

DRAINAGE MEETING  
JOINT DISTRICT HAMILTON #105-STORY #1  
MAY 26, 2015

The Drainage District Trustees of Hamilton and Story Counties met in a telephone conference call in the Story County Administration Building to consider a levy against Joint Drainage District Hamilton #105-Story #1, Story County controlling. Members present were Rick Sanders, chair, Paul Toot, and Wayne Clinton of Story County and David Young, Wesley Sweedler, and Doug Bailey of Hamilton County. Also present were Story County Vegetation Management Biologist Joe Kooiker and Drainage Clerk Scott Wall and Hamilton County Drainage Clerk Lori Klobberdanz and Auditor's staff member Lisa Matteson.

Sanders called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

Wall said the open ditch in Hamilton #105-Story #1 had been cleared of trees over the fall and winter of 2014 and Story County's Integrated Vegetation Management staff are requesting \$7,000 to burn the cut trees, treat stumps, and kill minor vegetation in and along the ditch.

Kooiker said the district had contracted with Finco Tree Service to cut and pile the trees in the open ditch. Finco initially left 40 or more small piles of cut trees. With Finco's help IVRM consolidated the small piles into 3 large piles which will be burned this fall after they have had the summer to dry out. The money being requested will cover the work already done to consolidate the piles plus the burning along with chemically treating the stumps in the ditch to kill them. Finco had already done this but there is still regrowth on some of the stumps that needs to be re-treated.

Young said typically they would approve the minutes from the last meeting (July 2013) as part of the current meeting. Can this be done? Clinton moved, seconded by Toot, to approve the July 2013 drainage district minutes. Motion carried unanimously (MCU).

Young said it was his understanding from the 2013 meeting that Finco was to have hauled the trees away and chipped them off-site. This is on page three of the July 2013 minutes. Kooiker said it had been his intent for the trees to be chipped but that was not written into the final contract. Performing proactive ditch maintenance is new for Story County and we would do things differently now than we did a year ago.

Young said when he drives to Ames he passes by the open ditch and has been very disappointed to see the piles of brush still there. The Hamilton County trustees as a group are disappointed at the outcome of this project so far. In Hamilton County their policy is not to levy until all work has been completed. Had that been done there would be no need for this meeting as a single levy would have taken care of everything.

Sanders said Story County was disappointed as well.

Toot said Hamilton County has been proactive in maintaining their districts for a long time but it has only been a couple of years for Story County and we've had a lot to learn. Certainly we'd do this project differently with the benefit of hindsight.

Kooiker said IVRM had made several attempts to get rid of the downed trees. A few land owners had gone in with chainsaws to collect firewood and Story County Conservation had tried cutting firewood for sale at their campgrounds but it wasn't economically viable.

Sanders said the contract with Finco wasn't what we'd hoped for and we would bid it differently today but there are trees on the ground now that need to be dealt with.

Young noted that there were still some trees standing along parts of the ditch. Kooiker said there were some acreages where the land owners wanted to keep the trees and these trees were along the ditch but not in it. He said after having the trees there for 50 years or more IVRM didn't want to go in and take out everything. They had marked trees to be saved before Finco went in to start cutting.

Young said Hamilton County does not leave any trees within the drainage easement. As trustees they represent the entire district and the district's needs trump any land owner's desire to keep their trees. He thinks any remaining trees will have to be dealt with at some point in the future as will the root balls left behind from the trees that were cut. As long as the roots are there we will have to deal with some level of regrowth.

Toot moved to levy the district at 14% as proposed. There being no response Sanders declared Toot's motion dead for lack of a second and requested more direction from the trustees.

Young said Hamilton County ditches are on a three year rotation for spraying and they regularly levy their districts to cover that expense. Here the land owners were just levied for tree removal and now they will be asked to pay more for a project they think is completed.

Sanders questioned Young on how Hamilton levies their districts. Earlier Young had said they do not levy in advance but now he said they levy in advance for ditch spraying. Young replied that maintenance of the ditches is a known, regular expense and they do levy in advance for those costs. They do not levy in advance for larger projects where the final costs can't be known. For this project Hamilton would not have levied until the trees were cut and the debris cleaned up then they would levy for that expense plus the cost of spraying the ditch at least one time. The district can pay the interest on the stamped warrants until the work is complete.

Toot again moved to accept the request from Story County IVRM and the recommendation of the Story County Drainage Clerk to levy Hamilton #105-Story #1 at 14% of its original assessed value, said assessment to be dated July 1, 2015 with payment due on or before September 30, 2015.

Kooiker said there was a lack of communication between himself and the employee under him. It had been his intent to have the trees chipped and hauled away but that had not been communicated to the employee who wrote the contract. Finco did not bid on a proposal that included chipping the trees and when the chipping was brought up they said they would have to rebid the contract if chipping the trees were to be a part of the job. Not chipping the trees was not a failure on Finco's part and they did fulfill their duties under the contract.

Young seconded Toot's motion to levy Hamilton #105-Story #1. MCU.

Toot moved, seconded by Sweedler, to adjourn. MCU. Meeting adjourned at 11:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Scott T. Wall