

**VILLAGE OF EPHRAIM
VILLAGE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2026 – 7:00 PM
9996 WATER STREET- EPHRAIM VILLAGE HALL**



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

Staff: Brent Bristol -Village Administrator, Andrea Collak - Clerk-Treasurer

Guests in-person: Kim Roberts, Michael McCutcheon, Kelsey Stone, Lane Methner, John Cox, Keith Krist, Ken Pabich, Sean Donohue

Guests online: BD Thorp, Angie, J. Larson, Michael Miller, Margaret, CR

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:**

Past President Mike McCutcheon offered a brief public safety note, urging the public that in any emergency, they should call 9-1-1 rather than individual officials, as dispatch can direct the right resources efficiently.

He then shared a story written by Kevin and Wanda McDonald, titled "A Story of a Dog Named Ghilli and a Village," about McDonald's family who had adopted a two-year-old Airedale terrier named Ghilli from a Chicago rescue organization, and brought her to Ephraim for the Fourth of July holiday. During the visit, Ghilli was startled and bolted, escaping during the family gathering. Over the following four days—from July 1st through July 5th—the McDonald family searched desperately for the dog, enlisting the help of what grew into a village-wide effort.

They in their letter described how the search spread organically through the community, with neighbors, visitors, gardeners, veterinary contacts, the non-emergency sheriff's line, firefighters, dog trappers, and complete strangers all participating. They named dozens of individuals from Ephraim, Bailey's Harbor, and Sister Bay who joined the effort on foot, bicycle, and by vehicle at all hours. They recounted multiple sightings that gave hope and eventually led to Ghilli being found on the afternoon of July 5th, tangled by her leash around a tree on Wilder Lane, miraculously unharmed.

They concluded by thanking the entire village of Ephraim and Door County, saying: "This is truly a special place—more than just its beauty, but also its people." They noted the quote shared by one of the searchers, "It takes a village," from Hillary Clinton's 1996 children's book, and said it perfectly captured what the community had demonstrated.

No other visitors' comments were offered.

5. **Approval of previous minutes:**

Mulliken moved, T. Nelson seconded to approve the minutes of the June 9, 2026 meeting, all ayes. Motion carried.

Mulliken moved, T. Nelson seconded to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2026, Closed Session meeting, all ayes. Motion carried.
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Mulliken moved, T. Nelson seconded to approve the minutes of the June 22, 2026 Special Board meeting, all ayes. Motion carried.

6. President's Comments:

K. Nelson shared that the Village of Ephraim had, the previous afternoon, successfully acquired the parcel of property located north of the Firehouse Marina. He extended his thanks to Keith Christ, who was present at the meeting, and to Christ's relatives, the Rispens, for giving the Village the first opportunity to come to an agreement and for their cooperation in bringing the transaction to close. K. Nelson noted that the acquisition would be discussed further under the relevant agenda item.

7. Consent Agenda Items:

Mulliken moved, Hoyerman seconded to approve the consent agenda items as presented, T. Nelson abstained, all ayes. Motion carried.

8. Administration:

a. Presentation of quarterly report from Ephraim Business Council:

Kelsey Stone and Lane Methner from the Ephraim Business Council (EBC) presented their quarterly report, covering several highlights from the season.

Fyr Bal Festival: Methner began by describing the 61st Annual Fyr Bal Festival as a tremendous success. The weather was beautiful, attendance was strong, and feedback from both community members and visitors was positive. The Viking cultural elements reflecting Ephraim's Scandinavian heritage were noted as particularly meaningful. Stone added that longtime community figure BD Thorp had been named the 61st Fyr Bal Chieftain, which she said was "very well deserved." The medallion presented to BD was handcrafted by local artist John Balistreri of Balistreri Fine Art. She praised Thorp's moving speech about his Ephraim roots. Lane extended gratitude to all businesses and community members who contributed to the fireworks show, as it remains a significant expense. Both thanked village staff for their ongoing support in making the festival a success.

North End Path Celebration: Stone described a celebration held two days after Fyr Bal on the newly completed North End Path. Businesses on both sides of Highway 42 at the north end of town participated in open houses, sidewalk sales, and pop-up tents. The event coincided with the kickoff of the first Farmers Market of the season.

Evenings in Ephraim: Both presenters noted that the ongoing Evenings in Ephraim series had been well-attended. The Farmers Market runs Mondays from 3–6 PM at the Red Putter, followed by concerts in Harborside Park from 6–8 PM. Seven are still left. Stone encouraged all board members to attend.

Visitor Information Center: Methner reported that the Visitor Information Center, located across from the Old Post Office restaurant, had been open since early May with four staff members. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 AM to 5 PM. The center carries Ephraim-branded merchandise including hats and t-shirts.

Stone and Methner closed by thanking the Village Board and staff for their continued partnership.

K. Nelson thanked EBC for organizing the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

b. Discussion and Consideration regarding distribution of \$10,529.28 received from Door County Tourism Zone Commission for 250th anniversary celebration:

K. Nelson opened this item by providing background. He noted that in April, while serving on the Door County Tourism Zone alongside Matt Meacham and Missy LeBelle, he had raised the topic of the nation's 250th anniversary and what could be done to mark it. At a subsequent meeting, the Tourism Zone voted to distribute \$100,000 back across the Door County's contributing municipalities, proportioned by each municipality's room tax contribution. The Village of Ephraim received a check for \$10,529.28.

K. Nelson offered a suggestion for how to allocate the funds. He explained that the Village had planted a Liberty Elm tree and that a bronze plaque was currently being mounted on a stone—total cost estimated at approximately \$2,000. He recommended that the remaining balance, after covering the Liberty Tree plaque and ceremony costs, be transferred to the Ephraim Business Council—specifically earmarked for future fireworks.

Mulliken expressed support, noting that while it was a one-time transfer, it would "make a really big difference" and help offset the significant ongoing expense of fireworks for events like Fyr Bal.

T. Nelson said he agreed that distribution. Meacham also agreed.

Hoyerman agreed as well and raised the question of whether the board could request that the EBC specifically earmark the funds for fireworks. K. Nelson said that was appropriate given the stated purpose of the Tourism Zone's disbursement, referencing their memo encouraging funds be used for event-related expenses or cost offsets.

Mulliken moved, T. Nelson seconded, to approve the balance of the \$10,529.28, less the cost of the Liberty Elm tree and plaque cost, be transferred to the Ephraim Business Council for future fireworks, all ayes. Motion carried.

c. Discussion and Consideration regarding Village of Ephraim capital reserve fund(s) for Anderson Dock maintenance/endowment and fund usage guidelines:

K. Nelson opened the discussion by summarizing the history: over many years, the Village had been setting aside money in a capital account called the "Anderson Dock Cement" fund, originally intended for concrete repair work. The current balance stands at approximately \$33,800, with an annual contribution of roughly \$1,908.88—approximately \$2,000 per year. He noted that in a recent review of all capital accounts, the board found they were setting aside approximately \$20,000 less per year than needed across all accounts, including vehicles and fire equipment. The conversation, he said, was about whether to rename and repurpose this fund—potentially as an Anderson Dock reconstruction or replacement fund—and whether to consider a second, separate account for donated funds.

T. Nelson confirmed that the fund had indeed been established specifically for concrete maintenance. The money had never been spent and the accumulated balance was "not even close to enough" to address the need, hence the current reconstruction project estimated at over \$1.7 million, with construction expected to begin in the fall of 2027. He suggested renaming the fund as a "reconstruction fund" and noted the importance of continuing contributions, even if \$2,000 per year over 50 years would yield only \$100,000 against a much larger eventual need.

McCutcheon then came forward to offer context from the fundraising task force perspective. He explained that potential major donors would likely ask what the Village itself was contributing to a project involving a municipally-owned structure. Having a dedicated capital account with ongoing Village pledges would be a meaningful answer to that question. He also mentioned that the Door County Community Foundation had suggested the task force aim for a \$1,000,000 endowment—though

no money had yet been collected. He said that even the seed of \$33,800 and a commitment to ongoing contributions would help the task force when approaching donors.

Mulliken added that the fundraising group had been working with the Door County Community Foundation on materials and that the concept of a "50-year fund" had resonated well with them. She noted the importance of being able to communicate to potential donors exactly what their money would be used for, and raised the issue of two separate accounts: one for reconstruction costs and one for endowment-style maintenance beyond regular operations—such as large-scale power washing or graffiti abatement—that the Village's own staff resources could not handle. She stressed that the uses of the two accounts must be kept clearly distinct when soliciting donations.

T. Nelson agreed with the two-account concept, expressing a preference to avoid the word "endowment" and suggesting "extra maintenance" as a more descriptive label for the second fund.

K. Nelson noted that Option 1 in the capital account framework would simply be continuing the existing \$2,000 annual contribution, resulting in roughly \$133,800 to \$135,000 after 50 years when combined with the current balance—a meaningful starting figure, even if far short of full reconstruction costs.

Bristol added a broader financial caution, noting that while the Village's fund balances were in better shape than initially feared going into the review, the levy tax increase limit imposed by state law made it very difficult to suddenly find an additional \$20,000–\$40,000 per year for capital contributions. He suggested that room tax funds or PRAT funds could potentially be used to seed future capital accounts, though he cautioned that those accounts had already been drawn down significantly by projects like the North Path, the maintenance garage, and other recent initiatives. He suggested the budget process in September would be the appropriate time to work through specific contribution levels.

The consensus of the Board would establish what the accounts are for and what the goals are, and revisit contribution amounts during the budget process. He acknowledged that with the fundraising still in its early stages, specific numbers would likely become clearer in the next couple of years.

No formal motion was taken on this item; the discussion was understood to be directional, informing the upcoming budget process and the fundraising task force's communications.

d. Discussion and Consideration regarding Anderson Dock Fundraising Focus Group term extension:

K. Nelson noted that the Anderson Dock Fundraising Task Force's original one-year term had expired the prior month, and he asked Mike McCutcheon whether he would be willing to continue. Mike responded he would carry it through the end.

K. Nelson proposed extending the task force's term by two years, which would carry it through the summer of 2028. He explained that by that time, the fundraising effort should be largely complete and the reconstruction project well underway, providing clear answers to the questions the board was currently working through. The two-year window, he said, "should give the task force enough time to complete their work."

Tim seconded the motion with the added specification that Mike McCutcheon would continue to lead the effort, which drew a brief laugh.

Mulliken moved, Meacham seconded, to approve the Anderson Dock Fundraising Task Force 2 years term extension with Mike McCutcheon leading the effort until 2028 to complete the work, all ayes. Motion carried.

e. Discussion and Consideration regarding – Combination Class “B” and “Class C” Alcohol Beverage Retailers License:

- 1. Project Zulu LLC - dba Bad Moravian/Ephraim Coffee Lab – 3055 Church St**
- 2. Wilder Inn LLC – dba Wilder Inn – 10013 Poplar St**

Meacham moved, Hoyerman seconded, to approve the Combination Class “B” and “Class C” Alcohol Beverage Retailers Licenses for Project Zulu LLC dba Bad Moravian/Ephraim Coffee Lab at 3055 Church Street and Wilder Inn LLC dba Wilder Inn at 10013 Poplar Street, dependent on passed fire and health inspection, Mulliken abstained, all ayes. Motion carried.

f. Discussion and Consideration regarding Door County Emergency Communication Tower Project Draft Intergovernmental Agreement and Easement and exemption from Ephraim tower ordinance:

Bristol summarized the item. The Village's attorney and the county's legal counsel had reviewed the documents and reached agreement on the terms of the lease and intergovernmental agreement. The matter had gone before the Plan Committee two weeks prior, which passed a recommendation to the Village Board to approve the intergovernmental agreement, the easement, and a waiver of the applicable sections of the Village's tower ordinance—limited to this project only.

Bristol noted one refinement since the Plan Committee review: the committee had suggested moving the tower compound slightly to the northwest from the original southeast corner location on the German Road property, in order to preserve a small vegetative buffer of existing trees along both the eastern and southern boundaries. He confirmed that the County had indicated it was comfortable with this adjustment.

No board members raised questions for the county representatives present at the meeting, and the Board moved directly to a vote.

T. Nelson moved, Hoyerman seconded, to approve the Door County Emergency Communication Tower Project Draft Intergovernmental Agreement, Easement required for access road and exemption from Ephraim tower ordinance for this project only, all ayes. Motion carried.

g. Discussion and Consideration regarding Administration building project planning, design and options:

Bristol provided background. He, President Ken, and Trustee Carly had met with Keller, the project architect, who had reviewed both the administration building and Village Hall. Following the previous board meeting where Option 3 was eliminated, the group had compiled an updated summary document outlining project costs and existing conditions for Options 1 and 2. Staff had also prepared a memo—presenting the administrative team's perspective on the scope and goals of the project.

“Dear Ephraim Village Board of Trustees,

The Village Board has now held three meetings regarding the future of the Administration Building. While it has been communicated that staff support Option 2, neither the Board nor the community has heard directly from the employees who work in the building every day. Following the most recent Board meeting, staff felt it was important to share our perspective on the project, our operational needs, and why we believe Option 2 represents the best longterm investment for the Village.

Our support for Option 2 is based on three primary considerations: Providing a safe and stable working environment for staff and the public, creating an efficient and accessible hub

for Village operations, and investing taxpayer dollars in a lasting solution rather than a temporary fix.

Before discussing these needs, it is important to address a common misconception regarding the Administration Building. The building was constructed in 1947 and is not listed on either the National Register of Historic Places or the State Register of Historic Places. That said, staff recognizes and respects the important place the building holds in the memories of many residents. For some, it served as the one-room schoolhouse of Ephraim Village School District No. 2. Others remember it as the home of Peninsula Preschool, attended by their children or grandchildren. These connections are meaningful and deserve acknowledgment.

Throughout the Capital Projects Ad Hoc Committee discussions, Chuck Pearson consistently emphasized the importance of investing in facilities where Village work is performed. As he noted, “We ought to spend money where people work. That is where we will get the most payback.” Guided by this principle, the Capital Projects Ad Hoc Committee (Ken Nelson, Chair; Matt Meacham; Chuck Pearson; Maggie Peterman; and Fred Bridenhagen) established several key objectives for evaluating capital projects:

1. Focus on facilities with a projected lifespan of 30 to 50 years.
2. Prioritize locations where Village services and work are performed.
3. Maximize the value of taxpayer dollars through efficient design and operation.
4. Avoid short-term patches in favor of durable, long-term solutions.
5. Maintain the character and ambiance of Ephraim while modernizing facilities.
6. Use design dollars effectively and responsibly.
7. Seek the most responsible balance between investment and long-term community benefit.

From the staff's perspective, these principles strongly support Option 2. The current Administration Building has experienced significant water intrusion and deferred maintenance over many years. Additionally, the building tested positive for asbestos. The resulting deterioration is visible both inside and outside the facility. These conditions have created environmental concerns that affect the health, safety, and comfort of employees and visitors. This March, during the blizzard Elsa, we watched the ceiling of the central room bow and crack. In 2019, the ceiling in one of the offices cracked, and water poured onto the employee's desk. In July of 2021, during a heavy rainstorm, we experienced water pouring out of the ceiling in the copy room. Ice damming and water intrusion have been an almost annual event. Administrative staff spend more time in this building than any other Village employees spend in a single workspace, making the condition of the facility particularly important.

Beyond the physical condition of the building, the current layout no longer adequately serves the needs of Village operations or the public. Residents frequently struggle with accessibility challenges, particularly when navigating stairs or using the elevator. During elections and public meetings, these limitations become even more apparent.

In considering alternatives, staff believes consolidating Village administrative functions into a modern, accessible facility would provide several important benefits:

- **Improved accessibility:** A single, modern facility would better accommodate residents and visitors who use walkers, canes, wheelchairs, or other mobility aids. Current conditions, including access to the Village Hall stage and meeting spaces, present challenges and do not fully meet modern accessibility expectations.

• **Enhanced public participation:** Technical limitations in the Village Hall can make it difficult for audience members to hear proceedings, reducing engagement and transparency during meetings. Physical modification of the stage and making it a permanent setup for the Village Board and committees would alter the purpose and availability for community use and would not necessarily solve the present acoustic issues. During the summer months, acoustics can be compounded by the noise from the rear bathrooms when the hand dryers often drown out the meeting underway. Further, significant permanent changes would not enhance the historic aesthetic of the Village Hall (which is listed on the National/State Historic Register of Historic Places).

• **Safer elections and public events:** The current facilities present challenges related to parking, staffing, accessibility, and emergency egress. A facility designed to accommodate elections and large public gatherings would better serve residents while improving safety.

• **Greater operational efficiency:** Housing staff and public services in a centralized location would improve day-to-day workflow, communication, and customer service. It would also reduce the need to divide staff between multiple locations during meetings and public events.

• **Improved safety and code compliance:** The lack of adequate egress routes in some areas raises concerns during elections and high-attendance events. A modern facility can be designed to meet current safety standards and provide a more secure environment for staff and the public.

Ultimately, staff believes this decision is about more than a building. It is about creating a facility that supports the delivery of Village services for decades to come. Option 2 aligns with the guiding principles established by the Capital Projects Ad Hoc Committee by providing a long-term, efficient, and responsible solution that serves residents, visitors, staff, and future generations.

We respectfully ask the Village Board and community to consider the operational realities, accessibility needs, health and safety concerns, and long-term financial implications of this decision. From the staff perspective, Option 2 represents the most responsible investment in the future of the Village.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Village of Ephram Admin Staff.”

Brent acknowledged receiving, but forgetting to distribute, a letter from community members Bruce and Cindy Nelson, which he committed to forwarding to the Board. The Nelsons' letter emphasized heeding staff input and highlighted the challenges of the current Village Hall space for audience members—suggesting that some attendees found it easier to follow meetings from home online than in person due to acoustics.

Meacham opened by raising what he considered the essential threshold question: before discussing options for the administration building, the Board needed to decide whether it wanted to continue holding meetings in Village Hall. That decision, he said, fundamentally shapes the administration building design, because if meetings remain at Village Hall, the admin building does not need to accommodate a permanent meeting room.

K. Nelson described his walkthrough of Village Hall with Bristol and the architect after their earlier meeting. The architect had quickly identified several challenges. To create a permanent, accessible meeting setup for up to nine stations (to accommodate the Planning Committee's seven members plus the administrator and minute-taker), he said the stage would need to be extended 10–12 feet in depth into the main hall and widened. This would require a ramp for accessibility, routing back to the existing elevator. The architect also flagged that the current elevator requires someone inside the building to call it down, making it inaccessible from outside—a significant accessibility problem given that the handicapped parking is on the opposite side of the building. Additionally, the architect observed that the hard floor and wall surfaces create serious acoustic problems and would need to be softened if the room were to function well for meetings both in-person and remotely. The estimated cost for all of these modifications, K. Nelson noted, was in the "couple hundred thousand dollars" range, as an educated architectural estimate.

Hoyerman expressed strong philosophical opposition to abandoning Village Hall as an official meeting space. He argued that the building is central to the identity and character of Ephraim and that allowing it to become "an ornament" would be a mistake future boards would regret. He pushed back on the scope of changes the architect had described, saying he was skeptical that modifications needed to be so extensive. He called for a second—or even third—-independent architectural opinion: "I think we should do it no matter what. I think it would just be awful if this building just was the place we eat pancakes twice a summer." He was careful to say he was not making allegations against Keller, but felt that for a building of this importance, an independent perspective was warranted. He is in favor of fixing the administration building so it does not become run down place even if a new building is built for the admin staff. However, he believes that the symbolic place such as Village Hall should not be abandoned from an official use.

Meacham supported getting a second opinion on Village Hall specifically. He has no issues with options 1 or 2 for the administration building and noted that whatever modifications may come to Village Hall, those costs would need to be added to the overall project figures. He agreed that any changes to Village Hall must be analyzed in light of the cost of the option chosen for the administration building. Meacham also noted that to him it does not make much sense to stick all the money into the administration building if there can be a new building built with everything the way we wanted.

T. Nelson offered a reframing, suggesting the board think of the administration building as "the old schoolhouse" and Village Hall as "the Village Hall"—shifting the perspective to underscore that Village Hall has always been the civic heart of the community. He supported a second opinion regarding the Village Hall and offered a list of specific challenges that a new architect should be asked to address: accessibility, acoustic treatment, and audio-visual improvements. He was particularly reluctant to change the floor surface, noting the cleaning challenges it would create for other uses, but suggested softer audience chairs as one possible alternative.

Mulliken noted that she understands why there are those who encourage the meetings in the Village Hall because it is historic, central location to the Village. However, if we start modifying it we will be taking away from what we actually value about the building. Are we willing to make these changes? She encouraged the Board to stay focused on the problems they were originally trying to solve, noting that the memo from staff was specifically written for that purpose. She suggested that major Village Hall renovations could be considered as a separate future capital project rather than being folded into the current administration building initiative.

Bristol, while supportive of keeping Village Hall in use for meetings, raised an ongoing operational challenge: on days when a committee meeting is held at Village Hall, at least two of the three administrative staff must be present (one for the meeting, one for the minutes), meaning the third must

stay at the admin office to keep it open. This effectively means that roughly five days per month, staff cannot take leave. He noted that board meetings at night did not present the same problem, but that the daytime committee schedule created real staffing constraints. He said there were potential solutions—such as remote minute-taking if the audio-visual system were improved—but that the challenge was real and should be considered.

Kelsey Stone from the EBC, who was still present, asked the board to keep public use of the stage in mind as they explored options, noting that EBC uses the stage for Santa Claus events, children's performances, musician setups, and movie screenings. She expressed hope that any modifications would preserve the ability to use the stage for community events.

Accessibility improvements were identified as a non-negotiable component of any plan. The group agreed to proceed in parallel with the administration building planning.

Reminder of Problems Trying to Solve:

- Admin Building has a flat roof that leaks, despite reroofing in 2013.
- Building has a lack of conditioned spaces. Two offices lack heat, all offices lack AC.
- Building is not properly insulated. Especially due to roof system design and lack of wall insulation.
- All of which contribute to an unsafe working environment for employees, along with insufficient functional (eg long-term record storage) and aesthetic issues with the building (such as erosion of mortar and water stains from ice dams).
- Space does not provide employees with optimal working conditions, such as lack of privacy and disruptions from visitors. Especially during elections.
- Admin Building is not fully accessible and limited to one egress point.
- Hosting meetings at Village Hall creates technology issues that can be time consuming for staff to troubleshoot. Additionally, the Village Hall's tall ceilings create audio issues that make it difficult for everyone (both online and in-person) to hear properly. Tear down and set up are also a burden on staff time. Stage is not accessible for committee and board members.

• OPTION 0 (Deferred Maintenance, Existing 2,172 sq. ft.):

\$600,000 with \$50,000 contingency

The project scope is limited to targeted deferred maintenance, including the addition of HVAC to two enclosed office spaces (currently not code compliant), improvements to building insulation / exterior envelope, conditioned HVAC basement, and full roof replacement. The work does not include building expansion, reconfiguration, or full system replacement beyond these defined areas, and is intended to address specific performance deficiencies rather than a long term solution.

Pros:

- Addresses the deferred maintenance issues within the current building.
- HVAC added to the two rear offices and basement (making space available for storage)
- Board members agree that the building must remain standing

Cons:

- No alterations within the office building
- No relocation of meetings from Village Hall
- Not intended as a long-term solution

• OPTION 1 (Remodel Existing 2,172 sq.ft): \$1.3 million with \$100,000 contingency

A comprehensive renovation of the existing 2,172 square foot facility to improve functionality, code compliance, and overall building performance. Work would involve reconfiguration of interior spaces, upgrades to mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, and improvements to

the building envelope as needed. This approach maintains the existing structure while modernizing the facility to better support current and future operational needs. In addition, some interior reconfiguration within existing space.

Pros:

- Can possibly move smaller committee meetings back to Admin Building
- Conditioned basement allows for additional storage
- Options for minor reconfiguring of office layout within the existing building envelope
- Some modernization of facility to better support current and future needs
- Better accessibility with the addition of exterior ramp
- HVAC added to the two existing rear offices and basement

Cons:

- External Ramp with no protection from weather
- Still requires the use of Village Hall for HPC/Plan and Village Board Mtgs.
- Smaller committee meetings occupy 1/3 of office space of the entire building for approximately 5 meetings a month and are disruptive to office operations as the flow has not been sufficiently improved
- AV system while new would likely still have to be broken down from time to time and cannot likely be hard wired. This increases the likelihood of failure, disruption and maintenance.
- Still not a long-term solution

Work Required to Village Hall for Long Term Accommodation of Village Meetings:

Cost estimate: \$200,000

We met with the architect from Keller to determine the long-term modifications needed to the VH to hold all meetings there. Assumed the largest meeting would be Plan Committee requiring 9 seats (7 members + Admin + Minute-taker).

Design would include:

- An open “U” shape for stage. All seats and electronic devices would be permanent.
- The stage would be extended outward by at least 10 feet. Currently the width of the stage will not accommodate 9 seats, but a “U” shape with more depth will work.
- The stage is currently inaccessible, so a ramp would be built on left side. Current configuration on right side would remain for access to elevator.
- Moving the stage out and building a ramp would require modifications to walls on either side of the current stage.

Challenges with meetings at VH, even with proposed updates:

- Given the cavernous design of the VH and the hard walls and floor, it will still be challenging for both in person and on-line attendees to hear. People who speak from the floor without going up to the microphone at the lectern will still not be heard on-line.
- The aesthetics of this work in the historic building will be challenging.
- The VH is not now readily accessible. The elevator is in the rear with no dedicated parking nearby. A ramp in the front of the VH may be considered.
- The current stage would have a folding panel in front of it to secure all the equipment. Stage would no longer be available for other Village events.
- Remaining floor area for events is smaller with the larger stage.

• OPTION 2 (Remodel & Small Addition, Total 2,990 sq. ft.; Existing 2,172 sq. ft. & New 818 sq. ft.): \$1.8 million with \$100,000 contingency

This option includes renovation of the existing 2,172 square foot facility combined with an 818 square foot addition to allow internal ramps (rather than external). This option improves on ‘option 2’ in allowing a safer solution with lower long-term maintenance costs. Work includes integration of new and existing systems, interior reconfiguration, and upgrades to building systems and envelope as required to support the addition.

Pros:

- All village meetings, minus the largest public hearings, can move back to Admin bldg.
- Board/Committee member table and AV systems can be permanent/hard wired
- Conditioned basement allows for additional storage
- Small addition allows for a more significant reconfiguring of the office/meeting room layout for more separation and better flow.
- Modernizes facility to better support current and future needs
- Accessible ramp is completely enclosed
- Addition only impacts the portion of the building that was previously an addition. Original aesthetics retained
- Staff supports this option as most viable

Cons:

- Looking at the long term this plan likely limits office staffing to 3 full-time employees. Current staff does not see the need for a 4th full-time staff member on the horizon. Space can be found for part-time employees, limited-term employees or interns if need be.

• ***OPTION 3 (Remodel & Large Addition, Total 4,178 sq. ft.; Existing 2,172 sq. ft. & New 2,006 sq.ft): \$2.3 million with \$100,000 contingency***
Option 3 was eliminated as a viable option.

- ***OPTION 4 (New Building, 3,500 sq. ft.): \$2.0 million with \$100,000 contingency***

This option includes construction of a new 3,500 square foot facility, replacing the existing building entirely. The new facility would be designed to meet current operational requirements, building codes, and energy performance standards. Important to note this does not include land cost. This approach eliminates constraints associated with the existing structure and allow for a fully optimized layout, modern systems, and long-term durability with reduced maintenance.

Pros:

- Ground up purpose built new construction that will be a long-term solution without the need to utilize a portion of the existing building
- Eliminates disruption of day-to-day operations during construction

Cons:

- Plan results in relocating the facility to NW end of existing property. Depending on use of existing building, will likely generate more traffic to site overall
- New building would require parking lot, utilities, and stormwater retention (e.g. rain garden).
- Still requires the costs of deferred maintenance in Option 0 (could be approximately \$300,000 for minimal work) along with ongoing costs of annual maintenance and utilities.
- Several community members/neighbors have expressed their opposition of a new building and supported updating the current building.

The board reached consensus that they would engage an independent architect to assess Village Hall and develop options for creating a permanent accessible meeting setup while preserving as much of the building's character and usable floor space as possible.

h. Discussion and Update regarding village purchase of parcels 121-24-0033B and 121-24-0031C:

K. Nelson noted he had touched on this in his opening comments. The Village had successfully closed on the purchase of two parcels located north of the Firehouse Marina. He once again thanked Keith Christ and the Rispen family for their cooperation.

Bristol provided additional context. He noted that in his nearly 20 years with the Village, these two parcels had always been of significant interest to the Village because they effectively connect the marina and park on the south with the expansive parkland to the north, completing a critical link. He

confirmed that no immediate development plans exist for the property—it will serve as a park extension for now—and that the board had discussed the acquisition and its pricing in closed session. Bristol noted that the Village paid cash for the parcels and committed to bringing additional information to the next meeting regarding financing options, including the possibility of long-term debt to reimburse the Village's cash position. He drew a parallel to the due diligence process undertaken before the streetscape project bond, including a credit rating review, and noted the board's existing financial policies around fund balances and assigned reserves. He indicated that the key question going forward would be whether the Village wants to reimburse itself through borrowing or can absorb the cash outlay given other ongoing capital projects.

No formal motion was required, as the purchase had already been executed. The board received the update with apparent satisfaction, and no questions were raised.

i. Discussion and Consideration regarding posting of meeting minutes and recordings on website:

Bristol explained that staff had explored using YouTube as a free hosting platform for meeting recordings, as the Village's website lacks the storage capacity to host large MP4 video files. Deputy Clerk Roberts had conducted a test, uploading a recording without public notification, and had shared the link with at least one interested community member who responded positively. The system works by hosting recordings on YouTube and linking to them from the Village's website.

Bristol confirmed the service is completely free with no storage limits, no ad revenue concerns, and requires only a couple of clicks to upload. He noted that under the current system, individual recording requests are difficult to fulfill because the files are too large to email and require arrangements like flash drives or Dropbox. This approach would be simpler and more transparent.

Meacham questioned whether the Village already met its open meeting law requirements. Bristol responded that there are no legal requirements to archive meeting videos, and that this initiative is primarily about transparency and ease of access. Meacham expressed skepticism about the need for YouTube posting. He said he didn't see what problem it was solving, since the public can already request recordings.

T. Nelson asked whether the YouTube format was strictly view-only, with no interactive element. Bristol confirmed it is purely a passive viewing medium—essentially like recording a TV program and watching it later—with no ability for viewers to comment or interact once posted, protecting the integrity of the official record. He also noted that the uploaded video would capture the full meeting view, including any remote participants shown on screen.

Others noted that it is already common practice among other municipalities and school districts in the county. K. Nelson observed that even very large MP4 files could be stored without charge.

Mulliken moved, T. Nelson seconded to approve the posting of meeting minutes and recordings on the Village website through YouTube as discussed. Motion carried 4-1, with Meacham opposed.

j. Discussion regarding North Path tree planting proposal from Tom Wolf:

K. Nelson introduced horticulturalist Tom Wolf, describing him as a highly accomplished professional who had done the tree planning and planting work in Egg Harbor. K. Nelson and Bristol had met with Wolf and asked him to develop a proposal for replacing the trees removed along the first 1,000 linear feet of the North End Path during construction—primarily cottonwood trees and one maple, totaling approximately 15–18 trees removed. Wolf's proposal, included in the board packet, was a detailed, property-by-property tree selection plan recommending approximately 22 trees at roughly 50-foot spacing.

• **Starting at the east end the Old Sled Dog property 130 ft**

- 5 Crabapples

o 3 Royal Raindrops, blooms deep red - 7 ft multi stemmed persistent red fruit all winter 15 ft height, 12 ft spread

o 2 Adirondack Crabapples, blooms white -2 in dia. persistent orange fruit 15-20 ft height, 20 ft spread

• **Front of Green Gables and Universal Unitarians 230 ft**

- 11 Catalpa Trees 25 gal White Flower Yellow Autumn Color 40-50 ft height, 20 ft Spread

• **Front of 106-9 lodge/resale shop 100 ft.**

- 3 Sienna Glenn Maple 2 in dia., 40 ft height, 25 ft spread

• **Front of George Burr Gallery 100 ft**

- 3 Crabapples

o 2 Royal Raindrops, blooms deep red - 7 ft multi stemmed persistent red fruit all winter 15 ft height, 12 ft spread

o 1 Adirondack Crabapples, blooms white -2 in dia. persistent orange fruit 15-20 ft height, 20 ft spread

Delivery Planted Staked Mulched \$14,000.00

Wolf operates in a turnkey "design-build" model, meaning he delivers and plants everything.

K. Nelson suggested two parallel next steps: the board members review the proposal individually and do their own research on the species, and the proposal be forwarded to the Physical Facilities Committee for their input—particularly on spacing and the relationship to planned solar bollard placement.

T. Nelson raised the question of whether the proposed species were native, noting that crabapples, for example, are technically introduced. He asked that staff follow up with Tom Wolf on this point. He also said he would appreciate more flexibility on spacing, noting the trees did not need to be equidistant.

Mulliken said she would appreciate a visual rendering of what the planting would look like.

T. Nelson flagged that bollard placements need to be coordinated with tree locations to ensure trees do not block solar bollard lighting. He noted that the bollard plan called for roughly 100-foot spacing and that now that the path is built, a realistic on-the-ground assessment of bollard placement is possible.

K. Nelson and the Physical Facilities Committee to revisit the bollard placement plan, noting that the path's curves and bends may have resulted in minor deviations from the original plan that should be confirmed before trees go in. T. Nelson agreed, noting the bollards must stay within the 10-foot easement corridor for the sections beyond the state right-of-way.

Meacham raised a concern about the proposal's inclusion of 11 Catalpa trees, noting that catalpas are known for aggressive root systems that could damage the path surface over time. K. Nelson agreed this was worth flagging and said it would be included in the follow-up questions to Tom Wolf.

The board agreed to proceed with simultaneous review by board members and the Physical Facilities Committee, with a goal of implementing the tree planting in the fall.

No formal motion was taken.

k. Update, Discussion and Consideration regarding liberty tree planting and plaque ceremony:

K. Nelson noted that the bronze plaque for the Liberty Elm Tree had been completed and was currently being mounted on a stone by local craftsman Mike Anderson. He proposed organizing a small public unveiling ceremony for the plaque, suggesting it could be held on a Monday evening before one of the Evenings in Ephraim concerts in order to take advantage of the existing crowd.

Kelsey Stone from the EBC suggested that the Monday, July 27th concert might be a particularly fitting occasion, as that evening's performer is Eddie Larson's Classic Memories Band—a nine-piece patriotic group that concludes its set with Taps and asks all veterans to stand. She said the unveiling of a Liberty Tree plaque could pair naturally with that program.

K. Nelson proposed targeting July 27th, pending confirmation from Cody Schreck; the point of contact for the plaque and stone; that the mounting would be complete in time. Mulliken noted she had been in contact with Schreck earlier that day and believed the timeline would not be a problem.

No formal motion was required; *the board reached consensus to target the July 27th Evenings in Ephraim concert for the ceremony.*

9. Airport:

a. Discussion and Consideration regarding Village's position relative to future expansion and property purchases associated with current master plan discussions:

K. Nelson provided background. He had attended a public meeting at the airport the previous Thursday, July 9th, 2026 which reiterated the findings of an earlier May presentation by the master plan consultant.

The meeting confirmed the preferred alternatives previously discussed with the Ephraim Village Board:

- Runway 14-32 Rebuild: Option D, including a 300' extension to increase the runway length to 3000'
- Runway 1-19 Options: turn the turf runway approximately 10 degrees giving the Airport complete control over runway protection zones. Runway will remain turf.
- Hangar Development Options: Alternate A1
- Future Hangar Expansion: Building Area Alternate D (on existing Airport property)

At the Public Open House on July 9, 2026, the possibility of obtaining the parcel of property in Ephraim immediately to the north of the existing hangars for future hangar development was discussed, labeled Alternative B. Drajesk emphasized this would only be done if the owner was willing to sell.

K. Nelson stated that he had stood up and told the meeting that the Village of Ephraim is opposed to any airport property acquisition for hangar expansion in Ephraim. He noted that Gibraltar Township Administrator Travis had also spoken up to say the township was likewise not interested in airport expansion into adjacent properties.

K. Nelson explained his core concern: in the previous airport layout plan process six years ago, what the Village was told was merely a "wish list" of aspirational items later became interpreted as approved items. He feared that if Alternative B remained in the master plan, and an opportunity arose to purchase the parcel, it could be treated as pre-approved—creating a situation the Village would have to fight retroactively. He wanted the Board to formally state its position now, while the master

plan is still in comment stage, so that the record is clear. The master plan will come to the Ephraim Board for the final approval.

He described the property in question as a 12-acre parcel along Maple Grove Road, where—under the airport's current hangar specifications of 25 feet by 25 feet minimum footprint and 35 feet maximum height—up to 25 large metal buildings could theoretically be constructed.

T. Nelson questioned whether there was a way to require some form of vegetative or visual buffer along Maple Grove Road through Village zoning ordinance, rather than simply opposing expansion outright. He acknowledged that while he personally did not want to see the property developed into hangars, he saw some likelihood that the proximity to the airport would eventually make the parcel attractive for that use. He suggested the Board think about how to "make the growth qualify for Ephraim's aesthetic desires" rather than trying to stop growth indefinitely.

Hoyerman countered that the Village did have legitimate oversight—any airport land acquisition would require Village concurrence as a 50/50 joint owner—and argued that sending a clear signal now was the right course of action. He noted that while the Board cannot bind a future board, a formal comment on the master plan would be entered into the public record.

Mulliken suggested editing the final paragraph of President K. Nelson's written position statement to focus specifically on property acquisition—not expansion generally—and noted the text could end after referencing the adequacy of existing property for hangar development under Alternative D, without the additional sentence that had been included.

Bristol provided useful zoning context: the parcel in question is zoned R-1 Residential, in which airports are neither a permitted use nor a conditional use. Airports are a conditional use only in the rural residential district on the eastern limits of the Village. Even under the most intensive zoning, Village code only allows one principal structure per lot of record, making it essentially impossible to build 25 hangars without a comprehensive overhaul of the zoning code. He acknowledged that ordinances can always be rewritten, but noted there are substantial existing barriers.

On the question of tax revenue, K. Nelson noted that the airport's personal property tax income to Ephraim from existing hangars works out to approximately \$100 per hangar—not the significant revenue some might have expected. The Board agreed that financial considerations were a secondary concern compared to the visual and character impacts.

The Board reached consensus to formalize and transmit the written position statement—clarifying that the Village does not support any additional property acquisition for hangar development in the Village Ephraim, that adequate existing property exists for extensive new hangar development (Alternative D), and requesting that Alternative B be removed from the master plan.

The statement would be sent to the Town of Gibraltar, the Airport Commission chairman, and the master plan consultants.

No formal motion was taken; the Board proceeded by consensus.

b. Discussion and Consideration regarding right of first refusal for hangar D5:

T. Nelson moved, Meacham seconded to waive the right of first refusal for hangar D5, all ayes. Motion carried.
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c. Discussion and Consideration regarding sale of hangar D5 from Warren James to Lauren Lopez:

Meacham moved, T.Nelson seconded to approve the sale of hangar D5 from Warren James to Lauren Lopez, all ayes. Motion carried.

d. Discussion and Consideration regarding lease with Lauren Lopez for hangar D5:

Meacham moved, T. Nelson seconded to approve the lease agreement for hangar D5 with Lauren Lopez, all ayes. Motion carried.

e. Discussion and Consideration regarding right of first refusal for hangar A8:

Meacham moved, T. Nelson seconded to waive the right of first refusal for hangar A8, all ayes. Motion carried.

f. Discussion and Consideration regarding sale of hangar A8 from Lauren Lopez to Jeff Drajesk:

Meacham moved, T. Nelson seconded to approve the sale of hangar A8 from Lauren Lopez to Jeff Drajesk, all ayes. Motion carried.

g. Discussion and Consideration regarding lease with Jeff Drajesk for hangar A8:

Meacham moved, T. Nelson seconded to approve the lease agreement for hangar A8 with Jeff Drajesk, all ayes. Motion carried.

h. Discussion and Consideration regarding lease with Steve Grasely for hangar C7:

Meacham moved, T. Nelson seconded to approve the lease agreement for hangar C7 with Steve Grasely, all ayes. Motion carried.

i. Discussion and Consideration regarding lease with Rich Bierman for hangar E7:

Meacham moved, T. Nelson seconded to approve the lease agreement for hangar E7 with Richard Bierman, all ayes. Motion carried.

j. Discussion and Consideration regarding lease with Tom Wilson for hangar F1:

Meacham moved, T. Nelson seconded to approve the lease agreement for hangar F1 with Tom Wilson, all ayes. Motion carried.

k. Discussion and Consideration regarding lease with Laura Seidensticker for hangar F2:

Meacham moved, T. Nelson seconded to approve the lease agreement for hangar F2 with Laura Seidensticker, all ayes. Motion carried.

l. Discussion and Consideration regarding lease with John Wilson for hangar F3:

Meacham moved, T. Nelson seconded to approve the lease agreement for hangar F3 with John Wilson, all ayes. Motion carried.

m. Discussion and Consideration regarding lease with David Krueger for hangar F4:

Meacham moved, T. Nelson seconded to approve the lease agreement for hangar F4 with David Krueger, all ayes. Motion carried.

10. Committee Minutes for review: There were no comments raised on the committee minutes.

11. New business for the Next Meeting: Mulliken noted that Green Tier would like to continue the solar installation option at Wastewater Facility. She indicated that the engineering team may not be far enough along to present a full enough plan to explore grant opportunities, and that the conversation should continue.

T. Nelson requested that the Physical Facilities Committee be asked to consider a tree planting plan for the area just south of the Firehouse Marina parking lot, where trees had been removed following the

windstorm the previous fall. He acknowledged it might create additional work for the committee but felt the timing aligned well with the broader tree-planting discussion already underway.

12. Adjournment:

T. Nelson moved, Meacham seconded to adjourn at 9:30 PM, all ayes. Motion carried.

Recorded by,

Andrea Collak – Clerk/Treasurer

DRAFT