

**VILLAGE OF ELLSWORTH COUNCIL MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
BANKS TOWNSHIP HALL
February 9, 2026**

Present: J. Rasmussen, S. Sowers, M. Drenth, Al Drenth, L. Spearing, S. Dhillon, Don Ruis, and M. Potter.

Absent: M. Bennett

Others: Tina Sundelius, Ken Grosser, Diane Stewart, Matt Thomas, Dave Muha, Deana Jerdee, Jennifer Graham, Heidi Shaffer, Jarris Rubingh, and Kandi Randall.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. **MOTION** by L. Spearing/seconded by Sheila Dhillon to accept the minutes of the January 12, 2026, regular meeting as presented. **CARRIED** 6-0

PUBLIC INPUT:

- Ken Grosser wanted to know how many parking lots we plow and yards we mow for free that do not belong to the village. The answer was none that we are not paid for.
- Diane Stewart commented on the broken plowtruck.

Regular Meeting was closed at 6:38PM

A Public Hearing to discuss the 2026 Budget was opened at 6:38PM.

M. Drenth reviewed the new budget and took questions. No Public Comment.

Public Hearing was closed at 6:43PM.

Regular meeting was opened at 6:43PM.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Dave Muha gave an update on the VanDellen/River Park project. We need professional engineering to proceed. The Rec Plan needs to be completed before we can apply for grants. The docks will go in in the spring. Signage will be included in the project: "Doc's Docks"

Deana Jerdee gave her annual Paddle Antrim update and asked if they could launch from River Park again this year. The days and times of the festival have been moved. The event will take place on Friday, Sept. 18-Sunday, Sept. 20. With events happening at River Park beginning at 2pm on Friday. The 2025 Paddle had over 200 paddlers from 14 different states. She expressed that Paddle Antrim would be excited to assist the village with the River Park improvement project as soon as their present fundraising commitment is fulfilled.

Jennifer Graham reviewed past efforts to get a community septic system in place. They are in agreement that a change of direction for the project is in order and clarified the pros and cons of going with a community drain field for the business district. The cost would be an estimated \$75 per month per recipient of the system.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

- a. Recreation: L. Spearing reported that the Recreation Plan Committee has been organized. J. Rasmussen reported that he visited the bath house at Wooden Shoe Park and has a plan for improvements.
- b. DPW: J. Rasmussen reported that our main DPW employee would like us to begin advertising for his replacement. The plow truck has broken down 4 times in 4 weeks.
- c. Streets: None
- d. Zoning: None.
- e. President's Report: J. Rasmussen reported that according to the liquor commission, we do not need a liquor inspector. He will let John Fant know. He also reported that a realtor advised the village that it would be better to lease the property that the Farmer's exchange is interested in rather than sell it.
- f. Clerk's Report: M. Drenth presented. Antrim County is looking for someone to join the North Country Community Mental Health Committee. A letter was received from the fireworks Committee. The Michigan minimum wage has been raised to \$13.73. she also reported that water bills that typically go out on the first of the month have still not been sent because of issues with the reading equipment. The issue is being addressed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- a. Finance Committee: None
- b. DDA: The January meeting was cancelled because of the weather. The next meeting is the 16th of this month. The concerts on the square music line-up will be an urgent topic at that meeting.
- c. Planning Commission: They are meeting this Thursday, Feb 12. Routine business.
- d. Ordinance/Law Enforcement Committee: None
- e. Streets/Lights/Water/ Solid Waste Committee: None

DISCUSSION:

- a. Upcoming Par Plan Grant Cycle: L. Spearing would like some help getting estimates and measurements to place a fence &/or signs at the sports park track to prevent vandals from driving on the track.

ACTION ITEMS:

2. **MOTION** by S. Dhillon/seconded by L. Spearing to approve the new Wooden Shoe Park Visitor's Guide. **CARRIED** 6-0.
3. **MOTION** by S. Sowers/seconded by S. Dhillon to approve rate increases for Wooden Shoe Park. **CARRIED** 6-0.
4. **MOTION** by L. Spearing//seconded by J. Rasmussen to approve the budget amendments. **CARRIED** 6-0.
5. **MOTION** by S. Sowers/seconded by L. Spearing to approve the 2026-2027 budget as presented. **CARRIED** 6-0.
6. **MOTION** by L. Spearing/seconded by S. Sowers to approve RESOLUTION 2-9-26(A). Roll Call vote. All Ayes. **CARRIED** 6-0.
7. **MOTION** by L. Spearing/seconded by S. Sowers to approve RESOLUTION 2-9-26(B). Roll Call vote. All Ayes. **CARRIED** 6-0.
8. **MOTION** by S. Sowers/seconded by J. Rasmussen to approve the bills as presented. **CARRIED** 6-0.

PUBLIC INPUT: Commissioner Jarris Rubingh now sits on the recycling committee and asked for feedback about our recycling services. Discussion.

Kandi Randall asked if the new sewer system would include the Vet Clinic. Response, is that is the goal.

ADJOURN: MOTION by J. Rasmussen/seconded by S. Sowers to adjourn at 8:4PM. **CARRIED** 6-0.

Marlene Drenth, Village Clerk