

Minutes of the Potters Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District Special Meeting held Tuesday, August 12, 2025, at Town Hall, Town of East Troy, Wisconsin

1-Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Cathy Schulz at 6:30 pm.

2-Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Cathy Schulz, Chuck DeWall, Bill Roeber, MaryJo Jones, Thad Seymour, plus 17 lake constituents.

Also present: Heidi and Mitch Cole from Inland Lake Harvesters (ILH)

3-New Business Harvester

The meeting's purpose was to inform the public and gather input regarding the future of the lake weed harvester, including repair vs. replacement options, contractor alternatives, and funding strategies.

Current Harvester Status: The Harvester was purchased in 1984 and is 41 years old. Since 2021, PLPRD has had a total of 15 repairs, 13 of which are due to the unit's age, at a cost of \$6,248. The unit is currently not fully operational due to a failed solenoid. As no part can be found, a workaround is planned for \$ 1,038. A probable full hydraulic overhaul (if more solenoids fail) would cost \$30,000. Hydraulic paddle wheel motor replacement would run about \$15,000. The current motor is 10 years old and is no longer manufactured because it does not meet EPA requirements.

Replacement Harvester Options: Two vendors were contacted: Inland Lake Harvesters (ILH) and Aquarius Systems, the current manufacturer of our harvester.

Recommendations: Purchase a smaller ILH model (ILH 7-250). This model is more suitable for Potter's Lake than the larger model.

Pricing: The ILH unit with trailer was quoted at \$132,400, and the Aquarius equivalent harvester with trailer was quoted at \$237,500. As there was concern that the ILH trailer was too large for Potter Lake's shallow ramp, the decision was made to retain our current trailer. This reduces the quote by \$12,600.

Contracting vs. Owning: Contracting with an outside company, North Star Waterway Management, would cost approximately \$30,000 per year. This includes 3 weeks of cutting, one week per month, in the months of June, July, and August. The issue and challenges with this type of service are that it operates on a fixed schedule and is inflexible in response to the lake's weed growth. Since 1976, Potter Lake has had resident-operated harvesting, which provides immediate and flexible reactions to weed outbreaks and changing lake conditions. Our harvester operators are paid employees of the district.

Financing & Cost Options: The total purchase cost of the ILH unit would be approximately \$119,800, excluding the trailer option. The PLPRD currently has an annual revenue of \$51,000. The PLPRD has an LPL investment with a value of \$103,000 (down from an original basis of \$116,000). Three possible financing options were presented.

1. Use Cash + Liquidate LPL Investment:
 - Fully funded without raising taxes.
 - Leaves ~\$45K in reserves.
2. Use Cash + Special One-Time Levy:
 - First payment from cash.
 - Final two payments funded by one-time tax (~\$620/homeowner).
3. Use Cash + Government Loan:
 - 3-5-year loan at 5.5% via Wisconsin Board of Commissioners of Public Lands.
 - Yearly tax impact: ~\$140–\$225/homeowner (depending on term).

A Wisconsin DNR Recreational Boating Facilities Grant could provide up to 50% funding, but this would delay the purchase for two years, resulting in higher equipment prices. There is also the possible increased risk of harvester failure in the meantime. With a DNR grant, there were also indications that the DNR would want fees charged at the boat launch, which would be an additional cost to the district.

MaryJo Jones made a motion to present to the constituents at the Annual Meeting, scheduled on September 13, 2025, the option to vote on purchasing a new harvester, specifically the ILH7-250 Harvester from Inland Harvester. If the vote is in favor, a second vote will be held on the best method for financing. Thad Seymour seconded the motion. All voted in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

4-Adjourn

MaryJo Jones made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Bill Roeber. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:51 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chuck DeWall
Secretary