

# Cochran Lake Management District 2025 Annual Meeting

**May 24, 8:00AM**

In Person - *Pike Lake Fire Station*

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1. Call to order
2. Pledge of allegiance
3. Approval of minutes of 2024 Annual Meeting
4. Introduce and welcome new lake district members
5. Board Member Reports
  - Rick D.
    - Update on sunken pier
  - Maggie J.
    - Print directory
  - Warren J.
    - Current financial status, Annual financial summary
6. Town of Fifield Representative
7. Price County Representative
8. Committee chair reports - 10 mins.
  - a) Water quality - Alan J.
  - b) Loon ranger - Need volunteer
  - c) Adopt a road - Carlene B.
  - d) Fire Dept. - Warren J.
  - e) Fisheries - Sig K.
  - f) District website - Don S.
  - g) Fish stocking update - Phil O.
10. New business
  - a) Remove owner directory from website - **VOTE**
  - b) By-law change - Change CLMD fee from lot to property owner - **VOTE**
    - b1) If passed - Raise fee from \$35 to \$50 for all owners - **VOTE**
  - c) CLMD pier - Repair or replace - **VOTE**
    - c1) If replace, authorize CLMD to spend up to \$7,500 for a new pier - **VOTE**
    - c2) By-law change - Raise CLMD fee from \$35 to \$50 to help pay for new pier - **VOTE**
      - Form ad hoc pier committee*
  - d) Approval of 2025 budget - **VOTE**
  - e) Election of two board members (Maggie J. & Rick D. resigning) - Nominations/**VOTE**
11. Adjourn

At the Quarterly meeting in February, someone requested changing our CLMD fee from current \$35 cost per lot owned, to \$35 per owner, regardless of multiple or divided lots. It was also requested that the extra cost beyond single lot fee be refunded for the past year. We have attempted to explain the math involved on the whiteboard.

Eric Olson from Extension Lakes, our overseeing organization, was consulted. His response was as follows.

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Wisconsin statutes provide two primary methods for lake districts to budget and collect their revenue: the tax levy and special charges. The special charge option is relatively tricky to locate but it is in the section of Chapter 33 that also discusses sewerage system charges: [https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/statutes/33.32\(5\)](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/document/statutes/33.32(5))

*Special charges may be imposed for other services identified in the annual budget adopted under s. 33.30 (3) (b). The special charges may not exceed the rate of \$2.50 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The special charges may be certified by the district secretary to the clerk of each municipality having property within the district for collection and settlement in the same manner as provided under ch. 74. The commissioners shall allocate the charges to the property served in a manner prescribed by them unless the manner is specified by a resolution of the annual or of a special meeting. Delinquent special charges shall be governed by s. 66.0627 (4).*

The total revenue from special charges cannot exceed the equivalent of \$2.50/thousand. Some districts collect special charges on tax exempt property, so it does not make sense to look at the millage equivalent for each property.

The decision to use either the mill levy or special charges is up to the landowners and residents who vote at the annual meeting. The highlighted part of the statute means that either the voters decide how to allocate the special charges, or if they choose not to decide, then the board decides. There should be a resolution put forward by an owner/voter at the annual meeting stating how to allocate the charge. If, in your example, the change is from “parcel” to “owner”, it might require the per-owner charge to be higher than it was under the per-parcel arrangement (to raise the same amount of revenue). This would then be subject to a vote of the eligible voters at the annual meeting. You would also need to communicate the billing procedure to the town or county who generates the actual tax bills.

I would not advise trying to retroactively rebate past special charges. Local government is mostly in the business of collecting money and spending it on services, not paying it back out to individuals. Paying money to individuals would open up a number of records management challenges.

Eric

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In essence, we are allowed to vote to change our by-laws to change our fee assessment, within limitations. He advised against refunding past income.