

## Blue Lake Improvement District

**Executive Committee Meeting Minutes: February 14, 2015, 1 p.m.**

**Place:** Kathy Rabenberg's home, 8960 Vista Point Drive, Princeton

**Directors Attending:** Kathy Rabenberg, Bill Yueill, George Golden, Jim LeFebvre, Bill Fredell

**Guest:** Stephanie Johnson of Water Guards, Inc.

**Purpose:** The meeting's purpose was to hear a presentation and consider a proposal by Stephanie Johnson for inspecting boats for aquatic invasive species as they enter Blue Lake from the public accesses.

1. Stephanie Johnson presented the history of her company, Lake Guards, the scope of her company's work and the procedures she uses. Following are the key points of her presentation:
  - WaterGuards (WG) has served as many as 35 lakes in Todd and Stearns County. So far, 20 are booked for 2015.
  - Blue Lake would be the first lake for her company in Isanti County.
  - WG coordinates with the sheriff offices so the sheriffs know when WG will be inspecting and on what lakes. This assists the sheriff departments in assisting with inspections.
  - WG recruits workers from these sources: retirees who live on the lakes inspected, biology students from local schools and colleges, other college and high school students. Each inspector is trained by the DNR.
  - WG collects data on ruggedized electronic tablets using simple-to-use touch screens for quick input. This data is stored so that reports can be created to reflect usage patterns, activities, problems, etc. This is helpful in knowing the volume of boats that enter the lake, where they come from, what their purposes are in visiting Blue Lake, etc. It is further helpful in documenting what is being done to protect our lake. The DNR provides the questions asked by inspectors.
  - WG is flexible in its approach to scheduling based on the data collected, making it possible to staff the inspection stations when there is need.
  - WG has "silent shoppers" and random inspections by management so that workers are evaluated on how well they are performing inspections and interacting with boaters.
  - BLID would have to help pay for the electronic tablets. Stephanie can help BLID in getting this equipment quickly and inexpensively.
  - WG says that its employees do not have many problems with boaters. The workers are trained to be more of the "educator and communicator" than "the inspector."
  - Problems experienced to date have been around drunken boaters. Each year there may be one or two difficult boaters who do not want to comply with the inspections. WG employees know that they can always contact the sheriff's office for support if necessary. No serious problems for WG so far.
  - WG handles all insurance and the BLID is protected legally. WG has \$2M liability insurance.
  - WG fees include wages for the inspectors as well as supervision, a lead inspector, management and reports as necessary.
2. The committee thanked Stephanie for the presentation. She left the meeting so that the committee could consider the proposal in private.
3. After a discussion of vendor proposals, the committee voted unanimously to accept the proposal from WG. (Bill Fredell moved, and Jim LeFebvre seconded.) Details relative to the overall budget for inspections would be addressed later, pending the results of certain grants that are pending: WG will inspect for 750-1250 hours, depending on whether BLID receives DNR grants. The WG proposal was less expensive, yet more comprehensive than other proposals. George Golden was tasked with touring Stephanie around the lake to visit the boat landings/access points.
4. The next Spencer Brook Township Meeting will be held on March 10, 8:15 p.m., with BLID members attending.
5. The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Bill Fredell