

**VILLAGE OF EPHRAIM
VILLAGE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 22, 2026 – 12:00 PM
10005 NORWAY STREET – VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**



Present: Ken Nelson – Chair/President, Rick Hoyerman, Matt Meacham, Carly Mulliken, Tim Nelson

Staff: Brent Bristol -Village Administrator

Guests in-person: Michael McCutcheon, Sarah Martin, Rob Davis, Diane Taillon

Guests online: Tony Beadell

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1. **Call to Order:** K. Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
 2. **Quorum:** A quorum was present for the meeting.
 3. **Changes to the agenda:** There were no changes to the agenda.
 4. **Visitors' Comments:** There were no visitor's comments.
 5. **Administration:**
 - a. **Village contribution to the Anderson Dock Capital Campaign for the Anderson Dock Project:**

K. Nelson introduced agenda item and turned the floor over to Mike McCutcheon, identified as the leader of the Anderson Dock Capital Campaign Task Force.

McCutcheon opened by reiterating the Task Force's request for additional financial support from the Village, grounding his argument in a widely accepted benchmark for similar community projects: that the sponsoring municipality or town should contribute at least one-third of the total project cost. He walked the board through the current financial picture, noting that existing Village-related contributions and expenditures totaled approximately \$361,000, broken down as follows: \$100,000 from the CIF (Community Investment Fund, described as room tax money from the destination Door County entity), \$100,000 directly from the Village, and \$161,000 already spent by the Village on engineering drawings and related preparatory work through AECOM.

With the total restoration cost of the Anderson Dock rounded to \$1,700,000, McCutcheon calculated that one-third of that figure equals approximately \$566,700. Subtracting the \$361,000 already contributed, he arrived at a remaining gap of roughly \$205,700. On that basis, the Task Force came before the Board to formally request an additional \$200,000 from the Village — an amount that would bring the Village's total contribution to the one-third threshold that McCutcheon and the Task Force's consultant, Bret Bicoy, have identified as a key marker of credibility and fundraising success.

Tony Beadell, participating by phone, framed the issue from two vantage points: that of a potential donor and that of a potential solicitor. He acknowledged that this situation is fundamentally different from, say, a fundraiser to purchase private property such as the Iverson house. Because Anderson Dock is already Village-owned property, prospective donors will naturally and reasonably ask: "Why isn't the Village taking care of this completely?" Beadell characterized that question not as a hostile reaction, but as an inevitable one — and one that the Task Force will have to answer convincingly every time they approach a major donor. He argued that a substantial financial commitment from the Village is essential to signal the Village's total investment in the project before the public fundraising effort is launched. Without it, solicitors will find themselves fighting an uphill battle. He also raised a secondary concern for the Board's consideration: the protective covenants on the Anderson Barn. He suggested the Village and the Task Force should verify that the structure cannot be demolished or relocated by a

future Board, noting that long-term donors will want assurance that the building they are helping to preserve will not "disappear in 15 or 10 years with a new Board." He concluded by reaffirming the central message: "We need a substantial amount of money from the Village to really go to donors to expect them to step forward."

McCutcheon read aloud a written statement submitted by Village resident Steve Sauter, who was unable to attend. Sauter's statement expressed the view that maintenance of Anderson Dock is primarily the responsibility of the Village, arguing that there is "no more popular piece of property owned by the Village than Anderson Dock." Sauter also suggested that the Ephraim Marina, tourism tax funds, and the Ephraim Foundation — whose stated mission includes preservation of historical structures — all have an obligation to participate financially. As a property taxpayer, he is already contributing through his tax payments and asked the Board to "direct a portion of that payment to the maintenance of Anderson Dock."

A Task Force member Sarah Martin added that the Task Force has known from the beginning that the question of Village ownership would be one of the biggest fundraising obstacles. She noted that the Door County Community Foundation has been helping the Task Force craft messaging to address this challenge, and that the Foundation specifically emphasized the importance of the Village having "skin in the game." Sarah relayed that in casual early conversations with prospective donors — even before any formal solicitation has begun — the ownership question has already come up repeatedly. She expressed confidence that a stronger Village contribution would provide a compelling, straightforward answer: "Yeah, they're throwing in the third, you know — we're all in this together."

Rob Davis as another Task Force member agreed with the foregoing and noted that the outstanding question of the endowment — the long-term maintenance fund — was also relevant. He suggested that the Village making a formal commitment to serve as the ongoing maintainer of the structure, perhaps backed by a dedicated financial pool, would provide donors with a tangible, structural assurance rather than simply a promise.

Meacham opened the Board's response by acknowledging that the Task Force's request was not unreasonable. However, he pushed back on the implicit suggestion that the Village had historically neglected the building, noting that he could not recall any meeting at which the Village declared it would not maintain Anderson Dock. He questioned where the narrative of non-commitment originated.

Sarah Martin clarified that Steve Sauter's reference to "maintaining" the building was not a criticism of routine upkeep but rather a concern about long-term preservation — essentially asking, if no funds were raised, would the Village choose not to undertake the restoration at all? Meacham indicated he understood the distinction and agreed that such a concern — the Village choosing not to act — would not be in keeping with the Board's obligations.

Mulliken acknowledged the difficulty of wearing "dual hats" — both as a Village Board member and as a prospective fundraising solicitor. She articulated the core tension clearly: as a solicitor, he needs to be able to say with confidence that the Village is equally invested in the project and is demonstrating that commitment by funding a full one-third of the cost. Mulliken noted the challenge of answering donors' questions confidently while simultaneously asking for their money. She raised the possibility of finding ways to quantify the Village's non-monetary contributions — ongoing maintenance labor, seasonal opening and closing of facilities, garbage collection, graffiti removal — and incorporating those into the campaign's narrative of Village commitment. She added that the potential for a second CIF grant application was worth exploring as another form of demonstrable Village engagement.

Hoyerman sought clarification on McCutcheon's financial figures, confirming the breakdown of the \$361,000. He indicated he had no fundamental objection to the Village contributing more but raised a

pointed philosophical question: at what level of contribution does the Village successfully answer the donor skepticism, and is there a risk of a "slippery slope" where no amount is ever deemed sufficient? Hoyerman also noted the Village's general "user pays" philosophy with respect to infrastructure — citing the marina and airport funds as examples — and asked whether the Task Force's solicitors could frame the Village's overall contribution, including maintenance costs, as a "very substantial contribution" that justifies asking donors to step forward as well.

McCutcheon responded that, above all, the Task Force does not want to fail. He reiterated that the one-third benchmark came directly from consultant Bret Bicoy professional experience, and that meeting it has been identified as a meaningful psychological and practical threshold for donor confidence.

Tony Beadell interjected to make what he called a key point for the Board: "The Village Board has absolutely nothing to lose here." He explained that if the fundraising campaign falls short, the Village will simply have to make up the difference on its own — so committing additional funds now does not expose the Village to any financial risk it doesn't already bear. He also noted that any funds raised beyond the restoration cost would flow into an endowment for the ongoing care of the dock, meaning the Village's contribution would benefit Village property in perpetuity: "So the village has nothing to lose by putting in 300,000 dollars total because if we go over that mark, it's all gonna go to the good of the Village in an endowment."

T. Nelson offered a more measured perspective. He reminded the group that the Task Force has not yet completed its training with consultant Bret Bicoy and has not yet formally begun soliciting donations. Characterizing the early fundraising conversations as exploratory rather than representative, he cautioned against drawing conclusions about donor attitudes prematurely. He also questioned the framing of "failure" — noting that taken to its logical extreme, a sufficiently large Village contribution could theoretically guarantee success, but that misses the point of the exercise: "Let's have the village kick in \$1,600,000 — then we're sure to be successful fundraising." Nelson argued that the Village has already demonstrated substantial skin in the game — \$161,000 in engineering, \$100,000 in direct contribution, \$100,000 secured through the CIF — and that anyone "with a head" can see that. He expressed confidence that the project would be completed regardless. He concluded that in his view, pushing the Village to commit additional funds before the Task Force has even begun formally fundraising would be nice but is not necessary. The Village owns the property and it is not going away even without the contributions. People all over the Wisconsin would donate the money only if they want to.

K. Nelson offered his own perspective. He recalled that when the capital projects initiative was first developed — with McCutcheon serving as Board President — Anderson Dock had been ranked the number one priority by the community. He noted that the water level threat to the building had since receded, but the restoration commitment remained unchanged. He also recalled that over his eight years on the Board, individuals had repeatedly approached the Village saying they wanted to participate financially when the project got underway, and he expressed strong confidence those donors are "out there." K. Nelson recalled consultant Bret Bicoy's presentation, in which Bicoy had suggested that if the campaign could reach the halfway point — approximately \$750,000 — through lead gifts, the campaign could then approach the broader public marketplace with a matching or leveraged-giving proposition. The Chair observed that the Village's current position, at close to \$400,000 in contributions and expenditures, is "nothing to sneeze at," and suggested that rather than committing additional funds upfront, the Board should allow the Task Force to proceed and then be available to cover any shortfall near the project start date, which was identified as fall 2027. He stated clearly that if the Task Force came back to the Board at that time with a funding gap, "I believe this board is gonna be sitting right there."

McCutcheon acknowledged the optimism but asked whether the Board would be willing to put that commitment into a binding motion, which drew a brief and spirited exchange. K. Nelson ultimately did not move forward with a formal motion to that effect at the meeting, but the sentiment was broadly shared around the table.

K. Nelson proposed that the Village consider establishing a dedicated capital reserve account for Anderson Dock — similar to how the Village maintains capital accounts for the fire department, village hall, and other infrastructure. He noted that no such account currently exists for Anderson Dock. The concept: calculate a reasonable annual maintenance and capital replacement contribution based on the long-term cost of the structure, begin funding it annually, and present that ongoing commitment to donors as tangible evidence of the Village's long-term stewardship.

T. Nelson enthusiastically endorsed the concept, suggesting the present value of 50 years of projected maintenance costs could be calculated and presented as part of the Village's total contribution figure. Mulliken agreed this would be highly useful for solicitation purposes — particularly if the annual maintenance labor and operational costs (mowing, seasonal opening and closing, utilities, graffiti removal) could also be quantified and included in campaign materials as a demonstration of the Village's ongoing investment.

McCutcheon called this "an excellent idea," and the T. Nelson indicated the Board would take it up in forthcoming budget discussions. While no formal action was taken on the capital account at this meeting, the Board expressed clear intent to establish one, with K. Nelson noting it would need to be formally approved through the budget process.

The Board did not take a formal vote to appropriate an additional \$200,000 to the campaign at this meeting. The consensus that emerged was as follows: the Village's existing contributions and expenditures of approximately \$361,000—potentially growing with a marina and moorings contribution of approximately \$20,000–\$30,000—represent a meaningful and communicable commitment.

The Board directed that steps be taken to: **(1)** quantify and document the Village's annual maintenance contributions to Anderson Dock for use in campaign marketing materials; **(2)** explore establishing a dedicated capital account for Anderson Dock long-term maintenance; and **(3)** consider a second application to the CIF for additional grant funding.

The Board expressed collective willingness to revisit additional direct financial contributions closer to the project bid date in fall 2027 if a funding gap remains at that time.

McCutcheon noted that the Task Force's meeting the following day with Bret BiCoy — focused on building a donor prospect list — was an important next step, and the Board expressed confidence in the Task Force's ability to proceed.

b. Donor recognition preferences from the Anderson Dock Capital Campaign Task Force:

McCutcheon introduced the second item by describing work done by Jane Larson, a Task Force member, who had independently developed three design concepts for a donor recognition feature to be installed at Anderson Dock. The three options, all described as maritime in theme, were: (1) a compass rose design, (2) a ship's helm design, and (3) a circular frame design featuring the horizon and the Anderson Barn building as seen through the circle. McCutcheon noted that Task Force members who had seen the options at a prior meeting generally favored the third option — the circular frame — as the most evocative and appropriate.

Proposed Placement

McCutcheon proposed a specific installation concept: relocate the existing commemorative plaque (currently mounted on the monument stone near the dock entrance) to the knee wall at the front of the property, and install the new circular recognition feature in its place on the monument. This arrangement would, in his view, serve as both a visually inviting entrance feature and a natural focal point for donor recognition, potentially surrounded by additional named brick or brass plaques for individual donors.

T. Nelson confirmed he had seen the designs and had not previously known that Jane Larson was their origin. He expressed enthusiasm for the circular option and raised two additional ideas. First, he suggested that rather than replacing the existing monument stone, the small monument corner platform could be expanded to accommodate both the original historical plaque and the new recognition element side-by-side — preserving the narrative of continuity (the 1972 restoration) while honoring new donors. Second, he reiterated his previously expressed interest in incorporating brass name plates set into the concrete along the edge of the dock as a lower-level donor recognition tier. He suggested a tiered recognition approach: the circular artistic feature as a centerpiece, named brass plaques on the knee wall stones for mid-level donors, and inset brass markers in the dock surface for additional contributors.

Mulliken summarized what she heard emerging as a tiered structure of recognition options the Board was broadly comfortable offering to the Task Force as a palette to work from: **(1)** the monument point feature (the circular frame); **(2)** brass plaques along the knee wall; and **(3)** brass markers set into the dock surface. She noted these need not all be used, but offered the Task Force a range of approved options to match different donor levels.

Meacham cautioned that the execution must remain "classy".

The consensus of the Board was that recognition should be present and meaningful, but integrated and tasteful — consistent with the historic and natural character of the site.

The discussion was treated as directional guidance to the Task Force, which will continue developing specific proposals in coordination with Bret Bicoy and Jane Larson.

Task Force Term Extension — Housekeeping Note

K.Nelson noted that upon re-reading the original minutes establishing the Task Force (June 10th, 2025), the Task Force was constituted for a term of one year. Given the project timeline extending to fall 2027 and beyond, he raised the question of whether the Board should formally extend the Task Force's mandate. After brief discussion, it was agreed that a motion to extend the Task Force through project completion would be placed on a future agenda.

6. Adjournment:

T. Nelson moved, Meacham seconded to adjourn at 1:05 PM, all ayes. Motion carried.

Recorded by,

Andrea Collak – Clerk/Treasurer