

**VILLAGE OF ELLSWORTH COUNCIL MINUTES**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**BANKS TOWNSHIP HALL**  
**August 11, 2025**

Present: J. Rasmussen, S. Sowers, S. Dhillon, M. Drenth, Al Drenth, G. McCallum, and L. Spearing.

Absent: M. Bennett, Marcie Potter

Others: Tina Sundelius, Jarris Rubingh.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. **MOTION** by S. Dhillon/seconded by A. Drenth to accept the minutes of the July 14, 2025, regular meeting as presented. **CARRIED 6-0**
2. **MOTION** by J. Rasmussen/seconded by L. Spearing to accept the minutes of the August 7, 2025, special meeting. **CARRIED 6-0**

**PUBLIC INPUT:**

- Jarris Rubingh, County Commissioner, gave the Village 911 sheriff's report. Then reported that the sheriff's department is considering acquiring a license plate reader to place on US31 & US131. The average daily count of residents at the jail in 2024 was 21, in 2025 its 30-35 inmates. Torch Lake Township is contracting with the Sheriff's Department to patrol a couple of their roads including N.E. Torch Lake Drive. Drain Commissioner, Leslie Meyer, will be giving a presentation to the County Commissioners that will include the replacement of our culvert on Bridge Street. The need for annual dredging of the Upper Chain of Lakes was mentioned. It was last dredged in 1963 (?). Both Senator DaMoose & State Rep Roth have put Essex Road on their road packages. County Road Commissioner Burt Thompson is retiring next year. Interviews for his replacement will begin in November 2025.

**DEPARMENTAL REPORTS:**

- a. Recreation: S. Dhillon reported that our Rec Director, Beth Cooper, is leaving the position because of family changes. She presented the resume of Lisa Essenberg-Nagy for consideration by the council. The rusty/damaged batting cage fencing has been removed. J. Rasmussen will talk to the school about sharing the cost of new fencing. The playground equipment for River Park has still not been installed. The concession stand has been power washed and is ready to paint. J. Rasmussen requested a list from S. Dhillon of all equipment needed to set up all concession stands so equipment doesn't need to be moved back & forth. L. Spearing stated that she received an updated bid from Beckett & Raeder for \$11,000 to do the Village/Township joint Recreation Plan.
- b. Streets: J. Rasmussen reported that the sidewalks in front of the fire hall and the installation of a new sewer drain will be done in the next two weeks.
- c. Zoning: J. Rasmussen stated that the County told him that they are doing their part to get the abandoned building on Main Street cleaned up and we need to do our part. The zoning administrator has been directed by the board to send letters and follow through with any action required by our policies and ordinances, to all nonconforming issues in the village.
- d. DPW: J. Rasmussen reported that throughout the Village all that is getting accomplished is

maintenance. No upgrades or repairs because of limited resources. A question was raised about why the bathrooms at the park are not left open during the summer. L. Spearing will talk to Mike Strange, our IT person, about installing & accessing cameras at the park.

- e. President's Report: J. Rasmussen stated that the price for the retaining wall at Park & Elm streets came in at \$28,000. Tree removal at the tank bid came in at \$3,000. He is getting a new price from Payne & Dolan to resurface Resort Drive. If they are willing to do less than originally bid, we may be able to get it done with the financial help offered by the Township.
- f. Clerk's Report: M. Drenth broke down expenses of the water department and explained that/how we are \$20,000 short to meet the USDA payment. She presented a rate increase resolution. Discussion was held. Bills were over \$13,000 this month.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- a. Finance Committee: None
- b. DDA: L. Spearing reported Concerts in the Square have been well attended. Open Mic night, the final event, is coming up this week.
- c. Planning Commission: Meets this Thursday, August 14. They are working on updating the Village Master Plan.
- d. Ordinance/Law Enforcement Committee: No Report
- e. Streets/Lights/Water/ Solid Waste Committee: No Report

### **DISCUSSION:**

- a. VanDellen List: S. Dhillon distributed estimates and sketches of a 2-slip & a 4-slip dock. Everything is coming together nicely. She is waiting on one more bid before submitting the package to VanDellen.
- b. Sewer Project: After meeting with our Gordie-Frasier Rep at the Special Meeting, L. spearing was able to get in touch with both DaMoose & Roth who stated they want to help us get in touch with EGLE. EGLE has been nonresponsive to our many, many attempts to get things moving.
- c. High Street: This issue has been turned over to the three private property owners and their attorneys. The Village Council made it clear they are willing to be involved in the negotiations if wanted/needed.
- d. Tax Increase: Village taxes are set at 12.5 mills. However, due to the Headlee Act we receive 11.2528 mills. The Village has a very small tax base. The Clerk has been directed to gather the tax rates of neighboring villages.

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- 3. **MOTION** by S. Dhillon/seconded by J. Rasmussen to pass resolution 8-11-2025. Roll call vote **CARRIED** 6-0.
- 4. **MOTION** by L. Spearing/seconded by S. Sowers to hire Lisa Essenberg-Nagy as the village Rec. Director. **CARRIED** 6-0.
- 5. **MOTION** by S. Sowers/seconded by G. McCallum to approve the budget amendments. **CARRIED** 6-0.
- 6. **MOTION** by S. Sowers/seconded by L. Spearing to approve the bills. **CARRIED** 6-0.

**PUBLIC INPUT:** None

**ADJOURN: MOTION** by L.Spearing/seconded by S. Sowers to adjourn at 8:00PM. **CARRIED** 6-0.

Marlene Drenth, Village Clerk