

VILLAGE OF ELLSWORTH COUNCIL MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
BANKS TOWNSHIP HALL
December 8, 2025

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

Absent: Marcie Potter

Others: Tina Sundelius, Jaimen Waha, Jarris Rubingh.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. **MOTION** by L. Spearing/seconded by M. Bennett to accept the minutes of the November 10, 2025, regular meeting as presented. **CARRIED** 7-0

PUBLIC INPUT:

- County Commissioner reported that borings have been taken on the bridge on Bridge Street. Core samples are needed by the county as part of the work on the Chain of Lakes that Drain Commissioner Leslie Meyers is doing. He also reported that an invasive bug is infesting hemlock trees. Treatment is being done. A great deal of trimming will take place to further prevent the spread.

Guest Speaker: Jaimen Waha from the Health Department of Northwest Michigan answered questions on septic systems, the village's problems with new and failing systems, and options for the village. He informed that EGLE has a program called Septic Saves to help people get new systems.

DEPARMENTAL REPORTS:

- a. Recreation: S. Dhillon reported that an unanimous donor will provide supplies for upgrades at the Wooden Shoe restrooms. Could we provide a list of what is needed. The VanDellin dock project is moving forward with Dave Muha now taking the lead for the engineering portion of the project. L. Spearing reported that we received the \$11,000 grant from Rotary Charities to cover the costs of updating the Rec Plan.
- b. DPW: J. Rasmussen got quotes on a new 2026 pick-up for the DPW. \$42,000 and financing at 4.87% for 5 years. No penalty for early pay-off. M. Bennett would like to table a new truck purchase until after the budget is set for 2026.
- c. Streets: None
- d. Zoning: G. McCallum reported that Peninsula Fiber would like to come through town with buried fiber optics in March. S. Dhillon expressed concern that the village may be taken advantage of again by another utility company and would like to ask questions before they do.
- e. President's Report: J. Rasmussen reported that a group of investors are interested in the property adjacent to the Community Park for development. He then asked if the board would be interested in selling the property owned by the village next to the Farmer's Exchange, to the Exchange. They have been using it anyway. He was directed to find out what a good price would be.
- f. Clerk's Report: M. Drenth presented a letter from the county stating that the township has released their updated Master Plan for review.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a. Finance Committee: None
- b. DDA: L. Spearing reported that Christmas in the Village was a success. A goal setting retreat took place in November. The next meeting will be held the third Monday in January.
- c. Planning Commission: A Public Hearing will be held to receive comment on the Draft Village Master Plan.
- d. Ordinance/Law Enforcement Committee: None
- e. Streets/Lights/Water/ Solid Waste Committee: None

DISCUSSION:

- a. Sewer Project: J. Rasmussen stated that Aaron Klein from EGLE has referred the village back to Jennifer Graham who has not followed through for us. He spoke with her twice earlier today and she relayed to him that any past debt incurred by the village for the sewer project would “probably” be written off as bad debt. This frees the village up to find other options for the village. L. Spearing will be in touch with the USDA.
- b. Rasmussen suggested trading the Village police car for a new DPW truck. He was directed to shop around. Central Lake President is interested in collaborating with us on a police officer.
- c. The updated village Capital Improvement Plan was presented for approval. Discussion was held.
- d. A request to create setbacks in the business district was discussed. A recommendation will be sent to the Planning commission to consider the request.
- e. Three members of the DDA were reappointed: Tina Sundelius (Term ending Dec. 31, 2027), Mary Faculak (Term ending Dec. 31, 2028), & Chris Randall (Term ending Dec. 31, 2028),

ACTION ITEMS:

2. **MOTION** by M. Bennett/seconded by L. Spearing to approve the Village Capital Improvement Plan. **CARRIED** 6-0.
3. **MOTION** by M. Bennett/seconded by S. Sowers to approve a Memorandum of Understanding concerning the potential Chain of Lakes Special Assessment. **CARRIED** 6 Ayes-0 Nays.
4. **MOTION** by M. Bennett/seconded by S. Sowers to approve three reappointments to the DDA. **CARRIED** 6-0.
5. **MOTION** by S.Sowers/seconded by A. Drenth to approve the bills as presented.**CARRIED** 6-0.

G. McCallum left the meeting at 7:15.

PUBLIC INPUT: Jarris Rubingh, County Commissioner, reported that the Antrim Creek Natural Area committee is hoping to restore the little old school house and would like input from the Historical Society.

ADJOURN:**MOTION** by M. Bennett/seconded by J. Rasmussen to adjourn at 7:55pm. **CARRIED** 6-0.

Marlene Drenth, Village Clerk