

**Lake Musconetcong Regional Planning Board
Regular Meeting
December 17, 2025**

Chairman Riley opened the Regular Meeting at 7:00 p.m. with a reading of the Open Public Meetings Notice which was sent to the Daily Record and New Jersey Herald on January 16, 2025 and was sent to the Clerks of the four municipalities, the State and the two counties.

ROLL CALL:

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| Jacob Hamilton - absent | Shawn Potillo - absent |
| Robert Hathaway - present | Steven Rattner - present |
| Joseph Keenan - present (arrived @ 7:02pm) | Rudy Shlesinger - absent |
| Rosemarie Maio - present | Lester Wright - present |
| Judith McGrath - present | Earl Riley - present |

MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA: There were no modifications to the agenda.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Chairman Riley opened the meeting to the public.

Don Beech, a resident of Port Morris, said he would like to do something about the cattail growing in the area around his property. They are mostly on the town's property, but it is only a matter of time before the whole left side of the boat ramp will be completely covered with them. Mr. Beech said he would like to see what the Board can do, or him personally, or the State. Mr. Beech said he knows people with equipment that will go in and dig them out, but he would like permission first. Chairman Riley stated the Board had a discussion on this issue at last month's meeting and discussed it with State Park's representative. Chairman Riley informed Mr. Beech that State Parks will not allow him to go into the water and take them out. If you want to do it by hand, that is fine but State Parks will not allow you to go in with a machine and remove it because you are disturbing the bottom of the lake. Mr. Beech said that, given the amount of silt in the lake, it is not the bottom of the lake. Mr. Hathaway said that the State will oppose any action that deteriorates the riparian buffer, which is what they will classify it as. Mr. Hathaway noted that at the last meeting, it was suggested by State Parks that he may have misrepresented the species and it is actually phragmites, which is an invasive species that looks very similar to cattail. Mr. Hathaway said, if it is phragmites, he can use a contractor to deal with the phragmites. Mr. Beech stated the town vacated a paper street back in that area and its right of way was from their property line going southwesterly so all of the people who had property abutting the right of way received half of that property. He now owns about an additional 20' going into the lake and he asked if he can clear out his property in the lake. Chairman Riley responded he cannot, adding that the State owns all of the water in the lake and they are not allowed to disturb the bottom of the lake. Chairman Riley said the Board is facing the same problem by the maintenance shed and they cannot do anything about it. They cannot get the harvester into that area. Mr. Hathaway said Mr. Beech needs to identify them as phragmites and then he would need to get an applicator who agreed they are phragmites and then he could treat them. Mr. Hathaway suggested he get in touch with the LMCA's applicator.

Seeing no one further from the public wishing to speak, Chairman Riley closed the public portion of the meeting.

ACTION ON MINUTES: On motion by Mr. Rattner, seconded by Mr. Mr. Wright, the Minutes of the November 19, 2025 meeting were approved on majority voice vote. Mr. Hathaway and Ms. Maio abstained.

COMMUNICATIONS: There were no communications.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES:

Canal Society – There was nothing to report.

Musconetcong Watershed Association – Mr. Rattner reported the Federal Parks is down about 50%. Mr. Rattner also reported there is a new representative from the DEP and she has five different areas from the Pinelands to up here. She asked them all to come up with their priorities. Mr. Rattner also reported that the Highlands Council is basically defunct. This past year seven meetings were cancelled due to lack of quorum. There are eleven members of the Highlands Council and one of them has died and another is incapacitated and of the nine remaining members, only two have active appointments. Everyone else is because their term expired and they are basically a holdover. The Senate is responsible for the appointments. They have six nominations pending as far back as January 2024. The Senate will not act on it because of senatorial courtesy. The staff is still actively working. Mr. Rattner said they are asking the towns, if they have a connection with some of their elected officers, to speak to them and try to get something moving forward.

Site Plan Review/Stream Encroachment – There was nothing to report.

Lake Awareness – Ms. Maio asked if the Board decided to revert back to their customary fishing contest the week before Father’s Day, or to continue holding it on Fathers Day in conjunction with the Elks Club. Chairman Riley said he remembers they decided to keep the event with the Elks Club on their date. The last event was very successful. Ms. Maio will reach out to the Elks Club to find out if they are still interested in the joint fishing contest.

Lake Management – Mr. Hathaway reported the shoreline clean-up was a successful event even though it was a very cold day. There were about 15-16 volunteers. Mr. Hathaway also reported they had a media day with the Netcong Police Department bringing the “Grinch” to the event, which made it onto YouTube. Mr. Hathaway said there were about half a dozen students who came to him to sign their school volunteer voucher, which is a first. Chairman Riley thanked the Lake Hopatcong Foundation for those students because they asked him and said they had people from Jefferson who wanted to participate in the lake clean-up. Mr. Hathaway said the debris collected was brought to the boat launch and there were about fifteen 55-gallon bags that were full. Mr. Hathaway noted that in the past during the shoreline clean-up, the debris pulled out of the lake included tires, a couch, a stroller and other large items. The type of debris pulled out of the lake this year were bottles, cans and plastics. Mr. Hathaway stated this is so much better than it was before, adding the shoreline is very clean. Chairman Riley asked the Board members to get more involved next year. Chairman Riley said Mr. Hathaway did the entire event this year by himself with no help from the Board, i.e. he prepared the flyer advertisement, reached out to the communities and coordinated the event. Chairman Riley asked that they put together a committee for next year’s lake clean-up so there is more than one person involved in it. Mr. Hathaway noted there is not much in lake management since it is the winter. Mr. Hathaway noted that the lake is frozen over and there is about 6” of ice. The lake is still down and they are supposed to be refilling it. Lake Hopatcong has not reached its required drawdown. Mr. Hathaway noted it will come down stream and float the ice in Lake Musconetcong. Mr. Hathaway said he is working with Mr. Hamilton on this and is in communication with him regularly. They are trying to control the Hopatcong outflow. Mr. Hathaway

stated this is uncharted territory for everyone and there is the potential for property damage which he does not think can be avoided. Chairman Riley said, if the lake comes up with this amount of ice, we can see docks lifted. Mr. Hathaway said he and State Parks are trying to work together to minimize adverse effects. Mr. Hathaway said his hope is the rain in the forecast will melt much of the snow and ice and it will refill the lake from the top down. Hopefully there will be enough melting. Chairman Riley reported that, because of what happened last year with the mice in the harvester, he has been at the site and took the engine cover off and inspected everything. As of last Friday there is no indication of any rodent activity in the harvester. He will continue to check it on a weekly basis.

Operating Budget – There was nothing to report.

CD Investment – There was nothing to report.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Chairman Riley informed the Board that the Treasurer’s Report for this month was prepared by the Clerk, Ellen, adding that Ellen has agreed to prepare the Treasurer’s Report in the fashion the Board is used to seeing from Mr. Keenan. Mr. Wright is still responsible for the Treasurer’s duties including writing the checks. Mr. Wright gave the Treasurer’s Report as prepared by Ellen. The balance in the Fulton checking account is \$81,453, the balance in the Fulton long-term savings account is \$5,7905 and the balance in the Fidelity money market account is \$153,322 for a total lof \$240,480. On motion by Mr. Hathaway, seconded by Ms. Maio, and carried by unanimous voice vote, the Treasurer’s Report was accepted and placed on file.

BILLS: On motion by Mr. Hathaway, seconded by Mr. Wright and carried by the following unanimous roll call vote, the Board approved the bills on the Bills List:

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| Operating Account: | |
| Ellen Horak - Clerk’s Monthly Compensation | \$ 550.00 |
| Lake Management Account: | |
| JCP&L – electric at shed | \$ 11.81 |
| Morris County MUA - Shade Tree (weed disposal) | \$ 180.00 |
| Debit/Credit Card: | |
| Optimum - internet service | \$ 40.00 |

ROLL CALL:

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| Mr. Hathaway - yes | Ms. McGrath - yes |
| Mr. Keenan - yes | Mr. Rattner - yes |
| Ms. Maio - yes | Mr. Wright - yes |
| | Chairman Riley - yes |

OLD BUSINESS:

\$572,000 Grant Agreement – Chairman Riley reported he had to submit a budget modification to alleviate the fact that we were not able to meet the in-kind match. The budget modification was approved last Friday. Chairman Riley said he has started resubmitting the financial reports for January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025 and hopefully will get it done this week.

Website - Chairman Riley noted the Board discussed the website proposal received at last month's meeting and agreed the quote was outrageous and they would not move forward with it. Chairman Riley asked if anyone wants to take this task over and find a new website manager for the Board. He would like someone to volunteer to go out and find a website developer. Mr. Hathaway volunteered to take on the task. Mr. Hathaway noted a discussion with Mr. Potillo about using Rob Kuncken, who does IT for Roxbury. Mr. Hathaway said he would prefer the person do the work directly for the Board. Mr. Hathaway noted Rob Kuncken is an option. Netcong uses Navitend and there is a contractor on one of their Boards who may be able to do the task. Chairman Riley said they need someone to do the website development and after it is developed, Ellen will manage the website on a monthly basis and input the information. Mr. Hathaway said there are a number of options he will look into.

NEW BUSINESS:

Sale of Horiba Water Quality Meter - Chairman Riley said the Board purchased this water quality meter three years ago when they were planning to put probiotics into the lake, but we were not allowed to do it. The Board paid \$3,600 for this meter that has not been used. Chairman Riley said he reached out to the MWA and Lake Hopatcong Foundation to see if they were interested in purchasing the meter, but he has received no response. Chairman Riley suggested putting the meter on GovDeals.com for a price of \$2,500. On motion by Mr. Hathaway, seconded by Ms. Maio and carried by unanimous voice vote, the Board authorized Chairman Riley to list the Horiba Water Quality Meter on GovDeals.com and to accept whatever amount he can get.

Financial Reports - Chairman Riley stated Ellen agreed to prepare the financial reports for the Board every month. She will be writing the Treasurer's Report and he asked that she be compensated with a \$50 stipend for this task. On motion by Ms. Maio, seconded by Mr. Hathaway and carried by the following unanimous roll call vote, the Board agreed to a monthly stipend of \$50 to Ellen Horak for preparing the monthly financial report.

ROLL CALL:

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| Mr. Hathaway - yes | Ms. McGrath - yes |
| Mr. Keenan - yes | Mr. Rattner - yes |
| Ms. Maio - yes | Mr. Wright - yes |
| | Chairman Riley - yes |

Mr. Hathaway stated he spent money at Shoprite to purchase bags for the clean-up. He misunderstood an email and thought the LMCA was going to provide the bags, but they did not. He spent about \$10.00 at Shoprite, which was put on the Board's card.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Chairman Riley opened the meeting to the public.

Don Beech noted the discussion regarding the website and suggested they approach the County Colleges and see if a student would be willing to develop the website. Mr. Hathaway stated the Borough Administrator has contacts at the college and he will speak to him about it.

Seeing no one further from the public wishing to speak, Chairman Riley closed the public portion of the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: On motion by Mr. Hathaway, seconded by Mr. Wright and carried by unanimous voice vote, the meeting was adjourned at 7:56 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Horak, Clerk