

VILLAGE OF ELLSWORTH COUNCIL MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
BANKS TOWNSHIP HALL
February 10, 2025

Present: J. Rasmussen, G. McCallum, S. Sowers, M. Bennett, S. Dhillon, M. Drenth and L. Spearing.
Absent: A. Drenth, Marcie Potter.

Others: Tina Sundelius, Gail Denny, and Sandra Davies-Webster.

A Public Hearing on the 2025-2026 budget was called to order by Rasmussen at 6:30pm.
Public Hearing closed at 6:35. No public input.

1. **MOTION** by L. Spearing/seconded by M. Bennett to accept the minutes of the January 13, 2025, regular meeting as presented. **CARRIED** 7-0

PUBLIC INPUT:

- Gail Denny addressed the council as a representative of the Friends of the Labyrinth, a newly formed 501c3 whose mission is to maintain and enhance the Labyrinth Sensory and wellness Garden. The group would like to hold an informational, fundraising event at Community Park. An Easter Egg Hunt on April 13, 2pm. They need use of the pavilion and the bathrooms open. She was given the council's approval and told to talk to Tex (DPW) about opening the bathrooms and kitchen.
- Sandy Davies-Webster notified the council that the Banks Township Historical Society is planning to host a Bicycle fundraiser. Planning is in the infancy stage but proceeds from the event will be used to support the little stone house and other Society expenses. It would be called Bicycle Antrim.
- Tina Sundelius representing the Pig Roast Committee thanked the village for past support of the festival and requested that they support the event again this year.

DEPARMENTAL REPORTS:

- a. Police: Discussion was held on whether to continue to have a police department, contract with the Sheriff's department or leave things as they are. The building that was approved at the December meeting will be put on hold because of the lack of an officer and funds shortage. The issued \$5,000 has been spent on drawings that will be used when the project picks back up.
- b. Streets: G. McCallum talked to Pastor Wallace at the Wesleyan Church about the need for a guard rail on Essex/Park at the curve. He doesn't think a guardrail is needed but that the side of the hill needs to be shored up, reinforced with a retaining wall. The church is willing to share the expense with the village. It will be looked at closer when the snow melts.
- c. DPW: Tex plans to retire in April. He will meet with the Council to put a job description together. His assistant, Carl Krosnicki is willing to take over Tex's duties and Tex is willing to stay involved until Carl is fully trained. Carl will need to go to 'water' school and a job notice will be posted for his present position.

- d. Presidents Report: Rasmussen expressed exasperation at placing multiple calls in to both the sheriff and our Gourdie Fraser representative and not being able to touch base with either before the meeting.
- e. Clerk's Report: M. Drenth reported that we need new signature cards at the bank, removing Campbell's name and adding Rasmussen's, We received a thank you card from the Jean Drenth family, an update letter from Paddle Antrim, the NLEA's new strategic plan and a letter from the Ell Clair Fireworks committee hoping for a donation again this year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a. Finance Committee: L. Spearing reported that she is working on 2 grants. One with Rotary Charities that will result in the addition of a handicap accessible kayak launch at River Park and the Safe Sidewalks to School Grant that, if awarded, could result in new sidewalks at various places in the village. Both are in progress and will take time to complete.
- b. DDA: L. Spearing reported that work on next season's Concerts on the Square has begun, the student reps were given 2 classes on civics, leadership and committee policy. The Front Porch Café has received the Breezeway Business of the Year Award. The next meeting is set for February 24, 5p.m.
- c. Planning Commission: The Planning commission will meet February 13, 7p.m. the Village Master Plan will be discussed.
- d. Parks and Recreation: Rec Director Bethany Cooper was absent.
- e. Ordinance/Law Enforcement Committee: G. McCallum brought to the council's attention that the village does not have a clean energy ordinance. M. Drenth will contact the attorney for a sample ordinance to bring to the next meeting for review.
- f. Streets/Lights/Water/ Solid Waste Committee: N/R

DISCUSSION:

- a. The Ellsworth/Banks Parks & Recreation Master Plan needs to be updated. There is a 93 page document that instructs us how to complete the plan. L. Spearing is reaching out to the NLEA for guidance.
- b. VanDellen List: S. Dhillon has tried extensively to get a hold of the person who reached out to us with no success. She is considering reaching out to their children.
- c. Ellsworth/Banks Recreation Plan Update: The plan and budget submitted by Cooper looks good. The council recommends that she concentrates on the Little League program in 2026, it is expected to take a great deal of work to bring it back. President Rasmussen approached the school and they will be contributing \$3500 to the Rec Budget.
- d. Sewer Project: Rasmussen has held many conversations with the USDA and Gourdie Fraser about the project. Some movement must take place by April 2025. Rasmussen will try and call a meeting between all players in the very near future.
- e. Tax Raise: The village is in need of more revenue. We are dipping into our fund balance for the second year in a row. The village hasn't raised taxes in over 40 years. S. Sowers expressed a strong objection to raising village taxes. We presently levy 12.5 mils but after the county

calculation collect 11mils. 1 mil brings in a little more than \$12,000.

- f. Wages: In November we discussed raising the Woodenshoe Park attendant's pay by \$50 per week but didn't vote on it.
- g. President's Wages: Discussion was held on giving the President \$100 per month plus \$30 per meeting.
- h. Committee of the Whole Goal Setting Meeting: Discussion was held on the need to set goals and get on the same page. A meeting was set for February 25, 5p.m. at the township hall. Public welcome.

ACTION ITEMS:

2. **MOTION** by M. Bennett/seconded by S. Dhillon to approve the 2024-2025 budget amendments. **CARRIED** 7-0.
3. **MOTION** by L. Spearing/seconded by M. Bennett to approve the 2025-2026 budget as presented. **CARRIED** 7-0.
4. **MOTION** by S. Sowers/seconded by G. McCallum to pay the bills as presented. **CARRIED** 7-0.
5. **MOTION** by L. Spearing/seconded by G. McCallum to Postpone the police building project. **CARRIED** 7-0.
6. **MOTION** by G. McCallum/seconded by L. Spearing to raise the Park Attendant's salary by \$50 per week. **CARRIED** 7-0.
7. **MOTION** by L. Spearing/seconded by M. Bennett to give the Village President a \$100 per month salary. **CARRIED** 7-0.
8. **MOTION** by M. Bennett/seconded by S. Sowers to change our current signature cards at Charlevoix State Bank removing Hugh Campbell's name, adding Jerry Rasmussen's name, maintaining Marlene Drenth and Marcie Potter's names on the signature cards for General Fund [REDACTED], Water Fund [REDACTED], Bond Reserve [REDACTED], RR & I Fund [REDACTED] and Community Square Fund [REDACTED]. **CARRIED** 7-0.
9. **MOTION** by L. Spearing/seconded by M. Bennett to adopt ordinance 02-10 of 2025 that allows for the appointment of the village clerk and the village treasurer. **CARRIED** 7-0

PUBLIC INPUT:

- No public Comment.

10. **MOTION** by S. Sowers/seconded by G. McCallum to adjourn at 8:38p.m. **CARRIED** 7-0

Marlene Drenth, Village Clerk