

Village of Elmira Heights
215 Elmwood Ave., Elmira Heights, NY
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2026
7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER & ATTENDANCE:

Mayor Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance and called the meeting to order at 7:15 PM at the Elmira Heights Village Hall. **Those Village Board members in attendance and constituting a quorum were:** Mayor Smith; Trustee Patelunas via Zoom from 28326 Loft Mountain Drive, Leesburg, FL; and Trustees Aiosa, Churches, & Fuhlhage

Others Present: Clerk Martone, Fire Chief Sabatini, & Code Enforcement Officer Mein

Public Present: Barbara Day, Dale Terry

PROCEEDINGS:

1. Trustee Aiosa made a motion to resolve to accept the minutes of the February 3, 2026 Board Meeting.

Second by Trustee Churches

Roll Call Vote:	Trustee Patelunas	Aye	
	Trustee Aiosa	Aye	
	Trustee Fuhlhage	Aye	
	Trustee Churches	Aye	
	Mayor Smith	Aye	Motion Carried.

2. Trustee Patelunas made a motion to approve audit # 10 in the amount of \$318,809.44 claim numbers 466 - 533, check numbers 24031 - 24095.

Second by Trustee Aiosa

Roll Call Vote:	Trustee Patelunas	Aye	
	Trustee Aiosa	Aye	
	Trustee Fuhlhage	Aye	
	Trustee Churches	Aye	
	Mayor Smith	Aye	Motion Carried.

3. Department Official Remarks

Trustee Churches read Superintendent Vanderhoff's report, which is on file.
Fire Chief Sabatini read his report.
CEO Mein read his report.

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4. Trustee Fuhlhage made a motion to put the following reports on file for the month of February 2026.

Fire Department
Street Department
Code Enforcement
Village Justice and Acting Justice Reports

Second by Trustee Aiosa

Roll Call Vote:	Trustee Patelunas	Aye
	Trustee Aiosa	Aye
	Trustee Fuhlhage	Aye
	Trustee Churches	Aye
	Mayor Smith	Aye

Motion Carried.

5. Trustee Churches made a motion to approve Resolution #2 of 2026: **Resolution Supporting Increased Aid to Municipalities and Strengthening New York's State-Local Partnership**

WHEREAS, Governor Kathy Hochul released her 30-day amendments to the Executive Budget, which include an additional \$100 million in Temporary Municipal Assistance (TMA) to be allocated in the same manner as in the past two years; and

WHEREAS, these additional investments reflect a recognition that New York's strength begins in its cities, villages, and towns, and that a strong state-local partnership is essential to delivering the services, infrastructure, public safety, and quality of life that residents expect and deserve; and

WHEREAS, local governments across New York continue to face mounting fiscal pressures driven by inflation, increased service demands, infrastructure needs, and rising operational costs, while striving to provide relief to taxpayers amid a rising cost of living; and

WHEREAS, NYCOM Executive Director Barbara Van Epps, along with mayors from across the State, testified at the Local Government Joint Budget Hearing in Albany, advocating for increased unrestricted aid and a strengthened state-local partnership; and

WHEREAS, the additional \$100 million in TMA will offer meaningful assistance to many municipalities statewide, helping to address fiscal challenges and maintain essential services for residents;

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village of Elmira Heights applauds Governor Hochul for recognizing the importance of investing in local governments and for reaffirming her commitment to strengthening New York's cities and villages; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Village of Elmira Heights urges the New York State Legislature to include, at a minimum, this additional \$100 million in Temporary Municipal Assistance in the adopted state budget; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Village of Elmira Heights calls upon the Governor and the State Legislature to develop a more permanent and predictable solution for unrestricted municipal aid to ensure long-term fiscal stability for New York's local governments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the Temporary President of the Senate, the Speaker of the Assembly, and the members of the State Legislature representing the Village of Elmira Heights.

Second by Trustee Patelunas

Roll Call Vote:	Trustee Patelunas	Aye	
	Trustee Aiosa	Aye	
	Trustee Fuhlhage	Aye	
	Trustee Churches	Aye	
	Mayor Smith	Aye	Motion Carried.

6. Motion by Trustee Fuhlhage that the Election Inspectors shall be compensated for their service in the upcoming Village Election in the amount of \$100.

Second by Trustee Aiosa

Roll Call Vote:	Trustee Patelunas	Aye	
	Trustee Aiosa	Aye	
	Trustee Fuhlhage	Aye	
	Trustee Churches	Aye	
	Mayor Smith	Aye	Motion Carried.

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7. Motion by Trustee Patelunas to authorize the clerk to move \$3,267.45 from A1990.4 (Contractual) to A1620.42 (Building Insurance) to cover the final liability insurance payments for this fiscal year.

Second by Trustee Aiosa

Roll Call Vote:	Trustee Patelunas	Aye	
	Trustee Aiosa	Aye	
	Trustee Fuhlhage	Aye	
	Trustee Churches	Aye	
	Mayor Smith	Aye	Motion Carried.

8. Motion by Trustee Aiosa to set the date and time of Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 6:00 PM for the Village Clerk to present the Tentative Budget to the Board of Trustees at a special meeting.

Second by Trustee Fuhlhage

Roll Call Vote:	Trustee Patelunas	Aye	
	Trustee Aiosa	Aye	
	Trustee Fuhlhage	Aye	
	Trustee Churches	Aye	
	Mayor Smith	Aye	Motion Carried.

9. Motion by Trustee Patelunas to deem a 2019 Tahoe as surplus, to be sold as a police vehicle and in as-is condition to the Cayuga Medical Center for an amount not to exceed \$18,000.00.

Second by Trustee Aiosa

Roll Call Vote:	Trustee Patelunas	Aye	
	Trustee Aiosa	Aye	
	Trustee Fuhlhage	Aye	
	Trustee Churches	Aye	
	Mayor Smith	Aye	Motion Carried.

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10. Motion by Trustee Fuhlhage to surplus the following impounded vehicles, to be put up for auction at govdeals.com:

- White 2002 Lincoln
- White 2007 Nissan Quest
- White 2007 Jeep Liberty

Second by Trustee Aiosa

Roll Call Vote:	Trustee Patelunas	Aye	
	Trustee Aiosa	Aye	
	Trustee Fuhlhage	Aye	
	Trustee Churches	Aye	
	Mayor Smith	Aye	Motion Carried.

11. Discussion & possible action regarding village website developer

Prior to the meeting, the Village Board observed a presentation from Civic Plus for the purpose of updating the village website. All Board members were in agreement that the website needs to be updated and to be made compliant with legislation regarding ADA accessibility and the acquired .gov domain. Civic Plus is willing to offer the Village a 35% discount for the first year. The annual cost for the website after the first year is currently \$4,664.00.

Trustee Patelunas made a motion to add to the agenda authorization to partner with Civic Plus to develop an updated village website at a cost not to exceed \$3,881 for the first year.

Second by Trustee Churches

Roll Call Vote:	Trustee Patelunas	Aye	
	Trustee Aiosa	Aye	
	Trustee Fuhlhage	Aye	
	Trustee Churches	Aye	
	Mayor Smith	Aye	Motion Carried.

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Trustee Churches made a motion to authorize a partnership with Civic Plus to develop an updated village website at a cost not to exceed \$3,881 for the first year.

Second by Trustee Patelunas

Roll Call Vote:	Trustee Patelunas	Aye
	Trustee Aiosa	Aye
	Trustee Fuhlhage	Aye
	Trustee Churches	Aye
	Mayor Smith	Aye

Motion Carried.

12. Feral cat control update

Trustee Churches spoke with John Jacobis, the ASPCA Director of Programs and Services. Mr. Jacobis acknowledged the feral cat problem in Elmira Heights. The free spay and neutering program is done twice monthly by veterinary students from Cornell University. Many details still need to be worked out. Trustee Churches suggested that going forward the Village should design some sort of legal plan, educate the public on what is going on as well as how to safely and humanely trap feral cats, and come up with parameters to ultimately partner with the ASPCA.

13. PERSONS RECOGNIZING THE BOARD ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS.

Barb Day of 114 Verona wished to thank the Village Board regarding the website updates and work on the feral cat control. She asked about a previous conversation had by the Board of dividing the Village into districts for each Trustee to oversee. Nothing more has been decided on it, but Trustee Fuhlhage did suggest that the creation of the updated Village website could be a good time to establish that if all were in agreement.

Ms. Day also asked about the Village Election date and the process of conducting a village election. Mayor Smith explained the process and that we follow the guidance of the New York Conference of Mayors (NYCOM). NYCOM produces a calendar of dates for village elections, which individual municipalities review and follow what applies to them as the book covers both March elections and June elections.

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Mayor Smith further explained that the elected officials in Elmira Heights all serve four-year terms, and elections are held every two years. This year's election will determine the Village Justice and two of the four Trustees. In two years, the next village election will determine the Village Mayor and the remaining two Trustees. Election Law states that March elections are held on the third Tuesday except when that day is March 17th. In such an event, Election Day is to be moved to Wednesday, March 18th.

Ms. Day also asked about the Village's purchase of the property on East 9th Street. Trustee Patelunas stated that the parcel is property bound by the Village Garage, and that there are many things the Village could use that space for. Examples included: ease of operation for the Street Department in terms of storing equipment or a pole barn for road salt storage, a location more secure for impounded vehicles, and possibly a parking lot for the Cinderella Field. Trustee Patelunas further stated that the funds for this purchase will come from the Urban Renewal Agency's revolving loan fund, so the burden of said purchase does not fall upon village taxpayers.

14. REMARKS: MAYOR, TRUSTEES

Mayor Smith was asked by the Elmira Heights Police Department to inform the Board that they will have a 5k run on May 30th, and that there will be a meeting with Attorney Pautz on Tuesday to get the legal aspects sorted out. The run will start at Oakridge Park and be a similar course to the Brad Sanford Run. The Elmira Heights Police Department are also working with the school district. Proceeds from the event will go to a graduating senior.

Mayor Smith also stated that her 2nd Celebrations meeting took place. The 250th celebration for the Nation will be on the weekend of July 18th, to include a parade and activities at Oakridge Park. The 130th celebration for the Village is tentatively scheduled for September 18th and 19th, and may include a parade and fireworks pending available finances.

Trustee Fuhlhage asked if anyone had any further thoughts on the tax for the sidewalk problem. He spoke with one of the superintendents for the City of Ithaca who stated that their program operated similar to CHIPS but that it was small government-funded and that the worst sidewalk is picked for that year. Furthermore, Trustee Fuhlhage stated that he would be willing to speak with certain contractors to try to obtain services at a discount. Trustee Churches agreed that the sidewalk problem is a major issue, but felt that a tax might be difficult and suggested looking into supplemental subsidized funding.

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ADJOURNMENT

15. Motion by Trustee Patelunas to adjourn the March 3, 2026 regular board meeting at 8:16 PM.

Second by Trustee Churches

Roll Call Vote:	Trustee Patelunas	Aye
	Trustee Aiosa	Aye
	Trustee Fuhlhage	Aye
	Trustee Churches	Aye
	Mayor Smith	Aye

Motion Carried.

Respectfully Submitted By,

Amanda Martone
Village Clerk