

Lake Lawrence Lake Management District Steering Committee

15735 Topaz Dr. SE
Yelm, WA 98597



1. Co-Chair Barry Halverson opened the virtual work session at 6:30 p.m. Since this was a work session for all LMD members and no decisions were to be made a quorum was not required. Attendees: Barry Halverson (Co-Chair), Janice Leitzke (Budget Committee Chair), Ken Stewart, Terry Stewart, John Carpenter, the Moffett's, the Bryant's, Gary Hofmann, Randy Leitzke, the Blaney's, Patrick, Frank Hudik, the Hennigan's, the Westergaard's, Kim Farnes & Carl Scanson, the Collin's, the Beckendorf's, the Villani's, Curt Cleaveland, David Keen, Rob Knight, Anne Carpenter, Kathy Boyajian, Karol Watts, John Wilson, the Fossum's, Kim Nelson, the Duncan's, Ralph Starks, and Erika Rutledge. Some others attending were not identified. LMD members representing all geographical areas of the lake (shoreline, canal, and upland) attended.
2. Barry began with several overview slides to inform attendees of the outreach that had been done to inform members of this meeting, outlined the Steering Committees considerations for renewal of the LMD, discussed the LMD budget issues since 2015 identifying the progress the LMD Steering Committee has made in working with the county to greatly reduce county administrative charges allowing over \$30,000 to be returned to the LMD for use in lake water quality improvements. Barry discussed the toxic algae incidents since 2020 for Lake Lawrence, Pattison Lake, Offut Lake, Long Lake, Black Lake, Summit Lake, and Spanaway Lake. Toxic Algae incidents for Lake Lawrence have been increasing annually and exploded in 2024. Lake Lawrence experienced the worst toxic algae outbreaks in its history. The lake reached "DANGER" levels for four consecutive weeks closing the lake completely for all water recreation activities. The public boat launch gate was locked by the state. Thirteen additional weeks the lake was at "WARNING" levels recommending recreational activities be curbed or cancelled. Several lakes in our area that have experienced toxic algae blooms and taken action to deal with them are Black Lake, Long Lake, and Spanaway Lake. The costs associated with mitigating or eliminating toxic algae blooms on those respective lakes are: Over the past five years Black Lake has spent approximately \$1.5 Million to treat their nearly 600-acre lake for cyanobacteria (Toxic Algae); Long Lake spent over \$500,000 over a three-year period to tackle similar issues for their 320-acre lake and are continuing efforts at a cost of approximately \$130,000 a year to sustain reductions in cyanobacteria (algae blooms). Both Black and Long Lake experienced excellent results after the first two years and have had no toxic algae blooms since above state guidelines, but they continue to monitor and treat to prevent future outbreaks. Preventing cyanobacteria (toxic algae) outbreaks is a continuing long-term effort as cyanobacteria is primarily caused by excess phosphorus and/or nitrogen that enters water bodies from many different sources and although much can be sequestered for short durations with targeted treatment the continuous introduction of phosphorus and nitrogen into our lakes requires constant monitoring and mitigation efforts to prevent future toxic algae blooms. Spanaway Lake has initiated a process to install an oxygen injection system in a portion of their lake. They are currently in the preliminary feasibility stage. They expect the cost for this system to deal with only a portion of their lake and to cost approximately \$2 Million initially with monthly expenses for an indefinite period. Lake Lawrence has initiated a Cyanobacteria Management Plan Study costing approximately \$100,000 that will make recommendations on how we can deal with our cyanobacteria problem and how much each of those recommendations will cost. This study is required by the state before any treatment to mitigate or eliminate cyanobacteria can be done. Attendees were shown a slide comparing LMD assessment fees for all LMDs in Thurston County pointing out that Lake Lawrence had the lowest fees by far and the current Lake Lawrence LMD budget was never intended to tackle cyanobacteria problems.

3. Barry then discussed three renewal options, the cost associated with each and then laid out the proposed budget for the LMD for options 2 and 3. Option 1 was do nothing and let the LMD expire on 31 December 2026, so no budget analysis was required for that option. No one thought option #1 was acceptable. Not renewing the LMD would revert the lake to a weed invested, toxic bog within a few years where community swimming areas and boat docks would become inaccessible. A Real Estate Agent and LMD member in attendance stated that it would have a debilitating impact on home prices and sales throughout the area to include all upland properties that enjoy unfettered access to their respective HOA community parks, boat launches and docks if the LMD was not continued and the toxic algae problem was not addressed. Who wants to purchase a home in a community (HOA) with a lake if it cannot be used? That is the primary reason people buy property around Lake Lawrence. Questions were asked if the county or state would help control the aquatic vegetation and algae problems if the LMD were not renewed. The simple fact is no. Neither the county nor state would provide any resources to deal with these issues. The only thing they will do is conduct water quality testing between April and October each year, as they have for the past 15 years, and post and close the lake when cyanobacteria outbreaks occur to prevent health related injuries to citizens.
4. LMD Steering Committee decision points for renewal of the LMD were discussed. A poll of attendees was taken for each decision point to help LMD Steering Committee members make an informed decision at their 20 March 2025 regular LMD meeting. Not all attendees voted for every decision point, which is why poll numbers do not match. The decision points are:
 - #1 LMD Duration
 - #2 LMD Rates & Charges
 - #3 How to calculate LMD Rates & Charges to meet expected expenditures as determined by option selected
 - #4 Senior/Disabled Exemptions
5. Decision Point #1 – Duration. Lake Lawrences current LMD is 10 years and expires 31 December 2026. Hicks Lake currently has a 35-year LMD. Long Lake is currently in the process of renewing their LMD for 20 years. A longer duration to deal with the emerging cyanobacteria problem is necessary. The other point is the cost to go through the renewal process is approximately \$15,000 in today's dollars. Who knows how much it will cost in 10 or 20 years, but we do know it will cost more. Reducing the number of times you need to renew an LMD eliminates those costs, and that money can be used to improve the lake. A poll taken to consider 10, 20 or a 35-year LMD and the pros and cons for each were discussed. One person voted for 10 years, one voted for 20 years and eighteen voted for 35 years. The LMD Steering Committee will discuss and decide at their 20 March 2025 virtual meeting.
6. Decision Point #2 and #3 were polled together since they are related. The Pros and cons for each were discussed. Keeping the rates at their current level would not allow the LMD to maintain an effective cyanobacteria program. Toxic Algae blooms would persist and get worse. Two attendees voted to keep current rates. Twenty voted for Option #3 to increase rates to \$94 a year for upland properties, \$390 for canal properties and \$789 for shoreline properties. These rates were determined based on other lakes in Western Washington with similar issues and geographic and historical parameters (size, depth, history of bloom, etc.) that have had to budget for cyanobacteria control. The best estimates by the Steering Committee show that to provide the level of control necessary to mitigate or eliminate the frequent and devastating results of cyanobacteria (toxic algae) would require a 10% increase for upland properties and a 130% increase for canal and shoreline properties. Renewing the LMD with lower assessment increases could result in continued, longer duration, and more toxic blooms. The LMD Steering Committee will discuss and decide at their 20 March 2025 virtual meeting.
7. Decision Point #4 discussed the current 90% exemption of LMD assessment fees for seniors/disabled members that have requested property tax exemptions from the county. Many LMDs across the state do not allow these exemptions. Long Lake is eliminating exemptions with their new LMD resolution beginning 1 January 2026. Since 2015 Lake Lawrence LMD assessment exemptions have increased from 50 to 66 in 2025. This accounts for 9.6% of members and \$6,700 of revenue. The question to be answered is should Lake Lawrence continue the 90% exemption, reduce the exemption, or eliminate it altogether. The poll showed four attendees did not want to change

the exemption from its current level of 90%. Four others voted to eliminate the exemptions, nine voted to set exemptions at 25%, eight voted for a 50% exemption and three voted for a 75% exemption. The LMD Steering Committee will discuss and decide at their 20 March 2025 virtual meeting.

8. Barry then discussed the next steps and the timeline to get the LMD through the renewal process.
9. The LMD Steering Committee will make decisions on the LMD Renewal at their upcoming regular virtual meeting on 20 March 2025. LMD members are encouraged to review the presentation slides attached to this summary of the meeting and send any comments/suggestions to the Steering Committee at lakelawrence750@gmail.com prior to the 20 March virtual meeting. These notes along with the presentation will be posted on the HOME page of the LMD website at <https://www.lakelawrencelakemanagementdistrict.com>. All comments will be shared with the Steering Committee. LMD Members will be able to provide additional comments at the 20 March virtual meeting prior to the Steering Committee decision on each of the four Decision Points mentioned above.
10. Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Prepared by Barry Halverson


Barry Halverson, Co-Chair

Presentation attached.