Solid Waste District of La Porte County
District Board Special Meeting

March 25, 2026
10:00 a.m.

APPROVED

Call to Order	**Director Clay Turner**
Pledge	
Roll Call District Board	Mayor Dermody Councilman Przybylinski Commissioner Haney Commissioner Holifield
Absent	Commissioner Gramarossa Mayor Nelson Deuitch Councilman Mollenhauer
Others Present	Clay Turner, Executive Director Robin Havens, Office Manager Douglas Biege, Attorney Jim Irwin – CAC Bob Garrelts – CAC Amy Feikes – CAC Tom Rector – Bulldog Lawncare

Comments From the Public

Tom Rector, of Bulldog Lawncare, addressed the District Board stating that he really relies on the Compost Site for his tipping, spending $1,500 - $2,500 per year at the site, which may not be quite a lot of money for a small company, but if you put a lot of the small companies together, it's quite a bit of money. Mr. Rector went on to say that after the fire last year, he feels that the District would rely more on that money at this time. Mr. Rector further stated he wanted to voice his opinion to get that decision reversed so he can begin tipping his green waste again, as a small business and a LaPorte County resident. Councilman Przybylinski asked Mr. Rector what kind of burden it was putting on his business by not being able to dump his green waste at the site. Mr. Rector stated it is a burden on him because he has no where else to take his green waste, as he doesn't own any additional property to store it. Councilman Przybylisnki asked what Mr. Rector is doing in the meantime and Mr. Rector stated he knows someone that is currently looking into filling in some space but once that's full, he will have nowhere to turn with his leaves, sticks and brush. Mr. Turner explained to Mr. Rector that the goal is to get everything cleaned up at the site from the fire, and them look ahead to possibly asking the Board to rescind their decision to allow green waste from contractors and landscapers. Commissioner Holifield stated that the new company in the KOP, which is taking food waste, wants to eventually take in the green waste from the site but there is no definitive timeline for doing so. Commissioner Holifield further stated when that takes place, he will definitely let everyone know.

Bob Garrelts, CAC, indicated that he offered to do a root cause analysis for the fire at the compost site. Mr. Garrelts explained that the analysis took place with a few of the other CAC members in attendance as well as several members of the Solid Waste District staff, most importantly, Abraham, Vince and Scott, which are working at the site all the time. Mr. Garrelts stated he believes the people working closest to the problem, know best, what's going on. Mr. Garrelts stated that he felt everything went well and in talking to Mr. Turner, they felt like the best thing would be bringing a presentation to the Board of their findings at the April 8, 2026 joint District Board/CAC meeting.

New Business

Insurance Update

Mr. Turner stated, thanks to Commissioner Holifield's persistence, the insurance company went back and looked to see if there were any other areas that money could be obtained and they found another $54,206.43 to get back to the District for clean-up of the fire at the site. Mr. Turner stated the check has been received and deposited and the District is moving forward.

Root Cause Analysis

Mr. Turner explained that Mr. Garrelts already discussed the root cause analysis during public comment but his intent is to put it on the agenda for the joint April Board meeting unless the Board directs him not to. Chairman Dermody asked if there was a timeframe for the presentation of the root cause analysis. Mr. Turner stated that the initial group spent about 2 hours of time on the presentation but Amy Feikes, Chair of the CAC stated they had no intention of spending that kind of time on the presentation to the Board. Chair, Amy Feikes stated she anticipates no longer than 30 minutes to bring the key points back to the Board at the joint meeting. **After Board discussion, Commissioner Holifield made a motion to add the presentation results with, a 30 minute time allotment, to the agenda for the joint meeting in April. Commissioner Haney seconded the motion. Voice vote taken. All in favor. Motion approved.**

New Business

Handbook Update 30-60 Days

Mr. Turner stated it was brought to his attention that the District retirement policy states 30 sick days are paid out at $75/per day after 20 years. However, the County's policy states a payout of 60 days at $75/per day. Mr. Turner explained that he typically follows the County's handbook policy but somehow he must have missed this update to the policy when it went into effect for County employees. Mr. Turner explained to the Board that we would like the Board to amend the policy from 30 days to 60 days in the District's handbook. **After Board discussion, Councilman Mollenhauer made a motion to adopt the increase of 60 days sick time payout, at $75 per day, after 20 years of service. Commissioner Holifield seconded the motion. Voice vote taken. All in favor. Motion approved.**

Old Business

Resolution to Obtain Loan

Mr. Turner explained that the bank requires some type of provision to move forward with a loan. He further stated that as we are in the process of obtaining a loan for the compost site fire clean-up, the District will need permission granted to proceed with the loan now that a contract has been awarded at $365,000. Mr. Turner stated that he listed on the Resolution the Chairman of the Board or the Executive Director could sign the loan documents after the Board agrees on the bank proposals being presented. Mr. Turner stated he got quotes from 1st Source Bank and one from the current loan at Horizon Bank. Mr. Turner indicated the loan from 1st Source came back around $100 less than what the District is currently paying for the loan through Horizon Bank, however; they want to take all of our banking with them to issue the loan. Mr. Turner further explained that even though the District would be paying $100 more per month on the current loan, the other accounts with Horizon Bank will be making approximately $300 per month more in interest. Attorney Biege made a recommendation to send the loan information via email to all Board members and if there is an objection, a special meeting will be held. Otherwise, the loan would move forward for signing. **Commissioner Holifield made a motion that after the loan documents are sent via email, Board members will just say yes or no to the email. Councilman Przybylinski seconded the motion. Voice vote taken. All in favor. Motion approved. Commissioner Holifield made a motion to adopt the Resolution to Obtain Loan 2026-01. Councilman Przybylinski seconded the motion. Voice vote taken. All in favor. Motion approved.**

Contract with Homer

Mr. Turner stated the District negotiated and received a contract from Homer Tree Services for the compost site clean up. Mr. Turner explained that the only issue with the contract was the District requested a 30 day start day after contract signing, but Homer Tree Service preferred 45 days after signing, however; they would do their best to start sooner. Commissioner Holifield wanted to know if the work would affect the public from dropping off but Mr. Turner indicated it would be two separate locations so the public shouldn't be affected by Homer's work at all. **Commissioner Holifield made a motion to move forward with the Board Chairman signing the contract with Homer Tree Services. Councilman Przybylinski seconded the motion. Voice vote taken. All in favor. Motion approved.**

Chairman Dermody stated that the Board is running short on time to have a new Director in place before Mr. Turner's retirement and to do it correctly, upon Councilman Mollenhauer's return in May, he feels that the Board should appoint Ms. Havens, Interim Director, effective April 3, 2026. Chairman Dermody stated there are 2 people within the District that have applied and will be interviewed, along with 2 additional outside applicants recommended. **After Board discussion, Councilman Mollenhauer made a motion to appoint Ms. Havens as the Interim Director and interview the 4**

applicants recommended after his return in May. Commissioner Holifield seconded the motion. Voice vote taken. All in favor. Motion approved.

Chairman Dermody asked if the Board should consider a pay raise for the Interim Director since they would be assuming the duties as acting Director. **After Board discussion, Councilman Przybylinski made the motion to set the salary of the Interim Director at $75,000 per year, during the interim timeframe. Councilman Mollenhauer seconded the motion. Voice vote taken. All in favor. Motion approved.**

Adjournment
10:32 AM