

SPECIAL DRAINAGE MEETING

March 20, 2025

The meeting was convened to discuss **special drainage projects**, which are larger in scope than regular maintenance and repairs. The primary focus was on understanding the process involved in these projects based on information shared from a meeting with Banning Engineering.

Here are the key points discussed:

Process for Special Projects: The process typically begins with **landowner complaints** leading to the identification of an area of concern (e.g., flooding, sinkholes).

Landowner Support: Moving forward with a reconstruction report requires **10% of landowners signing a petition**, but ultimately **60% landowner support (by acreage)** is needed to change assessments and finalize the project. Without this level of support, the board sees little reason to proceed.

Engineering Report: Once a petition is received and a public hearing is held, a contract deputy (like Banning Engineering) would be hired to conduct a **reconstruction or repair report**. This report defines the affected watershed and proposes necessary drainage improvements.

Public Hearings: Public hearings are a crucial step to gauge landowner support and present the proposed project and costs before a board vote. There is a legal judicial review process after the board vote, focused on whether the correct legal procedures were followed, not the project's popularity.

Financial Implications: Special projects would involve a **special assessment** on landowners, which Banning Engineering indicated could be **amortized over five years** for land. Funding mechanisms discussed included establishing a **reconstruction fund**, obtaining a **municipal bond**, or taking out a **loan** to bridge the period until assessments are collected.

Pilot Project: A potential **pilot project in Monroe Township** was proposed, involving a subsurface tile issue and open ditch concerns. The estimated cost for the initial engineering report for the subsurface tile portion was around **\$20,000**.

Importance of Outlets: It was emphasized that subsurface improvements need adequate outlets (like No Name Creek, Bell Creek, and Buck Creek) to be effective, and a separate repair report for these open ditches was also suggested.

Landowner Petition is Key: The board cannot formally initiate a special project without first receiving a **petition from the affected landowners**.

Getting Started: The consensus was to focus on the proposed Monroe Township project as a pilot to understand the entire process. A board member offered to discuss the project with landowners in that area to encourage a petition. The board attorney offered to draft a form petition.

Future Steps: The next anticipated step is to receive a petition, likely at the next meeting, followed by setting a public hearing for the meeting after that.

Overall, the meeting served to educate the board on the process for undertaking special drainage projects, highlight the importance of landowner support, discuss potential funding options, and identify a potential pilot project to gain practical experience with the process. The immediate next step is to obtain a landowner petition to formally begin the process for the proposed Monroe Township project.

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

William Whitehead, President

Joseph Hamilton, Vice President

Sherry Riggan, Member

John Christy, Member

Wayne Bothel, Member

Jennifer Licht, Recording Secretary