

BPLA Membership Meeting
Saturday, May 27, 2023 – 9:15 AM
Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order; Pledge of Allegiance – John

The meeting, held in person at the Finlayson Community Center, was called to order at 9:15am. There was also an option to join the meeting via Zoom. Approximately 76 members present and 1 member present via Zoom.

2. Introduce Board – John

John introduced the Board: John Mueller – co-Chair | Membership; Maria Gobely – Treasurer | Buffer Zones; Jim Corbo – Secretary; Roger Olson – co-Chair | Business Directory | Logo wear; Dan Frey – Newsletter | July 4th parade; Don Roepke – Projects | Fisheries; Dwight Benoy – Water Quality; Sue Bonine – Roadside Clean-up. All Board members were present at the meeting except Dwight Benoy. At large committee members include: Lisa Drake, Ron Redding. First time attendees were identified and welcomed.

3. Review Agenda – John

The agenda was presented and briefly reviewed. Handouts were noted and the raffle ticket process was discussed.

4. Approval of Fall 2022 Meeting Notes – Jim

Fall 2022 meeting minutes were presented. Motion to approve was passed.

5. Treasurer's Report – Maria

Financials from 2022 and 2023 Budget were presented. Thank you for your continued generosity. BPLA has approximately \$30,000 in cash reserves for future issues. We are on budget for 2023. Maria shared an update on the current plan of investing some of the BPLA balance into various CDs. Currently, \$5,000 held at Edward Jones and \$6,218 held at Members Co-op. John talked about the importance of maintaining a "rainy day" fund if / when major issues arise (ie. aquatic invasive species, dredging the narrows, etc.). Overall, the account is in good health. Motion to approve by Ron / Charlie (Jim, 2nd). Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report and Budget was passed.

6. Family Pathways Thank You

A big thank you to everyone who has contributed to our local food shelf partners. They are very grateful and BPLA has been recognized in local newspapers. The county and surrounding community is aware of our efforts. With your help, BPLA was able to donate \$3,120 in 2020, \$4,485 in 2021, and \$4,140 in 2022, and \$3,975 so far in 2023.

7. MN DNR Presentation

Deb Vermeersch, Assistant Area Fisheries Supervisor for the MN DNR, presented an official update on the fish survey completed on Big Pine and Pine Lakes in 2022. The power point presentation will be uploaded to the BPLA website. Great participation from the membership.

8. Committee reports

A. Membership – John

220 members in 2021. 211 members in 2022. 204 members to date in 2023. For reference, there are 315 units on Big Pine and Pine Lakes. Membership Directories and Business Directories are available at each meeting. The official Ice-Out date was April 29, 2023. There were 271 submissions and 10 winners, who will receive a free BPLA membership in 2024.

B. BPLA Website – John

The new website has been up and running and looks really good. Please check it out: www.bigpinelakes.org
There are a lot of valuable links to water quality related subjects.

C. Logo wear | Business Directory – Roger

BPLA has partnered with Artisons, Inc., a company that will allow most BPLA merchandise to be sold online. There will be a limited number of orders throughout the year – thus making logo wear available outside BPLA meetings and events. The website is: www.bigpinelakes2023.itemorder.com/shop/sale. Feel free to keep reaching out to Roger with ideas for new items. A question was asked about the availability of child sizes. Roger will look into that, but believes it is something that can be done. 40 members in the Business Directory this year. Thank you for supporting local businesses in our community.

D. Projects – Don

Thanks to all the volunteers who have shown up at the various Project Day events. Don reviewed the various projects completed throughout the year (docks in, boat landing clean-up, sign repairs, loon platforms, etc.). A lot of clean-up took place this year as a result of the large amounts of heavy snow back in December. Two of the three loon platforms were placed this year. A question was raised about placement of a loon platform on the east side of Big Pine. Ease of access makes that area difficult. June 24, 2023 will be the next project day. The road side clean up was very successful with 23 volunteers present. Noteworthy items found: a bumper and a Bee Gees CD.

E. July 4th Boat Parade & Fireworks | BPLA Picnic – Dan

The parade and BPLA fireworks show will be held on July 1, 2023. Registration for the boat parade will be at 4:30pm at Dan Frey's dock on the south lake and Lisa Drake's dock on the north lake. Parade will start at 5:00pm. The theme this year will be: Patriotic or Your Own Imagination. The annual picnic will be held on July 15, 2023 at 2:00pm at the picnic area in the narrows.

F. Water Quality Report – Dwight

In 2021, Minnesota approved a 10-year Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy, which seeks to improve and protect 80 watersheds throughout the state. Big Pine and Pine Lakes are part of the Kettle and Upper Saint Croix River watersheds – which are included in this WRAPS report. This vision will help guide future discussions for long term planning for our lakes and how BPLA can support those plans. More information is available through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

BPLA conducts 5-6 tests each year on various parts of Big Pine and Pine Lakes looking at phosphorus, nitrogen presence, which contribute to algae blooms, etc. Levels continue to vary depending on the time of year the tests are taken, but overall the levels continue to trend down. BPLA also tests water clarity levels via Secci Dish readings. Clarity continues to trend up.

John also talked about the continued risk of Aquatic Invasive Species. While Big Pine and Pine Lakes are fortunate to be free of Zebra Mussels, Asian Milfoil, etc., it only takes one dirty boat or contaminated live well to

cause a massive spread. Please take time to clean boats, drain live wells and other water tanks before transporting boats to different lakes. Be especially aware when hosting guests who bring boats to the lake. Keep in mind the same risk exists when purchasing used docks from someone on a different lake. Follow DNR recommended procedures for letting boats / docks dry before putting them back in the water.

G. Buffer Zone projects –Maria

In 2022, \$40,319 was spent on buffer zone projects. This included \$23,748 in state funded grants and \$16,571 of in-kind labor and private investments. Three projects planned in 2023. Thank you to all the volunteers. If interested in volunteering or to get on the list for a project, please contact Maria.

9. East Central Energy Fiber Optics Plan – Jim

ECE plans to install high speed internet to rural areas in MN as part of a federal and state funded grant program. This plan could take five years to complete. ECE has been looking to identify areas of the state that are in higher demand for this new service as a means to prioritize its installation plans. Please visit www.ecefiber.com to learn more. BPLA encourages you to sign up to express interest so that our area may be “prioritized.”

10. Old Business – John

None.

11. New Business – John

The following questions/comments were asked either from in-person participants or from zoom participants.

- A. Gongall Creek needs to be cleaned out and re-built / re-rocked. Impacted owners are starting to look into a plan to move forward.

12. Adjournment – John

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00am.