

**VILLAGE OF EPHRAIM
MARINAS AND MOORINGS MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2026 – 8:00 AM
9996 Water Street - Ephraim Village Hall**



Action Items:

B. Nelson moved, Thorp seconded, to approve the minutes of September 2, 2026, as presented, all ayes. Motion carried.

The consensus of the Marinas and Moorings Committee members present was that if the DNR approves, the launch fee should be raised from \$10 to \$15 for the 2027 fee schedule.

Thorp moved, Plansky seconded, to recommend approval of the 2027 Marina and Moorings budget as discussed to the Village Board, all ayes. Motion carried.

Thorp moved, Plansky seconded, to adjourn at 9:07 AM, all ayes. Motion carried.

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

Absent: None.

Guests: None.

Staff: Brent Bristol - Village Administrator/Harbormaster and 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 September 2, 2026, as presented, all ayes. Motion carried.

5. **Discussion and consideration regarding the 2027 budget:**

The Committee reviewed the proposed 2027 budget.

Moorings (202-40-46751): Bristol noted that while mooring inventory in the harbor has visually declined, revenue remains stable for the line item overall. Held raised a concern that mooring fees had not been increased when slip fees were raised the prior year, arguing that mooring users access the same facilities — including the launch ramp, parking lot, restrooms, dredged channel, and channel markers. Bristol suggested the Board consider whether increases should be made every other year rather than annually, to balance administrative burden against the need to keep pace with inflation.

Seasonal Slips (202-40-46752): Bristol noted that two slip holders this year had begun the season as transient reservation holders before transitioning to seasonal slips. This income was recorded on the transient side of the budget. He indicated he would consult with Clerk Treasurer Collak to determine whether a budget amendment or reclassification was warranted.

Transient Fees (202-40-46754): The Committee reviewed transient fee revenue, noting positive performance over the last two years. It was determined the budgeted amount for 2026 was reasonable considering water levels and the forecasted winter.

Launch Fees (202-40-46753): Revenue from launch fees was slightly down compared to last year. The Committee discussed the potential for transitioning to a QR code or digital payment system to make it easier for boaters without cash to pay. The Committee concluded that no suitable system had yet been identified, and the capital cost of a kiosk-style machine was difficult to justify given the annual launch fee revenue.

A broader discussion followed regarding a potential increase in the per-launch fee from \$10 to \$15. It was noted that when the fee was last raised from \$8 to \$10, that increment was administratively convenient because it eliminated the need for change. The Committee acknowledged that any increase beyond \$10 requires approval from the DNR. Bristol agreed to consult the DNR to understand their criteria and the

process for obtaining approval for an increase. It was further observed that a higher fee might modestly reduce traffic and trailer congestion near the downtown area. Held suggested installing “no trailer parking” signage. The Committee acknowledged the enforcement of no-trailer-parking restrictions would be a persistent challenge.

The consensus of the Marinas and Moorings Committee members present was that if the DNR approves, the launch fee should be raised from \$10 to \$15 for the 2027 fee schedule.

Seasonal Dinghy Fees (202-40-46755): Bristol noted that seasonal dinghy fee revenue, while slightly up from the prior year, remains below historical levels. He indicated he would request an inventory from the Assistant Harbormaster of the current dinghy holders and their locations prior to sending out contracts. The Committee estimated there are approximately 11 to 12 shuttles in use.

Seasonal Launch Fees (202-40-46756): Revenue from seasonal launch fees was slightly below the prior year but met the budget target. No changes were proposed.

Interest Income (202-40-48100): Interest income was in line with expectations. No changes were proposed.

General Fee Increase Policy: The Committee discussed establishing a general guideline for periodic rate increases across all fee categories, in response to direction from the Village Board President. The group reached consensus around the following principles: The full fee schedule should be reviewed annually. In the absence of extraordinary inflation or unusual expenses, rate increases should occur approximately every two to three years. Bristol agreed to document the date of the most recent rate increase and the prevailing inflation rate in the annual budget notes, to preserve institutional memory and inform future decisions.

Expenses:

Bristol reported that the expense side of the budget was largely stable. On staffing, he noted that Reynolds did not achieve the expected staffing level this season but confirmed this was not the intent going forward, and recommended maintaining the existing salary budget to allow for adequate staffing. The Personnel Service line item (202-40-55430-110) charge that represents the general fund's cost for maintenance staff, the harbor master, and administrative personnel supporting the marina has not been adjusted in three (3) years. Bristol noted that even though the level of service has remained constant, the underlying personnel costs paid by the Village have increased with inflation, and suggested this line item merits consideration.

Capital Expenses Outlook: T. Nelson outlined several near-term capital expenses on the horizon for marinas and moorings, including:

- An estimated \$15,000 marina share for the new utility trench as part of the Anderson Dock reconstruction project.
- Repositioning of slips near monument corner following reconstruction.
- Potential dock extension costs at Firehouse Marina to accommodate two newly acquired piers.
- Possible installation of a low-water transient floating platform — a decision not yet made.
- Future concrete repairs and replacement possibly to be coordinated with work on the adjacent property north of the marina.
- Eventual resurfacing or replacement of the marina parking lot.
- Replacement of the green launch dock, which is not designed for its current level of use.
- Potential dredging cost increases driven by fuel prices.

The Committee agreed that while the current fund balance appears healthy, these anticipated expenses provide clear justification for a measured approach to rate increases over time. It was suggested that a capital project list be developed during the off-season, with costs documented and cost sharing assigned between departments. This information should be shared across relevant departments where appropriate.

The Committee also briefly discussed the possibility of adding security cameras at Anderson Dock in conjunction with the upcoming reconstruction project, leveraging the installation of conduit as an opportunity to add infrastructure for future cameras.

Thorp moved, Plansky seconded, to recommend approval of the 2027 Marina and Moorings budget as discussed to the Village Board, all ayes. Motion carried.

6. New business for the next meeting:

The next meeting of the Marinas and Moorings Committee will take place on Wednesday, November 4, 2026, at 8:00 AM.

7. Adjournment:

Thorp moved, Plansky seconded, to adjourn at 9:07 AM, all ayes. Motion carried.

Recorded by Kim Roberts – Deputy Clerk