

Healthy Pine River
Membership Meeting Minutes
April 09, 2026
7:00 PM @ Alma Public Library

Call to Order: Dr. Ben Peterson

Approval of Minutes: Gary R. / Brittany S.

Financial Report:

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|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Beginning Balance as of 3/1/26 | \$37,123.77 |
| Deposits & Credits | \$11,895.00 |
| Withdrawals & Debits | \$4,342.42 |
| Ending Balance as of 3/31/26 | \$44,676.52 |

Meeting Adjourned: Gary R. / Brittany S.

The presenter was Mason Manuzak from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). He discussed the State Street Dam Risk Reduction Grant project, which is funding a feasibility study to evaluate the future of the dam.

Manuzak explained that the State Street Dam is classified as a Significant Hazard Dam because it does not have the spillway capacity needed during major flood events, even though it is structurally sound. The feasibility study is examining several options, including keeping the dam as it is, partially removing it, or fully removing it. A major part of the project involves studying the large amount of contaminated sediment behind the dam, which contains metals, PCBs, and other pollutants. EGLE is collecting data and using hydraulic modeling to understand how water and sediment would move under different scenarios and how each option could affect flooding, the environment, and nearby infrastructure. The study will also provide cost estimates and help guide future decisions and funding opportunities. Results are expected in late summer, followed by a community meeting, focus groups, and a mailed survey.

Questions & Answers:

Similar projects: Residents asked whether other communities have done similar studies. EGLE shared that 10–12 feasibility studies have been funded across the state.

Using sediment nearby: A question was raised about whether sediment could be placed along the riverbanks instead of being hauled away. Manuzak said this might be possible but depends on contamination levels, wetland rules, and engineering needs.

Partial removal costs: When asked if partial removal would be cheaper, he explained that while it may reduce costs slightly, sediment management remains the largest expense in any scenario.

Sediment moving downstream: Residents expressed concern about sediment traveling toward St. Louis. EGLE confirmed that this issue will be addressed directly in the final report to avoid shifting the problem to another community.

Weed growth: Someone asked whether removing the dam would help with weeds in the river. EGLE noted that aquatic vegetation is outside the scope of this grant.

Dam safety: Questions about risk led Manuzak to explain that the dam's hazard classification is based on a modeled 200-year flood event that could cause failure and affect local roads. There is no current structural concern, but the dam does not meet required capacity standards.

Cost: Residents asked what makes removal expensive. Manuzak confirmed that the volume and contamination of sediment behind the dam is the primary cost factor. When asked if the sediment could be sold, he said this is unlikely and depends on its composition.

Next Meeting: May 14, 2026 | 7:00 PM | Alma Public Library