

# VBL Conservancy Meeting Minutes

February 21, 2026

**Meeting Called to Order by Rebecca Bilbrey:** February 21, 2026, 9:30 a.m.

**Board Attendees:** Rebecca Bilbrey, Laren Zeeck, Brenda Dossey, Mary Timm

**Absent Board Attendee:** NA

**Staff/Contractor Attendees:**

Trisha McMannis (Office Manager), Jeremy Staley (Water Superintendent), Doug Clodfelter (Wastewater Superintendent), Marshal Alan Driver Jr., John Young (Attorney)

**Guest Attendees:**

Mike Novak – USDA Rural Development

**Community Members:** Attendance can be found on the sign-in sheet in the VBL Conservancy office.

## Pledge of Allegiance

## EXTERNAL BUSINESS

### USDA Rural Development Update – Mike Novak

Mike Novak from USDA Rural Development attended to discuss compliance requirements for the district.

Key topics discussed:

- Annual Rural Development (RD) report due **March 1**.
- USDA now requires an **Asset Management Plan** for water utilities.
- Board members must complete **required training by July and September**.
- Risk and resilience planning will be required for water systems.

Mike offered assistance with preparing the RD report using **Gateway software** to simplify reporting requirements.

### Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Planning

Discussion held regarding long-term infrastructure planning for the district.

Topics included:

- Development of a **5–10 year infrastructure plan**.
- Wastewater improvement planning and grant opportunities.
- Funding challenges due to federal budget constraints expected through 2026.
- Importance of engineering reports to support future grant applications.

Christy Jarrell will pursue **OCRA grant funding** for wastewater improvements.

## **INTERNAL BUSINESS**

### **Prior Month Minutes**

**Chair entertained a motion to approve the December and January meeting minutes and waive the reading of the minutes.**

Laren made the motion; Brenda seconded.

All in favor. Motion carried.

### **Public Hearing – Resolution 2026-01-17**

#### **Metered Water Billing**

Public hearing held regarding **Resolution 2026-01-17**, transitioning the district from flat water billing to volumetric metered billing.

Rebecca explained the billing structure:

- **Base monthly fee:** \$27.54 for up to 2,000 gallons
- Additional usage billed based on water consumption

Discussion included:

- Water billing for vacant lots with installed meters
- Water quality questions from residents
- Clarification that charges reflect **availability of service and easements**

After discussion and proper advertisement:

**Chair entertained a motion to adopt Resolution 2026-01-17 implementing metered water billing.**

Laren made a motion; Brenda seconded.  
All in favor. Motion approved.

## **Wastewater Fees**

Discussion held regarding sewer charges and capital maintenance.

Key points:

- Sewer availability fee of **\$21 per lot** reflects availability of service.
- Properties producing sewage must connect to the district sewer system.
- Possible future revisions to sewer line vacating policies were discussed.

## **Financial Report – Trish**

Trish reported on financial operations.

Key Items:

- December financials presented.
- Invoice Cloud NSF debit of \$197 discussed.
- District plans to transition toward **paperless operations by end of year**.

**Chair entertained a motion to approve December financials.**

Laren made the motion; Brenda seconded.  
All in favor. Motion carried.

## **Office Equipment Purchase**

Trish requested approval to purchase a new office computer system including two monitors for improved efficiency.

Total cost: **\$1,989.85**

**Chair entertained a motion to approve purchase of the new office computer system.**

Brenda made the motion; Laren seconded.  
All in favor. Motion approved.

## **Office Staffing**

Discussion held regarding office staffing schedules.

Board approved allowing Barb to take **Fridays off**, except the week before board meetings.

## Office Manager Wage Adjustment

Discussion held regarding Trish's compensation.

**Chair entertained a motion to approve a \$1 hourly wage increase for Trish, retroactive to January 17, 2026, bringing her wage to \$26 per hour.**

Laren made a motion; Brenda seconded.  
All in favor. Motion approved.

## Water & Wastewater Superintendent – Jeremy & Doug

Operations update included:

- Eight lock-offs completed (5 leaks, 3 non-payment).
- Preparations underway for **metered billing implementation.**
- Keystone system preparation including **GPS coordination and MIU meter assignments.**

## Water Tower Inspection

Jeremy recommended inspection of the water tower fill pipe before considering full replacement.

Inspection cost: **\$1,950** through Kraus Inspection Services.

**Chair entertained a motion to approve the \$1,950 inspection.**

Laren made a motion; Brenda seconded.  
All in favor. Motion approved.

Jeremy will also obtain comparison quotes for repair options.

## Utility System Contracts

Discussion held regarding the **Zenner contract** for meter reading and software services, including its two-year term and limited vendor alternatives. Preparations for system transition to volumetric billing were discussed.

## Marshal Report – Alan Driver Jr.

Marshal Driver reported:

- **19 interactions**
- **6 vehicle tags**

- Various complaints handled

Discussion included vehicle abandonment issues, community complaints, and coordination with local law enforcement.

The board also discussed drafting language regarding **meter obstruction violations and easement access**.

## **Board-Focused Tasks / Projects**

### **Infrastructure & Road Maintenance**

Laren will coordinate with **Hendrix Paving** to schedule a site review in March to evaluate potholes and road patching, particularly in **Section 6**.

### **Fire Hydrant Access**

Brenda will contact the **local fire department** regarding hydrant accessibility and condition.

### **Easement Access**

Rebecca and Trish will draft communication reminding residents that **meters and easements must remain unobstructed**.

## **New Business**

### **Section 3 Board Vacancy**

Two candidates, **Lynn** and **Mark**, expressed interest in filling the vacant Section 3 board seat.

Following discussion, the board determined the position would be filled by **board appointment rather than election**.

Subsequent to the meeting, an **email exchange vote was conducted by the board on February 25, 2026**, in which **Lynn was selected to fill the open Section 3 board seat**.

### **Sabrina Johnson Compensation**

Discussion held regarding compensation for emergency office administration services performed by former board member Sabrina Johnson.

Total claim: **\$2,192.40**

**Chair entertained a motion to approve the claim.**

Laren made a motion; Brenda seconded.

All in favor. Motion approved.

## **Lake Silt Runoff Issue**

Board discussed concerns regarding **silt runoff from a nearby farm affecting the lake.**

Rebecca will contact:

- Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- Putnam County Soil and Water Conservation District

Photos will be provided by Brenda.

## **Drainage Issues**

Flooding issues discussed including concerns near the **Patterson property.**

Board clarified the district addresses drainage issues affecting district infrastructure, while drainage on private property remains the responsibility of the property owner.

## **Board Resignation**

Rebecca announced her intention to **resign from the board effective March 1, 2026 or at the next meeting** on March 14th.

The board discussed the need to address remaining freeholder board positions moving forward.

# **Adjournment**

**Chair entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.**

Laren made the motion; Brenda seconded.

All in favor. Unanimous.

Meeting adjourned.