

DEKALB COUNTY DRAINAGE BOARD MEETING
January 15, 2026

Drainage Commissioners Present:

Kellen Dooley, Member
William L. Hartman, Member
James A. Miller, Vice-Chairman

Others Present:

Glenn Crawford, County Surveyor
Tyler Lanning, Lead Survey Tech
Troy Bungard, Survey Tech
Rebecca Wright, Drainage Board Secretary
Shannon Kruse, Attorney
Katie Rutan, Office Clerk

Appointed Members Serving

Jan 2025- Dec 2027

Steve Kelham, Member
Bruce Bell, II, Chairman

Guests:

John Hunt, AES
Todd Ramsey, Auburn Strip Center

Chairman Bruce Bell called the January 15, 2026, DeKalb County Drainage Board Meeting to order at 8:30 AM. He stated that prior to the reorganization of the Board, the first order of business was the approval of the minutes from the last meeting of 2025.

Approval of Meeting Minutes, December 15, 2025

Chairman Bell asked for a motion to approve the minutes from December 15, 2025, and Commissioner Jim Miller made the motion. Mr. Steve Kelham seconded the motion. Having a motion and a second, Bruce Bell asked if there was any discussion, but hearing none, he called for a vote, and the motion was unanimously carried. He then turned the meeting over to Attorney Shannon Kruse to conduct the reorganization of the Drainage Board for 2026.

Reorganization of the Drainage Board for 2026

Ms. Kruse asked for nominations for chairman of the board. Commissioner Kellen Dooley nominated Mr. Bruce Bell for the position, stating he had done a nice job in 2025, and he'd like to see Mr. Bell return to the post. Commissioner Jim Miller agreed, seconding the motion. Ms. Kruse asked if there were further nominations, but hearing none, she called for a vote, and the motion carried.

Upon establishing Bruce Bell as Chairman of the Drainage Board, Ms. Kruse called for nominations for Vice-Chairman, and Commissioner Kellen Dooley nominated Commissioner Jim Miller. Mr. Steve Kelham seconded the motion. Ms. Kruse asked if there were any other nominations, and Mr. Bill Hartman nominated Mr. Steve Kelham. Commissioner Jim Miller seconded the motion. Shannon Kruse called for a vote for Commissioner Jim Miller as Vice-President of the Board, and Mr. Kellen Dooley, Mr. Bruce Bell, and Mr. Steve Kelham voted affirmatively. With 3 votes in his favor, Commissioner Miller retained the position of Vice-Chair.

Ms. Kruse then turned the meeting back over to Chairman Bell to conduct the remainder of the Reorganization of the Board.

Chairman Bell stated he would entertain nominations for Secretary of the board, and Commissioner Jim Miller nominated Mrs. Rebecca Wright. Commissioner Kellen Dooley seconded the motion. Mr. Bell asked if there were any other nominations or discussion, but hearing none, he called for a vote, and the motion carried.

Bruce Bell then stated there was only one person in the room fit for the position of Drainage Board Attorney and that was Shannon Kruse. Commissioner Jim Miller motioned to approve the nomination, and Mr. Steve Kelham seconded the motion. Having a motion and a second and hearing no discussion, Mr. Bell called for a vote, and the motion carried.

Having established the roles for the 2026 Drainage Board, Chairman Bell stated there were several Joint Board Appointments that needed to be made. The following appointments were made with unanimous approval:

- DeKalb County/Allen County Board: Bill Hartman and Kellen Dooley
- DeKalb County/Noble County Board: Bill Hartman and Steve Kelham
- DeKalb County/Steuben County Board: Kellen Dooley and Jim Miller
- Allen County/DeKalb County/Noble County Board: Bruce Bell and Steve Kelham
- DeKalb County/LaGrange County/Noble County/Steuben County Board: Steve Kelham, Jim Miller, and Bill Hartman
- Interstate Board: Jim Miller, Bill Hartman, Kellen Dooley

Approval of the 2026 Attorney Contract and January Attorney Fee

Returning to items of business, Chairman Bell asked for a motion to approve the 2026 Attorney contract for Ms. Shannon Kruse. Commissioner Bill Hartman motioned to approve the contract, and Mr. Steve Kelham seconded the motion. Mr. Bell asked if there was any discussion, and Ms. Kruse offered that she had not changed the contract parameters. Mr. Bell called for a vote, and the motion carried. He then asked for a motion to approve the January payment to Shannon Kruse in the amount of \$1295.00, and Commissioner Kellen Dooley made the motion, and Mr. Steve Kelham seconded it. Having a motion and a second, Mr. Bell called for a vote, and the motion was carried.

Utility Permit

Mr. Bell introduced the solitary utility permit on the morning agenda, and Mr. John Hunt stepped to the podium. He stated that AES was extending service to customers along County Roads 46A and 37 and 39. He added that AES would bore conduit at a minimum depth of 48" under drains when it intersected them.

Mr. Glenn Crawford stated that the utility agreement was standard, and Lead Survey Technician Tyler Lanning said that AES had a history of working well with the Office and always communicated when a job would begin.

Having a favorable recommendation from the County Surveyor, Mr. Bell asked for a motion to approve the utility permit for AES on County Road 46A, CR 37, and CR 39 in Sections 2 and 3 of Jackson Township and Section 35 of Union Township on the James Provines Regulated Drain No. 207-00-0, the Jacob Magginnis Regulated Drain No. 436-00-0, the Jacob Magginnis Lat 1 Regulated Drain No. 436-01-0, the Daniel Hursey North Regulated Drain No. 48-60-0, the Marion Cramer Regulated Drain No. 78-00-0, the Daniel Magginnis Regulated Drain No. 286-00-0, and the Daniel Magginnis Lat 3 Regulated Drain

No. 286-03-0. Commissioner Kellen Dooley motioned to approve the permit, and Mr. Steve Kelham seconded the motion. Since there was no further discussion, Bruce Bell called for a vote, and the motion was carried. Mr. Bell thanked John Hunt for his time.

Development Plan

Moving to the Development Plan on the agenda, Mr. Todd Ramsey stepped forward. He explained that the Auburn Strip Center would be built along Shook Drive next to the Sonic Drive-In. It had received approval from the planning commission earlier in the week, and Mr. Ramsey received a variance as well. Mr. Ramsey also discussed plans for development of other land in the area of the future strip center.

Mr. Bell asked for a motion to approve the Auburn Commercial Strip Center Development Plan at 1570 Shook Drive in Auburn, IN, and Section 36 of Keyser Township on the William Peckhart Regulated Drain No. 22-00-0 in the Cedar Creek Watershed.

Commissioner Bill Hartman motioned to approve the Development Plan, and Commissioner Jim Miller seconded the motion. Mr. Bell asked if there was further discussion, but hearing none, he called for a vote, and the motion was carried.

Surveyor's Report

Tyler Lanning began the Surveyor's Report with the John Ketcham Reconstruction. He reminded the Board that the account had finished with a negative balance and after some adjustments, the final total was \$9,958.91, so the Office needed to schedule a hearing to place the drain on maintenance for one year. After the 1-year collection, the account would be paid in full, and the Surveyor's Office could turn the John Ketcham Regulated Drain over to the City of Auburn.

Mr. Lanning explained that the base rate of \$27.51 would be applied, which resulted in a commercial rate of \$82.52 per acre. Most of the watershed was zoned as commercial property, as the Drainage Board could see from the assessment scroll that was included in their paperwork. He emphasized that after one collection, the balance would be paid, and the drain would be turned over to the City of Auburn.

After some discussion, Commissioner Kellen Dooley motioned to hold the Maintenance Hearing for the John Ketcham Regulated Drain on February 19, 2026, at 9 AM, and Mr. Steve Kelham seconded the motion. The motion carried without further discussion.

Mr. Lanning then moved the report to the Ora Bohler Reconstruction and said that the Office had permitting costs from Foresight for the railroad crossing. He directed the Board's attention to the paperwork included in their packet and noted that the estimate included all labor and materials but not the jack and bore because that would be billed to the railroad and to INDOT. In addition, Mr. Lanning explained that the J.W. Jackman Regulated Drain and its watershed would become part of the Ora Bohler Drainage System and its watershed. He thought the Jackman would become Lateral 3 of the Ora Bohler, and he asked the advice of Attorney Kruse on the best way to facilitate that: would it require a vacation hearing?

Ms. Kruse answered that the most expedient method would be to amend the Surveyor's report to include the new maintenance rate to include the information in the hearing. In addition, per Section 41 of the Drainage Law, the Surveyor's Report should indicate that reconstruction would include a minute combination of the J.W. Jackman Regulated Drain and Watershed into the Ora Bohler Lateral 3.

Tyler Lanning said the engineer estimate was \$1200/acre and the total cost of the reconstruction was \$728,323. He said he would amend the report to include the total for the jack and bore but not adjust the engineer's estimate since it would be billed separately to the railroad and to INDOT. He would have the adjusted report at the February 5, 2026, meeting. Ms. Kruse noted that the costs should be clear to the landowners in the paperwork and at the hearing, and Mr. Lanning agreed.

Board members also discussed a wetland in the Ora Bohler watershed and if the landowner should receive a special assessment. Commissioner Hartman felt the details of the property were not fully disclosed to the landowner prior to the sale, but Chairman Bell felt that offering one special assessment might "open a can of worms" for future special assessments. Attorney Kruse pointed out that the wetland area in question had been granted special status that might leave room for a special exception that would prevent future loopholes.

The board discussed another parcel that had recently been sold in an effort to make sure paperwork was mailed to the appropriate address.

Discussion

Chairman Bell addressed the members of the Board and asked if any of them had anything to bring back from previous meetings.

Commissioner Jim Miller reported that Surf Internet was not burying its cable at a depth of 48" as requested by the Surveyor's Office. The roads impacted were County Roads 57, 51, and 68. Surveyor Crawford made a note to check the drains in the area.

Attorney Kruse asked about the status of the Butler City Drain. Mr. Lanning answered that he had emailed the mayor of Butler regarding the negative balance on the drain. However, he and the mayor had not come to an agreement about who was responsible for reconciling it. Ms. Kruse replied she wanted to be sure the drain was transferred to Butler, and Mr. Lanning agreed.

Commissioner Dooley reminded the Office about the drain that would be collected at a half assessment rate.

Chairman Bell asked for an updated 2026 Reconstruction List. He specifically asked about the George Wade Regulated Drain, and Tyler Lanning answered that a portion of it would be reconstructed through a Consent and Waiver as the watershed had voted down the reconstruction. Mr. Bell asked about the EP Griffin Regulated Drain as it caused County Road 19 to flood. Office members replied it was on the reconstruction list, but they were still conducting research as it would be expensive to reconstruct, and it had no good outlet. Mr. Bell noted that in 2022 the EP Griffin was at the top of the reconstruction priority list.

Bruce Bell asked if there was further discussion, but hearing none, adjourned the meeting at 9:24 A.M.

Bruce Bell II

Bruce Bell, II, Chairman

Rebecca Wright

Rebecca Wright, Drainage Board Secretary

DEKALB COUNTY DRAINAGE BOARD

DATE 1.15.2026

Name & Contact Information

Petition of Interest

John Hunt
Todd Ramsey

AFS

