

**Minutes of the Potters Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District Special Meeting held  
Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at Town Hall, Town of East Troy, Wisconsin**

**1- Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Cathy Schulz at 7:00 PM

**2- Roll Call/Notice of Quorum**

Present: Board members Cathy Schulz, Chuck DeWall, MaryJo Jones, Matt Wessels, Thad Seymour (on the phone), plus 2 lake constituents. Chairperson Schulz stated that a quorum was present.

**Public Comments-**

Bob Rice-W884 Shorewood DR, was in attendance and gave his comments

To the best of my knowledge, there are only 3 wake boats on our lake, which have never posed a problem and are rarely used in wake mode. Based on studies, there are recommendations for depths and distances from shore at which these boats should be used. Due to the size of our lake, I believe that any new legislation would impact the use of these boats on our lake. I would ask the board if changes are going to be made, at our lake board level, that they would be proposed at our spring or annual meeting, and include a grandfather clause for the 3 current boats, so they can be used as they have been in the past. One suggestion at the town level was wake surf zones. The area that these boats would be regulated to on our lake...5 acres would create havoc on a weekend when boats are going counterclockwise. I believe that if it were "suggested" and not mandated, most people would comply.

**Emailed Comments:**

Mike Domritz-W792 Potters Circle. Well stated. I do believe the lake's health should take priority.

Donna Sibilsky-Miramar Property Owners Association. I personally am against wake boats. They churn up more water. It is not good for the health of the lake.

Lou Ferruzza-W1016 Shorewood Dr.- The Ferruzza family, as actual wake boat owners on Potter Lake (1 of 3 owners), would like to add comments regarding the letter being drafted to be sent to the town. Firstly, we'd like to make clear that the infrequent use of our boat was actually less than 5 hours total for the 2025 season. In the letter to the town stating "many" riparian owners have concerns regarding Phosphorus stirred from the use of wake boats, what is the percentage of riparian owners that constitute the "many," and what data was presented to substantiate this concern?

I am surprised there is not an overwhelming concern regarding Phosphorus stirred from the lakebed caused by these everyday year-round activities including but not limited to: all boats pulling in and out of docks, jet ski and jet boat propulsion, all watercraft operating in more shallow areas such as the northwest area of our lake, and the Marinas operating barges to install and remove piers and lifts. The wake boats only operate in the deepest area of the lake, >20ft, and do not actually bring up muck as do the aforementioned activities. Another concern regarding a Lake Beulah ordinance enactment that could negatively affect boat traffic on Potter Lake seems premature. There are a finite number of parking slots available at the boat launch, precluding an influx of outside wake boats. Also, Potter Lake is known to be a smaller lake, thus wake boat operators would not flock to our lake but look at bigger lakes.

Invasive species have been found on many lakes, including Potter, prior to the popularity of wake boats, and are caused by all boats, especially fishing boats and their live wells and trailers, which travel from lake to lake quite frequently.

Ronald Braier-W1029 Miramar Dr. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I fully support the content of your letter. Keep up the good work.

Faith Wolf- W945 Miramar Dr. I do believe these boats stir up the bottom of the lake, as in the spring, it's clear. But as boating season begins, because our lake is shallow, it becomes cloudy.

Terry Ritchey-N9103 East Miramar Dr-This letter seems to make no recommendations to the Town of East Troy as to how we would like to see an ordinance worded. And we should state clearly what we want/need. The DNR proposal regarding wake-enhanced boating gets specific about size of lake, depth and distance from shore. If the Town ordinance did similar, it would deal with the issue for Beulah, Army and Potter Lake. And it would be objective, rather than emotional. In effect, it would ban wake-enhanced boating on Potter Lake. This seems proper actually, given the harms the churn causes a shallow lake. It would impact coming from outside. Your letter explains our situation well, but I think it critical that we help the Town Board and ourselves by being specific.

MaryJo Jones-N9033 East Miramar Dr. Please understand that I will be recusing myself on the discussion and the decision to send a letter to the Town of East Troy as this is a conflict of interest with my husband being the Town Chairman. However, I do support PLPRD reaching out to the Town Board on the wake surfing issue as PLPRD has not officially done so up to this point. I also wanted to reach out before the meeting tonight to point out some considerations for you to keep in mind as you prepare a Wake Surfing Boating letter to the Town of East Troy. The draft letter appears (in my opinion) to be avoiding a PLPRD position, only asking for consideration of possible impacts. At this point, there are basically two wake surfing options up for consideration by the Town Board on specially Lake Beulah; (1) shoreline distance/water depth ordinance restriction of 500/25 or 300/20 and (2) wait and see on current litigation of lawsuits/claims. These options were on the agenda from the February 2026 Town Board meeting. (3) Shoreline distance/water depth ordinance restriction of 500/25 with two established zones, expiring September 2026, was a recommendation from the Lake Beulah Management District (LBMD) and 300/20 with four established zones was a recommendation from the Beulah Responsible Boaters (BRB) citizens group. (4) Think about what will be the particular PLPRD recommendations on Potter Lake for the Town Board's consideration if a wake surfing ordinance restriction is being evaluated on Lake Beulah.

Al Hanson-: My name is Al Hanson. My address is W976 Shorewood Dr. I have been a riparian owner on Potter Lake since 2002 and a wake boat owner for the last 3 years. Since I'm unable to attend tonight's meeting, I am submitting my comments in advance. In 2025, there were 3 wake boat owners on Potter Lake, including myself. Of the 138 riparian owners, I represent less than 1 percent of all boats. I have zebra mussels attached to my pier every year, and I'm sure the rest of you do too. That invasive species has been here for many, many years. So how can anyone point a finger at my 3-year-old boat and say it's my fault? We did not wake-surf in 2025. In 2024 we wake-surfed once and we used the boat a total of 5 times. As a working family, our boat sits on the lift more than most, and our boat doesn't leave this lake. So, while everyone else drives around the lake and sees our boat sitting there on the lift, you should ask yourself who's turning up the lake or causing waves now? The fear mongering and bully mentality has got to Stop! You're enabling this contentious behavior and ruining our community. We don't need more regulations and you don't need to single us out.

### **New Business**

3. Discuss and take action on submitting a letter to the Town of East Troy board members that clarifies the position of PLPRD on wake-surfing.

*Before we started, Walworth County Representative, MaryJo Jones, recused herself from any discussion or decisions because of her affiliation with the Town of East Troy Chairperson.*

As stated above, from the riparian owners' concerns about wake-enhanced boating, the board will continue to monitor the ongoing State legislature and Town discussions. The PLPRD board is not taking a formal position at this time. The PLPRD Board felt it was important to communicate that concerns do exist, while the state and town decisions may ultimately determine future regulations. A suggested revision was to change "many riparian owners" to "a number of riparian owners" in paragraph two. Motion by Chuck DeWall, seconded by Thad Seymour, to accept the letter drafted by Chairperson Schulz with minor corrections. Motion passed 4-0; MaryJo Jones abstained.

4. Set a special meeting after March 10 to discuss and possibly take action on options for 2026 lake management and the new Aquatic Plant Management plan

The Board revisited its earlier discussion about applying for a DNR grant for a five-year aquatic plant management plan. After consultation with the lake management consultant, it was determined that accepting DNR funding could significantly limit treatment flexibility. It was also determined that DNR counting methods may delay treatment thresholds. The proposed regulatory changes (NR 107) could increase costs and restrictions. The Board will review updated cost information and revisit this decision at an upcoming meeting before making a final determination, tabling discussion until April 2026.

The PLPRD Board also discussed sediment conditions near the boat launch, noting that if we do not have sufficient rainfall, it may become difficult to remove the harvester at the end of the season, as well as the barge used to remove lifts and docks. There was some discussion that no dredging has occurred historically, and after reviewing the recent 2021 sonar mapping, the sediment appears to be relatively compacted. Measuring sediment depth near the launch may be considered in the future.

### **Old Business** -none

### **Announcements**-none

### **Adjourn**

Motion by Chuck DeWall and seconded by Matt Wessels to adjourn. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Chuck DeWall  
Secretary

Potters Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District  
PO Box 808  
East Troy, WI 53120  
February 24, 2026

Town Board for the Town of East Troy  
N9330 Stewart School Road  
East Troy, WI 53120

Dear Chairman Joe Jones, Supervisors Barbara Church, Michele Reyes, Ty Leonard, Brian Johnson, and Clerk-Treasurer Jean Loth,

The members of the PLPRD Board are aware that wake-enhanced boating was discussed at the Town of East Troy meeting on 2/11/2026. At this meeting, three options for regulating Wake Enhanced Surfing were presented. During the discussion of proposals focused solely on Lake Beulah, a suggestion was made that any ordinance include Potter Lake and Army Lake as well as Beulah. It was stated that *Potter Lake did not appear to have concerns about this topic*. This is the reason for this communication.

**While our riparian owners do not currently have many immediate concerns about wake-enhanced boating on Potter Lake, it is not accurate to say there are no concerns. A number of riparian owners are concerned about the negative impacts of wake-enhanced boating on the lakebed. It has been noted that phosphorus from the lake bottom may be stirred up and released into the lake. Additionally, due to the lake's shallowness and the lack of "flow-through", Potter Lake is already not as clear as a larger lake, such as Beulah. There is concern that it could be negatively impacted by additional wake-enhanced boating. There is concern that if the Town enacts an ordinance for Lake Beulah only, the implication would be that Potter Lake is unrestricted, which could result in more wake-boat traffic on our lake.**

For the past two years, the PLPRD has maintained that we are not taking a position on wake-enhanced boating at this time, though we are monitoring what is being shared locally and statewide in Wisconsin. We recognize that this is a more volatile issue on Lake Beulah, which is much larger, and that reports indicate multiple wake boats operating simultaneously. We have two, or possibly three, riparian owners on Potter Lake who have wake boats. These boats are used infrequently in wake mode. This has been the basis for our wait-and-see approach to restrictions on wake-enhanced boating.

At the PLPRD Spring meeting last year on May 17, 2025, the topic was discussed during a Q&A with Jeff Stelzer from Lake and Pond. He noted that this is a hot issue right now, but there appear to be negative effects on vegetation and a potential for invasive species to be introduced. He clarified that these negative effects are not caused by the boats themselves but by the actions of those using them. Attendees appeared to understand that wake-enhanced boating activity on Potter Lake is limited, but

remained worried about the possibility of future damage to the lake. As a reminder, our Potter Lake meeting took place just over a month after the Meeting of the Electors in the Town of East Troy, where the advisory vote called for a complete ban on Lake Beulah. Concerns were raised that restricting wake-enhanced boating on Lake Beulah alone could increase activity on Potter Lake, which people want to avoid. There was also discussion about how this issue has become contentious on Lake Beulah, leading to neighbor-versus-neighbor disputes. Comments made on various social media pages and the high level of emotion surrounding this topic were mentioned. During our meeting, we reaffirmed that the PLPRD was not taking a position on this issue and was closely monitoring the situation in the Town.

Since the spring of 2025, there has been much more information available on wake-enhanced recreation. Scientific studies show that wake-enhanced boating on shallow lakes causes damage. There has also been heightened animosity, expressed mainly on social media, between those on opposite sides of the issue. While our riparian owners have not generally gotten involved in those discussions, they are aware of them. I am sure they will be very concerned if restrictions are imposed on Lake Beulah but not on Potter Lake, thereby making Potter Lake more open to wake-boat traffic.

As the Town Board considers options for creating an ordinance, it should understand the realities of our lake compared to Lake Beulah. First, Potter Lake has not experienced wake boats entering from the boat launch. Wake boats owned by riparian owners are only on Potter Lake, reducing concerns about invasive species from ballast tanks that cannot be fully drained. This concern would increase if outside wake boats were permitted to enter our lake. Potter Lake is much shallower than Lake Beulah. I have attached the 2021 Sonar Survey of Potter Lake conducted by Lake and Pond Solutions. There are no areas of Potter Lake that are 25 feet deep. There is a small area of approximately 5 acres, 20 feet deep, and 300 feet from shore.

In conclusion, we ask that any decisions regarding an ordinance on wake-surfing for Lake Beulah take into account the ramifications for Potter Lake. It would be a mistake to assume that because our riparian owners have not publicly voiced their concerns, they do not have them.

Sincerely,

Cathy Schulz, Chairperson

[chairperson@potterslake.org](mailto:chairperson@potterslake.org)

Potters Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District