

**VILLAGE OF EPHRAIM
MARINAS AND MOORINGS MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2026 – 8:00 AM
9996 Water Street - Ephraim Village Hall**



Action Items:

B. Nelson moved, Thorp seconded to approve the minutes of August 5, 2026, as presented, all ayes.
Motion carried.

The consensus of the Marinas and Moorings Committee members present regarding parcels 121240033B and 121240031C was to consider expanding state highway parking along the parcels as a priority to the greatest extent possible, to extend the existing walking path that originates from the North, and the method of how to extend the walking path is to be determined and may need preliminary engineering to answer pending questions about grade and curb separation, and a path spur from the parking spaces to the marina building is not recommended.

B. Nelson moved, Thorp seconded to adjourn at 9:45 AM, all ayes. Motion carried.

Present: John Held, Bruce Nelson, Bob Plansky, BD Thorp, Tim Nelson-Chair.

Absent: None.

Guests: None.

Staff: Brent Bristol - Village Administrator/Harbormaster, Justin MacDonald – Fire Chief/Maintenance Manager, and Kim Roberts – Deputy Clerk.

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by T. Nelson at 8:01 AM.

2. **Changes to the agenda:** There were no changes.

3. **Visitors' Comments:** There were no comments.

4. **Approval of the previous minutes:**

B. Nelson moved, Thorp seconded to approve the minutes of August 5, 2026, as presented, all ayes.
Motion carried.

5. **Discussion regarding future use of newly acquired property north of Firehouse Dock:**

The Committee engaged in substantial discussion regarding the future development of the newly acquired property north of the Firehouse Dock. Held and B. Nelson collaborated and presented two (2) conceptual proposals to the Committee to consider and review visually during the meeting.

Site Overview

The site was described as bounded to the north by the existing walkway, with a limited asphalt shoulder along the road serving as a step-out area for parked vehicles. The site also contains some underbrush, a potentially salvageable tree, a manhole cover near the marina office, and utility boxes. An existing cement sidewalk originates from near the launch ramp and connects the area to the crosswalk leading to the Firehouse Museum.

Parking Expansion

Both proposals incorporated the addition of parking spaces along the road, extending southward from the current last designated parking spot. Preliminary measurements suggested a possibly exaggerated maximum of seven (7) additional spaces, though it was acknowledged that large vehicles with trailers could effectively reduce the usable number and create sightline concerns for drivers exiting the marina. The Committee broadly agreed that expanding parking to the extent legally and practically feasible was a high priority.

It was noted that any parking added should be formally documented, as those spaces could be credited toward future marina expansion requirements. Bristol noted that marina expansion is subject to parking ratios, and that documenting a net gain in parking spaces now could protect the Committee's options down the road, even if expansion is not an immediate goal. A prior informal understanding with the DOT that

would have allowed a simple extended shoulder to serve as a walking path was noted to no longer be viable given changes in DOT personnel and policy.

Walkway Extension

The second major element discussed was extending the pedestrian walkway through the property to connect the existing northern path to the marina area and ultimately to the crosswalk toward the Firehouse Museum. Two (2) conceptual alignments were presented: One routing the path closer to the highway, and one routing it along the shoreline side of the property.

The highway-adjacent alignment would likely require a barrier curb between the parking stalls and the walkway per DOT standards, and would preserve the bulk of the interior green space. The shoreline-adjacent alignment would follow the water's edge, potentially requiring some fill, and would necessitate coordination with the existing beach and natural shoreline features. Both alignments were noted to have similar walkway widths and comparable impact on overall green space.

It was agreed that both options remained viable and would benefit from preliminary engineering review to answer questions about curb requirements before a final recommendation is made.

Spur Walkway

A proposed spur walkway running between the marina building and the dinghy storage area was discussed as an element of one of the concepts. After debate, the Committee reached consensus that no spur walkway should be included in either option. Members expressed concern about increasing foot traffic near the dinghy storage area and the launch ramp. It was noted that no well-worn path currently exists in that corridor, indicating that a formal walkway is not needed.

Shoreline and Green Space

The Committee expressed a strong preference for preserving the natural character of the existing shoreline. The small sandy beach area was described as one of the last natural shoreline segments in the Village, and it was agreed that it should not be formally developed or restricted. Members noted the beach has been used informally for kayak launches, dog walking, and occasional sunbathing, and that enforcement of any use restrictions would be impractical. The area was also identified as a potential future access point for dredging operations on the north side of the main pier.

Concerns were raised about invasive phragmites growth along the rocky shoreline to the north. It was suggested that the Village explore eradication efforts, referencing a prior community permit with the DNR for phragmites removal. Bristol indicated they would contact the relevant county invasive species coordinator to determine the current process.

Existing Maple Tree and Concrete

The Committee noted that any grading or fill work in the area should be carefully managed to avoid harming the existing maple tree near the dinghy storage area. A preference was stated for routing any walkway toward the road rather than around the tree. Additionally, it was recommended that any upcoming concrete work on the property be coordinated with known deferred repairs to the existing sidewalk system near the marina building, including sections that have been cracked by heavy equipment. Reinforcing the concrete and installing a protective trench for the shallow waterline beneath the courtyard was also raised as a concurrent improvement to consider.

Marina Expansion

B. Nelson raised the question of whether the Committee intended to make any recommendation regarding marina slip expansion in connection with this property. After discussion, the Committee affirmed it is not recommending marina expansion at this time, citing the significant cost involved — estimated at \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 depending on scope — and the lack of a practical path forward in the near term. However, it was emphasized that the Committee is not recommending against future expansion, and that documenting current slip counts and any parking gains is important to preserve that option for future Committees.

Next Steps

The Committee agreed to prepare refined versions of the two walkway concepts, parking, removal of the spur element, and to present them to the Physical Facilities Committee for their input with the following consensus from the Marinas and Moorings Committee: *The consensus of the Marinas and Moorings Committee members present regarding parcels 121240033B and 121240031C was to consider expanding state highway parking along the parcels as a priority to the greatest extent possible, to extend the existing walking path that originates from the North, and the method of how to extend the walking path is to be determined and may need preliminary engineering to answer pending questions about grade and curb separation, and a path spur from the parking spaces to the marina building is not recommended.*

Held and B. Nelson indicated they would attend that meeting to provide context and answer questions. Bristol suggested that preliminary engineering — at roughly a 30-percent design level — may be appropriate to address grade, drainage, and DOT compliance questions before a final recommendation is brought to the Village Board.

6. Discussion regarding Pier and Waterfront projects:

Bristol reported that Pier and Waterfront had been consulted regarding installation of the two new finger piers. The contractor expressed a preference for a fall rough installation during the scheduled haul-out, which would allow the Committee to evaluate placement, spacing, and structural connections before the spring season. Bristol suggested that rub rail repairs would be addressed as part of that installation. No redecking was contemplated at this time.

The Committee discussed the need to extend the main pier by two feet (2') in relation to installation of the new finger piers in order to be parallel with the main pier. Bristol and T. Nelson were authorized by the Committee to work directly with the contractor to determine the preferred configuration and associated cost, given the time-sensitive nature of a fall installation.

Bristol noted that proposals for shoreline repair work, including sheet pile analysis discussed in prior meetings, had been set aside during the busy season and would be pursued again in the fall and winter to have options ready for a future decision.

7. Update regarding off-season work list and current projects/operations:

Bristol noted that the off-season work list, included in the previous meeting minutes, would be maintained as a standing agenda item going forward, with amendments added as work is completed. Maintenance Staff did not have an opportunity to debrief prior to this meeting, but Bristol acknowledged that additional items had been completed since the last meeting.

Regarding mooring buoy inventory, Bristol indicated that a mid-season inventory discrepancy — where the mooring area was short on buoys — had been miscommunicated. An updated inventory list had since been received, and orders for replacement and additional buoys would be placed promptly for readiness ahead of the next season.

8. Discussion regarding 2027 budget:

Bristol advised that the full budget reconciliation is conducted at the end of September each year to ensure year-to-date numbers are current and consistent. Detailed budget figures would be distributed to the Committee in advance of the October meeting, which would serve as the primary budget discussion session.

On the topic of fee increases, Bristol noted that the Board's direction from the prior year was to consider inflation-based annual adjustments to the fee schedule. He acknowledged there is an administrative burden to annual changes and suggested a possible approach of tracking annual inflation figures and applying adjustments periodically rather than every year. It was also noted that launch fees may be subject to additional DNR approval requirements once they exceed ten dollars, and that staff would clarify the current process if an increase is being considered.

The Committee discussed whether current fee levels remain competitive with comparable facilities in Door County. Members expressed support for keeping fees at or near the regional market rate — particularly for the launch ramp — noting that being the lowest-priced launch in the area generates excess demand that

strains parking and staffing. Research into current regional rates was suggested as a precursor to any fee recommendation. The possibility of implementing digital or QR-code-based payment options at the launch ramp was briefly revisited, with Bristol noting the key challenge remains ensuring real-time payment verification for staff in the field. Further research was required.

The Committee acknowledged several anticipated near-term capital expenditures, including the two new finger piers, a share of the utility trench work associated with the Anderson Dock reconstruction (estimated at approximately \$15,000 for the marina's portion), and potential dredging. It was noted that the current reserve fund balance is estimated at approximately \$340,000. B. Nelson cautioned that while the reserve appears healthy, a meaningful portion is already earmarked for known projects, and the Committee should be thoughtful before directing any of it toward Village-wide expenditures such as the recently acquired property.

Held complimented Assistant Harbormaster Reynolds's strong performance throughout the season.

Bristol noted that staffing challenges with a third seasonal employee resulted in fewer hours worked than planned — meaning salary expenditures are likely to come in below budget. Bristol indicated that off-season conversations would address staffing expectations for the coming year.

9. New business for the next meeting:

The next meeting of the Marinas and Moorings Committee will take place on Wednesday, October 7, 2026, at 8:00 AM.

10. Adjournment:

B. Nelson moved, Thorp seconded to adjourn at 9:45 AM, all ayes. Motion carried.

Recorded by Kim Roberts – Deputy Clerk