treasurer Soboloski noted that the contractor got the contract a little late.

ii. LWBA Sign Quotes

President Vigurs noted the multiple sign quotes received with one being significantly lower than the others. A consensus was reached that the lowest quote mock-up would be included in the minutes, posted on the website and posted on the bulletin boards for review at the annual meeting.

c. Annual Picnic

Tax Clerk Varhue noted that his wife is willing to continue to work on the annual picnic and that the date is proposed to be September 13, 2025. A consensus was reached in favor of this date.

d. By-Law Committee

i. Legal Questions Review

Secretary Miller said that the bylaws committee was a diverse group with varying opinions which was good to see matters from a variety of perspectives. She continued saying that they really worked to bring about consensus and debated matters thoroughly in order to do so. She said that when interpretations remained very different or perceived repercussions were significant, we noted them for the board to consider a legal opinion. She said if you ask any one of us, we might not feel some things need a legal opinion because we're confident in our opinions and perhaps the board might vote and happen to share an opinion that many of these matters don't need a legal opinion, that is yet to be determined. She said that she suspects that if we ask an attorney about one matter, including other questions probably wouldn't add significant cost but unless we figure out what needs to be asked, if anything, we won't know. There wasn't great enthusiasm expressed for paying significant legal fees in lieu of improving our properties preferring to seek opinions only where they felt it was necessary.

i. Deed Update / Info Gathering

Secretary Miller said that some members believe the deed can't be changed but she didn't believe that to be the case. She said that the deed poses the greatest challenge for sure, as she believes that if it could be changed, it would require 100% of owners to support, not just 100% present at a meeting. She continued saying that it would also most certainly require a lawyer and recording costs to weigh against what's gained in updating the information. She said if they consulted an attorney for any aspect of this work, she felt just documenting the information of what's involved in a change would be beneficial but it's unlikely a worthwhile pursuit.

i. Charter Update / Info Gathering

Secretary Miller said that she feels very differently about the charter update adding that it could be very helpful to clear up the confusion and update it to methods of this millennia and rectify financial thresholds that are no longer relevant. She explained that the information the committee uncovered was that the state legislature originally created tax act districts requiring them to come back to the legislature for any updates and fairly quickly realized what a bad idea that was. She continued saying that the legislature then refused to see any further changes instead requiring tax act districts to vote to go to "Home Rule" status should changes be desired.

She said that many members of the committee feel very strongly that we need a legal opinion to ensure we aren't losing any power by making the change. She said that given the vast majority of municipalities currently operate under home rule, she could not personally imagine the tax act district has power a town does not, nor that the association would ever choose to exercise those powers with \$150/year tax rate and also given that it has long deferred the lion's share of its expressed power to the town. She emphasized that while she's not opposed to getting a legal opinion, she also feels comfortable confirming with free research and moving forward. She explained that it requires establishing a committee, a minimum number of hearings, a review of the board and a vote of the membership. She said going to home rule status puts the control of changes in the hands of the membership. Many members expressed support of the control of the charter being in the hands of the membership.

i. Bylaws Update & Next Steps

Secretary Miller said that the committee recommended some tweaks to recognize how they operate and clarify matters. She added that the committee was tasked with reviewing the rules documents and the fine section is a current and typical element. She said the fine section needs more research to benchmark and tie to the tax in some way and to ensure they are appropriate and in line with other similar organizations. She remarked that the hope would be that fair and reasonable expectations exist and our members, out of respect for their neighbors, follow them. She emphasized that no one, herself included, wants to be focused on punitive measures or be in a position to consider such, it's just an incentive for our membership, no different than interest for late tax payments.

She continued that to avoid back-to-back updates, if the board were interested in a charter change, the option may be to do both the charter and bylaws updates simultaneously. Director Kelly praised the work of the committee and the level of detail that was researched and documented, expressing appreciation for the effort. She also admitted that her interest and focus is more on the properties and gatherings. Secretary Miller said the bylaws are not in horrible shape but they can't conflict with the

charter so they are constrained by how outdated the charter is. She said she very much would like to clean it up to best serve the community. As this is the last meeting of this board and the agenda is set for the annual meeting with insufficient time to pivot, the consensus was that this would be an issue taken up by the new board.

D. LWBA WEBSITE & EMAIL

a. Correspondence & Updates

Secretary Miller said that we received an email from Andrew Latour asking questions about Beach 1 and asked him to come to the meeting so they could be answered on the record, for the benefit of the whole association. Mr. Latour said given this may be a long, expensive, transformative project - we want people to understand the vision of what the outcome will actually look like. He said we want to gain feedback on the design as soon as possible, since we don't want the actual implementation to be unsatisfactory to the members. He suggested having the members involved in the design and approving the specific design will avoid a lot of controversy further down the line. He asked for a sketch of the plan.

Director Jankowski reviewed the diagram of the project (attached and to posted on the website and bulletin boards). He explained that the proposed work is:

- 2ea. Terraced (flat) areas. The flat areas are created by installing low retaining walls and cutting into the existing hillside contours.
- A trench drain and new timbers are shown on the high side. This would divert water and reduce erosion that is now occurring.
- A walkway with rail is to be installed on the South side to aid in walking to the waterfront.
- Provide sand as needed
- General regrading will occur.

He continued saying this project was inherited from the previous board and many were elected last June when this project was already defined and slated to move forward. He said he understood the purpose was to make Beach 1 more useable to LWBA members by easing the slope. He continued saying that the beach has a fairly steep slope to the water, so it's a bit awkward to set up chairs or tables as it is, and its useability would be enhanced with some flat areas. He said the board held informational meetings last July or August where the project was presented to the attendees, feedback was received, and changes were incorporated. The suggestions were:

- a. Add a trench drain at the top
- b. Replace the Timbers
- c. Keep the retaining walls low so that they are not a fall hazard
- d. Add a walkway with a rail for kayak carts and those with ambulatory challenges although unable to attain ADA compliance

Mr. Latour asked if 2' was too high for terraces but Director Jankowski did not think so adding it makes a great height for a sitting wall. Mr. Latour wondered if the association should wait on the project for people to raise potential concerns or ideas. Secretary Miller said that the project has been in the works for a long time and an established priority for the membership. She continued saying that she feels they should move forward with the understanding that the project is likely to evolve regardless. She said no one is going to shoot down a great idea or ignore a problem that's pointed out. She added that pushing forward immediately isn't going to mean there's a bulldozer there tomorrow as it's going to take time and evolve regardless, but she felt it's time to move the project forward.

E. Old Business

a. Encroachment Update

President Vigurs reminded all that they had provided the encroaching homeowner with an option to pursue an agreement, but the encroaching homeowner did not accept the offer. He said that lacking an acceptance, the alternative was for the encroaching homeowner to remove their belongings and structure from the association property. He emphasized that they had no communication from the homeowner but also, none was necessary as it was stated that without communication to move forward in pursuit of an agreement, the elimination of the encroachment would occur by May 31, 2025.

b. Board of Director's Role Definitions

Secretary Miller said she had posted drafts on the website and had asked members to review them and suggest edits. No one offered suggested updates.

b. Board of Director's Procedures/Playbook

President Vigurs said that he's put together a draft of the playbook or procedures and plans to get them out to the other board members for review and edit as well.

F NEW BUSINESS

a. Beach 1 Discussion, Special Meeting Results

Director Jankowski asked if there was anything further that needed to happen prior to pursuing engineering quotes. A consensus was reached that nothing further was required and Director Jankowski should seek engineering quotes as soon as possible.

b. Discuss Member Survey Feedback

Secretary Miller said this was discussed at the special meeting and she hoped this would continue in future years but earlier than it went out this year. She said the board could meet in early March and set the questions to be deployed perhaps to close mid-April after which they could repeat a budget hearing in advance of the annual meeting.

c. Officer Nominations & Interested Individuals

A discussion ensued and they all agreed that anything can happen at the annual meeting. The board welcomed interest and nominations for all of the positions which could influence plans for incumbents. It appeared the board may be needing nominations outside of the current board at least for president, vice president and director roles. Secretary Miller encouraged people to talk to their neighbors.

d. Zoom Options/Update for Future BOD Meetings

President Vigurs said that this was supported by the survey and they are looking into budgeting for the subscription and equipment needed for the functionality.

G. OPEN DISCUSSION

No one spoke

H. NEXT MEETING DATE/CLOSING COMMENTS

President Vigurs reminded all of the annual meeting at the Fire Safety Complex at 1pm, on June 1, 2025.

I. ADJOURN

President Vigurs adjourned the meeting at 7:33pm without objection.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Meanix Miller

Kimberly Meanix Miller

Secretary

Attachments:

Treasurer's Report and Budget Worksheet dated May 21, 2025

Sign Mock-ups (lowest quote vendor)

Beach 1 Concept Sketch

Beach 1 Budget