



MEETING SUMMARY OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF TEXAS FLOODING TASK FORCE MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 23, 2020

A meeting of the Charter Township of Texas Flooding Task Force was held on January 23, 2020, commencing at approximately 10:30 a.m. at the Texas Charter Township Hall.

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Supervisor John Hinkle opened the meeting, thanking everyone for taking the time to attend and inviting the Task Force members to introduce themselves. The following members of the Task Force were present:

- Engineer Tom Wheat, Prein & Newhof
- Derek Haroldson, EGLE
- Jeff VanBelle, Deputy Drain Commissioner
- Travis Bartholomew, RCKC Deputy Director
- Dan Moyle, RCKC Chairman of the Commission
- Keisha Dickason, Senator McCann's Office
- Clare Todd, Bass Lake Representative
- Christine Morse, Kalamazoo County Commissioner
- Congressman Fred Upton
- Nate Henschel, Congressman Upton's Office
- Andy Alspach, Kalamazoo County Emergency Management
- Chuck Buxton, Crooked Lake Association
- Russ Walters, Crooked Lake Association
- Amy Coon, Eagle Lake Association
- Steven Ott, Eagle Lake Association
- Dian Latora, Pine Island Development Representative
- James Baker, City of Kalamazoo Public Services Director
- Texas Township Superintendent Julie VanderWiere
- Texas Township Supervisor John Hinkle

2. UPDATE FROM CONGRESSMAN UPTON ON FEMA

Supervisor Hinkle reported that Congressman Upton was needed in Paw Paw shortly to attend a service man's funeral. In an interest for his schedule, we were going to move the FEMA update to the top of the agenda.

Congressman Upton reported that he had written a letter to Governor Whitmore requesting that the pumping rate be increased back to 2000 gpm. He had not yet received a response but hoped to see her at a function this weekend and he planned on discussing it with her at that time. He also advised that he sent a letter of support for the FEMA Grant to the Director of FEMA. He was recently at a meeting on the Great Lakes Flooding with the Regional Director of FEMA and he brought up the Texas Township Flooding as well. The Regional Director was aware of the issues we are facing in Texas Township.

Congressman Upton also asked that the FEMA Insurance division send a representative to Texas Township to meet with residents individually. He asked that they explain why a claim was approved or denied.

Tom Wheat thanked Congressman Upton for providing the letter of support for the FEMA Grant. He advised that it has been included in our grant submission.

3. FLOODING STATUS

Russ Walters (Crooked Lake) reported that the lake levels are up from our last meeting.



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Dian Latora (Pine Island Development) reported that the levels are higher than they have been in 9-10 months. She feels we are back to a critical state.

Amy Coon (Eagle Lake) reported that the lake is at 902.98, which was the lake level at the beginning of August.

Chuck Buxton (Crooked Lake) commented that he measures from his sea wall. We are currently down about 5 inches from the highest point. He added that if we hadn't been pumping we would be much worse.

John Hinkle commented that everyone is working hard. There is trauma fatigue and we understand that but we need to keep working together to resolve this flooding.

4. FLOOD MITIGATION PROJECT UPDATE

Tom Wheat commented that there have been questions about whether or not the pumps have been on. They have been on since November 1st, except for November 11th when we had icing issues. Derek Haroldson allowed the pumps to be turned on at 1000 gpm after the large rain even, when we were concerned about freezing of the pumps again even though the Kalamazoo River was still above the permit limit. All of the levels are now below the permit limit so we are now pumping at 1400 gpm out of Crooked Lake. James Baker and the City of Kalamazoo have been great to work with and very understanding of our situation. They allowed us to start pumping at a reduced rate, knowing that there is a 3 day travel time for our pumped water to get to the Kalamazoo River, and by that time the levels would be below the permit limit. However, the ice jam on the Kalamazoo River is still an issue.

We were going to talk to EGLE about another increase in the pumping rate however we had to throttle back due to the rainfall. Tom Wheat also advised that he spoke to the contractors yesterday and the system is functioning well.

John Hinkle thanked James Baker, Derek Haroldson, Tom Wheat and Julie VanderWiere for their efforts in getting the pumps turned back on as quickly as possible.

Jeff VanBelle asked for a clarification on whether we were going to be throttling down as opposed to shutting down due to the possibility of freezing?

Tom Wheat responded that there is no written protocol but that is how we operated this time.

Russ Walters commented that in the Governor Office responded to our request to increase pumping by indicating that our water levels are going down gradually. How do we get our point across that is not happening? Our communication needs to be sharpened.

Tom Wheat responded that we continue to have 30% greater precipitation and since September 2019 it has been more like 60% greater.



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Russ Walters commented that if we were using recent data there would be a much different picture,

Amy Coon commented that she appreciates the new graph showing the 30% increase in rainfall, but the graph is showing this will not resolve at our current rate within our permit time frame.

Clare Todd asked if someone was still measuring Bass Lake?

Tom Wheat answered yes, Bass Lake gets measured three times a week.

5. UPDATE FROM LONG TERM SOLUTION SUBCOMMITTEE

Tom Wheat reported that he received the legal lake level petitions two weeks ago. Penny in his office and Russ Walters have worked out the discrepancies. They have verified 67% for Crooked Lake and 72% for Eagle Lake, which both meet the required number.

Christine Morse reported that she spoke to the County Commission Chair and was advised that the LLL petitions will be on one of the February Committee of the Whole (COTW) Agendas for the County Commission. She advised that it will be determined this week which meeting it will be added to. The COTW meets at 4pm and public comment is welcome at the beginning of the meeting. They will likely vote on the petition at a meeting in March. If it is approved then they will have the study done on the lake level and will come back to the Commission asking them to petition the court.

Tom Wheat commented that we will need to prepare districts for both a Drain District and a Special Assessment District to be prepared for either direction the long term project will go (Legal Lake Level-Drain District or FEMA Grant).

Jeff VanBelle responded that we are still working both in a parallel manner.

Tom Wheat stated that without the FEMA grant the Judge will set the district. If the FEMA Grant is awarded then it becomes a Township project and the Township would set a Special Assessment District. If the FEMA Grant is awarded there will still be a need for a Drain District, as the intent would be for the Township to turn the project over to the Drain Office after it has been completed to operate and maintain it.

Jeff VanBelle commented that the project could not be deeded over to the Drain Office until it has been paid for.

Russ Walters asked when they decide what agenda the LLL petition will be on, could Julie VanderWiere be advised.

Christine Morse responded yes of course.

John Hinkle inquired who should attend the meeting?



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Christine Morse answered that it would be helpful to have some personal stories shared. The Commissioners will discuss the petition then will be asked by show of hands who wants to move the petition forward for a vote.

Clare Todd asked Jeff VanBelle if the project gets turned over to the Drain Office, will there be a requirement for water quality testing?

Tom Wheat responded that it could be part of the EGLE permit.

6. FEMA GRANT APPLICATION/HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Tom Wheat reported that we received comments on the Hazard Mitigation Plan from both MSP and FEMA. Once FEMA approves the plan it will go to the Township Board for adoption. We expect that will occur at the next Township Board meeting.

The FEMA Grant has been submitted to FEMA and we have received comments back from them. We submitted responses to those comments today and the letter from Congressman Upton will be sent today.

Amy Coon asked if there was anyone else that we should have contact FEMA for support?

Tom Wheat responded that any of our Representatives would help.

Jeff VanBelle asked when would we know about the grant?

Tom Wheat responded that he was not for certain but thought we should know something in June.

7. COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

Tom Wheat thanked EGLE, City of Kalamazoo and Julie for the efforts last week.

James Baker commented that Ice Jams are dynamic and unpredictable. He advised that he and Julie have been conversing regularly about the status and he has met with Emergency Management. The Ice Jam is broken up right now and it is starting to flow. Morrow Dam has to let water out still so the flood waring remains in place for Kalamazoo until the ice jam clears. It does look like we are moving in the right direction.

James then commented that he understands the limits on the EGLE permit but he also understands the property damage and plight that is occurring. We don't ask for cessation unless it is absolutely necessary to prevent flooding in the city and we don't take this lightly. 2000 gpm is 4 ½ cfs (cubic feet per second) really doesn't move our gauges. We all need to work together as a community to get through this crisis.



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James then commented about the sanitary sewer infiltration and additional flows. The Treasure Island causeway lift station has been improving as the lake level continues to go down. We will continue to monitor the lift station.

Tom Wheat responded that all the lakes and several of the neighborhoods sanitary sewer flows through the 12th street Interceptor Station. The normal flow is 450,000 gpd and we are flowing 800,000-900,000 gpd, which is over capacity. If the Township needed to rebuild the pumps it could cost anywhere from \$100,000-200,000. Sump pumps, broken laterals are a problem because the sanitary sewer system was not designed to handle that amount of increased flow. We are trying to protect against this. We used CCTV to identify the laterals (the connection to each house) with more than normal flow. We have found some sump pumps and believe there are some broken laterals. 99/100 people don't know its illegal to connect to the sanitary sewer system. We need to work on a public education piece get the word out.

Andy Alspach reported that the observations last night were that there is open water from Morrow Dam to the City. We are optimistic about the ice jam clearing but we are not out of the woods yet.

Dan Moyle commented that in his observation the coordination with all these agencies doesn't happen normally. He wanted to commend everyone for working together to get this resolved.

Russ Walters thanked everyone for keeping the pumps running. He said he would like the rate to be increased as soon as it is possible.

Travis Bartholomew reported that O Avenue between 4th and 6th Street is still closed and is being monitored. They have to wait for the water to recede before they will be able to determine the course of action. 8th Street in Oshtemo is still closed. Oshtemo is working closely with RCKC to raise the road and get it back open.

Scott Sylvester asked when they will be removing the gravel from Treasure Island? He followed that up with asking what RCKC's target elevation is to remove the gravel. He then commented that when the cul-de-sac was raised it took away the ability for the water to pool in the cul-de-sac. He shared that his basement is not flooding as well as his front yard. Raising the cul-de-sac transferred the road problem to the property owners.

Travis Bartholomew responded that there isn't a project scheduled yet for Treasure Island. We may not remove the gravel until there is a LLL. We will work with Township for a project then. We won't know what level the road needs to be set at until the LLL is set.

Jeff VanBelle commented that he is having the same issue with N Eagle Lake Drive drain project. We are in a holding pattern until the LLL can be set. He then stated that we have been discussing raising Treasure Island cul-de-sac for sometime and that was not done lightly.

Travis Bartholomew then commented that RCKC still has three pumps at Treasure island but the residents have agreed to operate them.

John Hinkle reminded everyone that we need to keep working together.



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Dian Latora shared that she hopes the pumps can be increased soon to handle the spring rains.

Steve Ott asked Tom Wheat how the measurements account for the lake spreading out wider?

Tom Wheat responded that we are measuring elevations strictly, so it doesn't account for that.

Steve Ott commented that as it spreads there is more volume. He stated that he again asks EGLE to evaluate every two weeks to determine if there can be an increase. He then asked what the lowest numbers the pump can be run at?

Tom Wheat responded that Eagle Lake pump can be throttled back easily however Crooked Lake pump is a VFD pump and its not as easy to do. He advised that he was not sure exactly how low that pump could get and still work.

Amy Coon thanked COK and EGLE for allowing the pumps to get turned back on. She then inquired what EGLE was waiting for to increase the pump rate?

Derek Haroldson commented it is dictated on keeping water levels downstream steady. He added that they were prepared to have a discussion with the Township about an increase then we got that large amount of rain. We are poised to have that discussion soon. Downstream has been stable, it appears to be the rain that is causing the fluctuations. He hopes to have feedback as early as next week.

Amy Coon commented that historically Crooked Lake would have flowed to Bass Lake. She asked if that was being taken into consideration.

Derek Haroldson stated that we understand that. That doesn't give us much direction for the pumping project though. It is the rainfall events that are causing the problems.

Dian Latora asked how much they would increase the pumping rate if it was allowed?

Derek Haroldson responded that we have been increasing at increments, so either increase to 1500 or 1600 gpm.

Tom Wheat advised he wanted to clarify about the channel on Crooked Lake. That would not have been flowing today but maybe at the peak. We would still need to get through this.

Derek Haroldson stated that people are obviously interested in a rate change. We will be reviewing and get with the Township. We will be meeting with the Township in reference to the long-term solution and we have been reviewing the permit for the N Eagle Lake Drain Project. But we need to get updated data in order to review the pump rate.

Jeff VanBelle commented that Vineyard Drain District Project is getting ready to go to bid

The next Task Force Meeting has been scheduled for Thursday February 20, 2020 at 10:30 a.m.

Submitted by Superintendent Julie VanderWiere
February 2, 2020