

Ottawa River Coalition Meeting Minutes
November 21, 2019 Perry Township Admin Bldg. 8:00 am

In attendance:

Steve Kayatin, Allen County Sanitary Engineer
Cory Gonya, Nutrien

Jim Morrissey, City of Lima Public Works Dept
Jarrett Lange, Kohli & Kaliher Associates

Brett Allerding Curfman, ODOT Dist. 1

Sierra Slusser, Husky Lima Refinery

John Schneider, LACNIP

Tom Sherwood, City of Lima Utilities Dept WWTP

Casey Heilman, Allen SWCD

Russ Decker, Nutrien

Sophia Fisher, City of Lima Comm. Dev. Office

Clint Schroeder, OSU Extension Allen County

Emily Kerber, City of Lima Utilities Dept

Joe Gearing, Allen County Engineer's Office

Cody Wischmeyer, Kohli & Kaliher Associates

Pat Beam, Beam Designs LLC

Beth Seibert, Ottawa River Coalition

Saul Allen, City of Lima Utilities Dept

Eric Markley, City of Lima Utilities Dept WWTP

Leslie Riley, Tri-Moraine Audubon Society

Jessica Begonia, Alloway

Roy Baldridge, LACNIP

Mike Elwood, Hardin SWCD

Chairman, Cory Gonya called the meeting to order at 8:04 am. Self-introductions were made around the room. No additions to the agenda were requested.

Perry Township Trustee Kevin Cox welcomed the group and gave an overview of the Township's operations. Perry Township has 3500 residents. Fire and emergency services are fully staffed and include one full-time, and one part-time EMT. Fire and emergency equipment features 1 tanker engine, 2 pumper trucks, 1 ladder truck, 1 grasshopper unit, and 2 ambulances. Two people staff the Road Dept and they have a part-time Police Dept. The room we are meeting in today is for rent, Kevin noted. Perry Local School District is the Township centerpiece and Kevin also bragged on the Commodores recent Northwest Conference Football win. Kevin Cox and lifelong township resident Kevin Haver shared some fun historical facts. Originally Perry School supported grades 1-9 and students completed their education at nearby Shawnee High School. The township and school system were named for American naval commander Commodore Oliver H. Perry. The historic "burgs" of Perry Township included Amherst, Warsaw, South Warsaw, and Rosculp. Operated in the early 1900s, the Ohio Electric Railway or interurban railroad extended from north to south across Perry Township in a line between Lima and Bellefontaine but connected far beyond – south to Springfield and Dayton and north to Toledo and Defiance (actually points much farther in OH and IN). The substation still stands at Hanthorn and Greely Chapel Roads.

Cory thanked Kevin for hosting us today! The Chairman presented the minutes of the September 26th meeting for approval. No additions or corrections were noted. *Motion by Joe Gearing to approve the minutes of the September 26 meeting. Motion seconded by Kevin Cox and carried.*

Treasurer's Report – Treasurer Sophia Fisher presented the November Financial Report, outlining receipts, expenses and account balances since the September report. *Motion by Mike Elwood to approve the Treasurer's report. Motion seconded by Steve Kayatin and carried.*

Committee Reports

Executive Committee – Chairman Cory Gonya reported on their October 24 meeting where this agenda was prepared and plans were made for the January 11 Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting will be conducted at The City Club with catering by Train Town/Casa Lu Al. Cory encouraged award nominations with a list of former award winners distributed as a reference.

Stream Monitoring Committee

- Emily Kerber gave an update on the Equalization Basin project, reporting that everything is still going smooth and ahead of schedule. Work currently is focused on the underground gate structures. The concrete work is done and the next step is I&I (inflow and infiltration) leak testing.
- Cory Gonya provided a regulatory update.
 - WOTUS 2015 – In Sept US EPA and USACE released a new rule to repeal the Waters of the US 2015 Obama-era Clean Water Rule. Currently the 2015 Rule is effective in 22 states including Ohio. The repeal will create uniformity in all 50 states and return to the 1986 WOTUS Rule and 2008 guidance document until such time a new rule is promulgated – anticipated for early 2020.
 - WLEB TMDL – In Feb 2019 environmental groups filed a federal lawsuit in the Northern District of Ohio against US EPA, alleging Ohio EPA was allowed to evade its legal duty to address nutrient pollution, resulting in harmful algae blooms (HABs) in the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB). Cory noted that this is moving through the courts much quicker than expected! Beth Seibert noted that such an action will apply to our local watershed. Russ Decker spoke of how it may drag out in appeals for another 18 months. Emily Kerber reported that the judge made it sound like an NPS (nonpoint source) plan could replace the TMDL (total maximum daily load) plan, but that the current NPS plan is insufficient. Cory reflected on how the issue boils down to the lack of progress on the 40% phosphorus reduction goal. Voluntary measures are NOT producing results, so mandates are required. H2Ohio, just announced last week, will throw money at more voluntary approaches. Ohio EPA publishes a nutrient loading report every two years with the next one due out in early 2020.
 - LEBOR – Proponents and opponents of the Lake Erie Bill of Rights are still waiting on a decision from federal court (filings in June 2019). Cory reported that LEBOR is still floating out there with nothing new since the last report.
 - Cory briefly reflected on a handout distributed this morning on H2Ohio. This high level summary described the 8 best management practices that Ohio and its collaborating, responsible state agencies are emphasizing in the nutrient reduction component. These eight land-based prevention strategies are: soil testing and fertilizer application, equipment and technology for targeted nutrient application and overall nutrient reduction, establishing more edge of field stream buffers, wetland creation for natural water filtration, addressing wastewater and water supply systems particularly in economically disadvantaged areas, building on successes of inland waterway treatment systems, supporting continued scientific research and data collection, and investing in additional water quality monitoring.
 - Cory also distributed the NOAA Experimental Lake Erie Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) Bulletin (October 31, 2019). He spoke of how the HAB forecast hit dead-on this year, which surprised him (and others) considering farmer's prevented planting, and reduced nutrient application during an excessive spring rainfall season. 2019 is the 4th worst year on record.
- Upper Auglaize River Watershed Study Update – The field portion of the Ohio EPA study is expected to be completed within the next 12 months, and no one in the room had specific details to report. So discussion turned to a variety of subjects regarding Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB).
 - Joe Gearing talked about three drainage projects he is seeking FEMA funding to conduct H&H studies. Two are in the Delphos area and one is in the Bluffton area.

He is working with Allen County EMA and the consulting firm Stantec to complete the grant applications.

- Beth Seibert talked about the Governor's November 14th video presentation regarding the goals of the H2Ohio initiative. State Representative Bob Cupp has asked the local SWCD to keep him updated on how the initiative plays out in Allen County. But in a conference call that Allen SWCD Administrator Gary Werling participated in recently, Ohio Dept of Ag (ODA) reports that no new dollars are being allocated for additional staff to handle the workload.
- Russ Decker spoke of the Toledo infrastructure upgrade that should be completed in 2020. The hope in Columbus is that the new infrastructure will lessen the WLEB pressure.
- Steve Kayatin spoke of regionalization and consolidation of drinking water resources that extends as far south as Bowling Green.

Lowhead Dam Committee – Cory Gonya gave an update on the Allentown lowhead dam removal project. Since we have agreed to remove the concrete material from the stream, Ohio EPA now says that the project is non-jurisdictional regarding the Section 401 permit. We had previously received the non-jurisdiction for the Section 404 permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers. There is also no requirement for sediment sampling but we are responsible for downstream silt capture. Cory explained that a silt curtain is being considered along with erosion prevention and stabilization during and following the dam removal. The next step is a Hydraulic and Hydrological (H&H) Analysis and we are contracting with Kohli and Kaliher Associates to conduct that study. The purpose of the H&H is to satisfy ODOT concerns about the bridge infrastructure and LACRPC regarding flood plain impacts. Our cost is \$9,400. Grant funding opportunities were discussed and Beth Seibert talked about completing a point watershed plan to capture 319 or WLEB funds. Steve Kayatin suggested speaking with Shirley Siefker in Findlay regarding USDA Rural Development funds. Beth and Cory also talked about reaching out to local partners regarding funding this project. Cory spoke of the ideal timeframe for the project to happen next year being mid-July through end of September. The fish spawning window extends from April 1 through July 15. Clams begin to burrow deeper into the stream bed after October 1 in preparation for winter.

Stormwater Committee

- Jim Morrissey gave an update on City of Lima projects. The Melrose project is wrapping up Phase I, on-time and on-budget. Schoonover dam repair is on winter shut-down. Fifty trees were planted around Lima this fall utilizing tree rebate funds. Lima may continue to do this every year or two. The railroad grade separation project is still moving forward. Upcoming projects include roundabout roadway projects at Main and Market Streets and the Boulevards intersection at the hospital. They are installing a stormwater tile project at Faurot Park with the goal of dry fields during baseball/softball season. Plans have been completed and are out to bid on the Melrose Phase II stormwater improvement project. Jim also reported that various other stormwater improvement projects are slated for 2019/2020 and all are aimed at helping keep Lima great!
- Joe Gearing gave an update on Allen County Engineer projects. OB Frails Subdivision drainage improvement project in Shawnee Township has been approved at a cost of \$1 million. A drainage improvement project involving the State Penitentiary and the neighborhoods to the west is hopefully going to line up for H2Ohio funding as the design features three detention basins.
- Casey Heilman spoke of urban stormwater initiatives served by Allen SWCD. She distributed a brochure outlining the various educational programs being offered by their

office to schools and public groups. She noted that the “River Insects Will Travel” is popular and explained how the local news covered her recent program with St. Charles students. She captured river insects from the stream in nets and took them into the school. The students searched the nets for the discovery of different insects. Casey asked that the programming information she provided be extended by the group. Allen SWCD is also in charge of the local Adopt-A-Roadway program. Twelve groups are actively picking up litter at least twice a year at specific locations. Perry School was just added. The purpose of the program is to aid in keeping the community clean and preventing litter from reaching stormwater. Volunteers simply request supplies from her and established groups are recognized by road signage at their areas. Beth Seibert reported that she is trying to wrap up various illicit discharge investigations with the year end.

Watershed Committee – Beth Seibert reported that Allen and Hardin SWCD are hosting a watershed planning meeting with farmers on December 3rd at 8:30 am in Lafayette for the Hog Creek subwatershed. As previously reported, Allen and Hardin SWCD are working with a consultant to develop watershed action plans for various watersheds in order to be ready to capture funding for primarily agricultural practices. Ohio EPA is paying for the plan development.

New Business

Cory Gonya reported that the 2020 voting membership dues is recommended to remain at \$100 per member organization. *Motion by Sophia Fisher to set the 2020 voting membership dues at \$100. Motion seconded by Roy Baldrige and carried.*

Member and Partner Reports

- Beam Designs – Pat Beam spoke of a very active year. They are in the 3rd phase of the John and Mary Rudolph Nature Preserve at Russells Point. The Nature Center project for Old Man’s Cave at Hocking Hills is 99% done. Pat was responsible for site design and oversight. The Celina Amphitheatre at Lake Front Park is almost done, while the Lima Rotary Club Amphitheatre is just getting a good start. Pat is also working on the design for an employee and bus parking lot for RTA in Lima. He is working on Clean Ohio applications for a stream restoration project for Lost Creek and another for Fort Jennings Park.
- ODOT District 1 – Brett Allerding-Curfman reported that the Governor released ODOT’s 150 most dangerous intersections list (March 2019). The intersection of Napoleon Road and State Route 309 in eastern Allen County is on that list. A public meeting regarding the plan for that intersection is being scheduled and Brett advised the group to watch for that announcement in December.
- Tri-Moraine Audubon Society – Leslie Riley reported on upcoming programs open to any interested person. December 3rd at 7:30 pm, they are having a program on Deer Management. Bird Counts are scheduled for December 14 at Indian Lake and December 15 at Grand Lake St. Marys. Leslie also noted that she and her students at ONU have been sampling fish above and below the Allentown lowhead dam for several years. Their studies also include algae and invertebrates. They were just out there last Tuesday to sample at Copus Road, just upstream of Allentown in the Ottawa River.
- Allen Water District – Steve Kayatin noted that he is a Board Member. They are engaged in a southeast regional water project collaboration that will provide water to Westminster in 2020/2021. They are also updating their service map and plan in this City/County/District collaboration.

- Allen County Sanitary Engineering Dept – Steve Kayatin reported that the Shawnee II WWTP upgraded with a \$15 million blending project. Phase II is the trunk sewer relocation which will be bid sometime in late 2020. Gomer is slated for a sewer collection system project, eliminating 150 septic systems. Another sewer extension involves Slabtown and Dixie Highway and 20 homes. A third project involves 7 homes on Adgate Road. Hume Road is back on their radar per failing septic systems. Steve also reported that the Allen Water District is working on a single county water entity.
- Nutrien – Russ Decker announced that he retired six weeks ago from his job with Ohio EMA. Five weeks ago he started working for Nutrien in Lima, heading up their Community Relations and Philanthropy section. Russ said it was good to be back in Lima and working with the ORC again!
- Alloway – Jessica Begonia noted the email that Beth had sent out recently on their January 29-30 program *Making Sense of Statistical Data*. This is a great hands-on workshop!
- Lima Allen County Neighborhoods in Partnership (LACNIP) – Roy Baldrige reported on their recent 25th anniversary awards program, including their prestigious Good Neighbor Awards. Wonderful information was shared and the Mayor gave an overview on what's happening in Lima. Roy proudly talked about how LACNIP programs are so very positive and well-received. A few years ago LACNIP purchased the fire station on West Spring Street. They are challenged with the \$5,000 annual property tax assessment and have applied for an exemption through the State of Ohio. Roy was happy to report that they had prevailed!
- City of Lima Utilities Dept – Saul Allen reflected on how Lima is fully involved in their fall leaf pick-up and supplying bags to customers. He also noted proudly that he is the product of two Perry grads!
- City of Lima Utilities Dept – Eric Markley added to the earlier report of how the Equalization Basin at Simmons Field is progressing nicely. November 2020 is the targeted completion date and they are six months ahead of that schedule.
- OSU Extension Allen County – Clint Schroeder reported that Columbus has not released too many details yet on the H2Ohio dollars. He is planning to cohost summer farmer education meetings with Allen SWCD. He reminded the group that H2Ohio still represents voluntary farmer involvement. Clint spoke about an app for your phone that farmers can use to score (0-100) and certify their operations in regards to best management practices (BMPs) for nutrient management. It is also a tool to recognize those who are going above and beyond.
- Perry Township – Kevin Cox wrapped up the reports with a variety of topics shared. He spoke of a fundraiser to be held in this meeting hall the following evening to benefit the Lima Rescue Mission. The program will feature Jeff Davis, an Elvis Presley entertainer. The Township road staff are preparing for winter. He also spoke well of the recent LACNIP dinner, as he had been in attendance. NW Perry Township is included in the Neighborhood Associations and Kevin has witnessed so many benefits by that partnership. Welcome back Russ Decker!

Motion by Kevin Cox to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Roy Baldrige and carried. Meeting adjourned at approximately 9:45 am. The next meeting of the Ottawa River Coalition is Saturday, January 11, 2020 at 5:15 pm. This is the Annual Meeting and is to be conducted at The City Club in Lima.

Minutes transcribed by Beth Seibert, Coalition Coordinator.