

**Otter Lake Water Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes**

May 12, 2026

Chairman Jake Rettberg with all Commissioners present convened the regular meeting of the Otter Lake Water Commission at 5:00 pm. Others present included Scott Hunt, Joe Hogan, Denzel Jines, Shannon Collins, and Meghan Theel.

MINUTES:

Dave Skinner made a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on March 10, 2026. Terry Davis seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 7-0 vote, with John Gudgel voting present.

AUDIENCE TO VISITORS:

Our engineer, Scott Hunt with WHKS was present to give an overall construction update on the current Water Main Replacement Project on Route 104.

BILL LIST:

Dave Skinner made a motion to approve the March bills totaling \$220,964.04 for payment. John Ulery seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 8-0 vote.

Jake Rettberg made a motion to approve the April bills totaling \$320,286.99 for payment. John Gudgel seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 8-0 vote.

RECREATION:

Park Financial Report:

Total income for March was \$30,838.60 with a year to date of \$38,753.95.

Total expense Otter Lake Park owes the Water Commission for March is \$21,707.03. With a total owed to date of \$0.00. Total income for April was \$126,234.43 with a year to date of \$ 164,988.38.

Total expense Otter Lake Park owes the Water Commission for April is \$22,018.44. With a total owed to date of \$0.00.

PARK MANAGER`S REPORT

Shannon Collins reported:

- **Waiting List:** At the time of writing this report, we have 6 open sites. Currently we have 141 names on the waiting list. I feel like the list is moving slowly, it seems like people are waiting the whole 7 days to pass.
- **Lot Lease Payments:** At the time of this report, we have two people that haven't paid their lease yet.
- **Campground Clean Up:** The maintenance crew has been hard at work, picking up limbs from all the high winds. We have started the mowing season. We had a few issues with the zero turn, but we believe we now have it in good working condition. We added another overnight camping spot, so we now have 7 water and electric sites.
- **Water On:** We turned on the water on April 15th, and everything went smoothly. All the bathrooms are now up and running. I got to use the new power washer on the north and west bathrooms, it works great, made a great difference
- **Fishing and Tournaments:** We had a young man full of excitement, this was his first time fishing at Otter Lake, and he caught a 3lbs 1 oz, 17.5" crappie. As you can see from the photo, it is a nice fish. I had an issue with a tournament on the weekend of May 2nd, a tournament that I denied had the tournament anyways. I didn't get them before the start of the tournament so when they all got back in, I got with the director and explained to him the situation (which he said he never got notification that it

was denied) and I told him that it is very important that he checks this, I would hate for him to not be able to come back.

- **Problem with the public:** On April 25th I had to call the County Sheriff's office out for assistance. I had a run in with some people fishing all hours of the night in the overnight area, on the early morning of the 24th these people came through the overnight around 3:30 am stayed for about 30 mins, went over to the boat ramp came back over to the overnight drove through and back to the boat ramp. I went over to the boat ramp area (mind you its raining and the lady is trying to fish) I told her that I didn't mind that they fish in the parking lot area but I asked that they not be in the overnight area any more after dark unless they wanted to pay like everyone else back there. She seemed to understand. Around 6:30 that morning I stepped out on my back porch and a man with his lady was screaming all sorts of profanity at me. I could only make out a few words, but it was enough to know I wasn't dealing with anyone with a level head. On the 25th in the early evening they were back in the overnight area, fishing. I went down the hill to have another conversation about where they could be and the man was not at all levelheaded. As you can see from the report, I did have him trespassed.

OLD BUSINESS:

None to report

NEW BUSINESS:

Joe spoke about Otter Lake allowing the South Palmyra Rural Water District to sell water to the Palmyra-Modesto Water Commission. South Palmyra Water District's contract states they need written permission from Otter Lake to sell water to another entity. After some discussion, Jake motioned to approve the written permission to South Palmyra Rural Water District to sell the extra water. John Gudgel seconded the motion. The motion carried with a 8-0 vote.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT:

Joe Hogan reported:

- **Route 104 Project Update-** All water lines and service tie ins have been completed. We have received our operating permit. We are down to punch list items and final grading/seeding. The landscaping contractor will be back later to touch any spots up, but the project will be considered complete this month.
- **ISAWWA WaterCon-** Denzel and I attended the 3-day conference last month. The main topics of discussion continue to be lead service lines and PFAS standards. As of now, compliance monitoring for PFAS and other related compounds will begin next year. We are currently testing quarterly for initial monitoring and to establish baselines.
- **Lake and Watershed-** Spheros (formerly Northwater) was out last month to conduct a bathymetric study of our in-lake sediment trap basin. This study will help us to determine the levels and amounts of sediment we are removing through our dredging project. A team from the Illinois State Water Survey was also out on the lake last month to obtain multiple core samples at different points on the lake to gather data on nutrient loads. They will provide us with the data. And finally, Jeff Boeckler will be out sometime soon to measure sediment at different points on the lake. We will be taking cross sections on both the north and south sides.
- **Dam Inspections-** WHKS Engineering performed dam inspections on both our low flow and main dams this past month. These are required every 3 years. The reports came back satisfactory and were sent to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR).
- **IDNR Muskie Survey-** In March IDNR came out to do an annual muskie netting survey. They caught 50 muskie in 10 trap (fyke) nets. The fisheries biologist, Ben Lubinski, said it was probably the most they had ever collected at Otter Lake. The largest was 42" and weighed 23 pounds. The average size was around 34-36" and 14-18 pounds. He stated that there did not seem to be a difference in catch

rates between the upper and lower parts of the lake. He again mentioned that all fish in the lake look great.

- **New Plant Operator**- We hired a new operator to fill the open position the water plant had. Carter Farmer joined the team last month. Since starting, he has completed training on both day and evening shifts at the water plant, as well as starting to learn about our distributions system. He comes to Otter Lake with over 1 year of Class A water plant operations experience.

OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR'S REPORT:

Denzel Jines reported:

- **Water Quality**- April 2026 saw an average lake temp of 62 degrees and an average pH of 8.4. The lake level was recorded at 620'. Full pool. MIB and Geosmin sample results are listed below. We are currently operating the UV system DIS mode only.
MIB and Geosmin Sample Results
April 13, 2026, Raw Geosmin 11 ng/L and finished Geosmin <2 ng/L
April 13, 2026, Raw MIB <2 ng/L and finished MIB <2 ng/L
- **Raw Water Pump #1 VFD**- The variable frequency drive (VFD) we utilize to speed up and slow down our raw water pump was burned up. It failed when we switched from line power to generator power. No other equipment was damaged during the power surge. The VFD was replaced by Dan Foss under warranty. This occurred in February.
- **Treatment Plant**- The turbidimeters used in the plant to monitor turbidity at various points throughout the treatment process were upgraded. The old Hach 1720D's NTU meters had not been supported by Hach for many years prior to the swap out and getting replacement parts was becoming difficult to source. This upgrade will keep us in compliance with our operating permit requirements for years to come. We got nearly 20 years out of the old NTU meters, so I am hoping to get at least that much out of the new NTU meters.
- **High Service Pump Flow Meter**- We had thunderstorms blow through at plant shut down on Friday April 17, 2026. We took a surge that fried the control board on our high service pump flow meter. After parts were ordered and received Stan and I were able to swap them out. This restored our flow meter.
- **Hydrant Flushing**- The crew flushed hydrants April 14th-24th. Hydrants were greased and oiled. One hydrant broke after being opened. Parts were ordered and the hydrant will be repaired as soon as we have the parts. Fall flushing will be done September 8th-18th.
- **Distribution System Leak**- In March the crew abandoned an air release that was leaking on Rt 4. We exposed the main then cut out the service line feeding the air release. We also plugged off the corp to abandon it. The crew exposed the water mains on Auburn Park Rd and Dickey John Rd. We have a 10" and a 16" water mains that T there. After getting the mains exposed, we were able to determine where the leak was coming from. We were able to stop the leak by tightening a bolt

OTHER BUSINESS:

None to report.

At 7:00pm Jake Rettberg made a motion to adjourn. Mike McCarthy seconded the motion. With no further business to discuss the meeting was unanimously adjourned. The next Commission Meeting will be at the Commission Office - 6475 W Montgomery Road in Virden on Tuesday, June 9th, at 5:00pm.

Meghan Theel

Minutes approved by the Board on 6/09/2026