

# Diamondhead Sanitary District

February, 2016

In 2002 Diamondhead Lake in southeastern Guthrie County formed a Sanitary District under Chapter 358 of the Code of Iowa. This arose due to problems with the aging sewage treatment system that served the Lake area. Sufficient funds to keep the system up and running properly were not available under the old arrangement. The State Dept. of Natural Resources had given executive orders that could not be met so the District was formed under the guidance of the Guthrie Co. Environmental Health Dept. to enable adequate funding to meet the repair requirements of the DNR

A Sanitary District is run similarly to a small town with the exception that only sewer is under its jurisdiction. Money comes from utility charges plus a small property tax of \$.54/1000 taxable valuation on all property. This money cannot be used for any purpose other than sewer and is not available in any way to the Longbranch Maintenance Corporation. The Board also has the ability to sell bonds and to do special assessments.

The District is managed by a Board of Trustees that is elected at the general election in November of even-numbered years. Current Trustees are Phil Littler, Carl O'Connor, Tony Padden and Jeff Wood. There is currently a vacancy on the Board due to a resignation. Each is elected to a six-year term with one or two up for election each time. The Board has regular monthly meetings that are open to the public. These are normally held the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the old Lake office. Citizens of the Lake should feel free to attend. These meetings and any special meetings are publicized on the entrance boards and on the old office door.

Each January-February a budget is developed and has to be publicized. This budget is authorized through Iowa law and must be forwarded to the State Auditor's office. These budgets, meeting minutes, etc. are also available through the Guthrie County Environmental Health Dept. office. This Dept. is in place to be an advisor to the District and has general oversight to assure the DNR that the District is being properly run by the Trustees.

The Board has just completed a major project to upgrade the system and to greatly reduce the overflow of lift stations. The Board worked with the County Board of Supervisors and the County sold bonds for the District in the amount of approximately \$700,000. The money went for upgrades and the District signed a 28E Agreement with the County to pay the principal and interest payments each six months. The County was able to sell the bonds at a better interest rate for the District.

The funds went to eliminate lift stations #2 and #3 with a new DNR approved lift station at Horseshoe Bend. The line under Horseshoe Bend Cove was abandoned. Then the new lift station goes to a new line up Outer Drive. This alleviates all waste from the south end of the Lake from having to go thru the other lift stations. This frequently resulted in over-flows and pump failures. The lagoons were also rip-rapped as they were in bad need of that being done.

The District also employs D.J. Services (Perry) to be the wastewater operator for the lagoons. The District has also upgraded the pump stations with Omni devices which record daily events at each pump station and is an alarm system to notify the Board when a station goes down. This eliminates a lot of problems.

The Trustees contract with Pat Hochstettler to do the bookkeeping, billing, etc for the Board. One of the banks in Stuart serves as the official repository of funds for the District. Budget notices are published in the **Stuart Herald**. These notices are usually in January or February depending on when the budget hearing will be.

Lake residents should always feel free to contact the Trustees with questions, ideas, and suggestions. Also, this Dept. is available to assist anyone who feels a problem is not being addressed properly.