

Healthy Pine River
January 9th, 2025 | 7:00 PM

Call to Order: Chuck Sandro

Approval of Minutes: Doug and Micheal

Financial Report:	Opening Balance:	\$17,348.62
	Closing Balance:	\$23,174.96

Program Guests: Spencer Welling Field Regulatory Specialist at Wolverine Pipe Line Company.
Fred Harris, Gratiot County Emergency Manager

About Wolverine Pipeline: Wolverine Pipeline transports petroleum products (both gas and diesel). The pipeline is inspected internally every 5 years to detect cracks and dents. Every three weeks, external inspections are done to check the pipeline to check for hazards. 18 systems are in place to ensure the pipeline is operating safely. The pipeline depth is at minimum 30 inches below the soil, or deeper depending on land usage.

About the leak: On December 27th, around 7:00 P.M., Wolverine Pipeline was notified from the Gratiot County Drain Commissioner of a leak at the crossing of the pipeline and the Arcadia/Newark drain in Arcadia Township. Wolverine Pipeline's initial response was to isolate the pipe by closing valves, deploying booms into the Arcadia/Newark drain to contain the spill. The booms were deployed at drain crossings at Ely Highway, Harrison Road, and in the woods between Tyler and Alger roads. Vacuum trucks skimmed the oil from the surface water in Arcadia/Newark drain. There were approx. 30 barrels (1200 gallons) of petroleum product removed from the surface water. This leak did not reach the main branch of the Pine River. They have also removed 3 'roll-offs' of contaminated soil. The amount of petroleum product found in the soil is still being evaluated. 40+ employees from Wolverine Pipeline were on-site responding to the leak.

Cause of damage: From recent investigations, the best estimate of the cause of the incident is damage done to the pipeline from an excavator. There is a 1.5 inch deep indentation on the surface of the pipe where the leak sprouted. This section of the pipeline had passed inspections 2 years prior to the leak. Initial contact with the pipe from an excavator **may** have dented the surface of the pipe without causing an immediate leak. Pressurization over time (600-700 PSI) would have developed the pin-hole sized leak, allowing the petroleum product to be discharged from the pipeline into the drain starting on December 27th, 2024. The drain commissioner informed Wolverine Pipeline of an excavator in the drain, cleaning out sediment, in February of 2024. Investigation into the cause of the indentation on the surface of the pipe is still ongoing.

Environmental/Health Hazard information: Environmental consultants have taken samples of the affected area and are assessing to ensure all the petroleum products were removed. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) will be reviewing these assessments to ensure all contamination had been removed before closing out this incident case. There is currently no ecological assessment planned; one may be required depending on the contamination severity left after EGLE's assessments. Well samples were taken and the wells were un-impacted by the leak. The nearest well was ¼ miles from the incident site. There did not seem to be any impact on wildlife.

Preventing future incidents: A new pipe was installed 34 inches below the drain. The previous pipe was only installed 8 inches below the drain. They are working to remedy other pipeline areas that are located below drainage crossings to deepen the distance between the pipeline and the drainage ditch. This would prevent accidental damage during drainage maintenance.

Next Meeting

Thursday, February 13th, 2025 | 7:00 P.M. | Alma Public Library