VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, January 21, 2025
(Approved Version)

Agenda Item No. 1. The January 21, 2025 meeting of the Sister Bay Village Board of Trustees was called to order by President Nate Bell at 6:00 P.M.

Agenda Item No. 2. Roll Call
Present: President Bell and trustees Denise Bhirdo, Louise Howson, Kurt Harff, Alison Werner, Patrice Champeau, and Lilly Orozco

Staff: Village Administrator Julie Schmelzer, Finance Director/Treasurer Vlad Gannik, Utilities Director Megan Barnes, Marina Manager Dave Lienau, Parks & Streets Director Erik Linczmaier, and Clerk Heidi Teich

Others: Laurel Harff, Jill Wiebe, "rwuel", Ellie Soderberg-Guger, Deb Fitzgerald, Brigid White, Paula and Roger Oakdale, Richard Burress, and Thor Johnson

Agenda Item No. 3. Approval of the Agenda
A motion was made by Werner, seconded by Champeau that the Agenda for the January 21, 2025 meeting of the Village Board of Trustees be approved as presented. Motion carried – All ayes.

Agenda Item No. 4. Approval of Minutes
A motion was made by Bhirdo, seconded by Harff that the minutes of the December 17, 2024 meeting of the Village Board of Trustees be approved as presented. Motion carried – All ayes.

Agenda Item No. 5. Comments, correspondence, and concerns from the public
Correspondence included in the packet for this meeting were an email from Myles Dannhausen Jr. to the USPS in response to their communication regarding relocation of their office; an email from Rodney Hedeen regarding property taxes, and a request from the Department of Natural Resources regarding the National Flood Insurance Program.

President Bell asked if anyone wished to offer any additional comments. No one responded.

Agenda Item No. 6. Discussion/Action Items:

a) Tax Levy/Tax Bills; Information & Recommendations
The Sister Bay Finance Committee met earlier this month to discuss possible actions the board could take regarding the unexpected increase in property tax bills for 2024, including the possibility of modifying the tax bills and issuing refunds to those taxpayers who have already remitted the tax. At the conclusion of their meeting, the committee recommended that the board take no action to refund taxes. This was reflected in a recent newspaper article.

Bell shared that the committee also reviewed the CIP and suggested some changes that will be incorporated into the budget process for 2026. Bhirdo indicated that an updated CIP reflecting the changes discussed at the Jan. 7, 2025 meeting, amounting to approximately $600,000, will be presented

at the next Finance meeting to illustrate the overall impact of the changes made over the next five-year period.
Schmelzer added that the committee has suggested some budget policies that will be presented to the board at a future meeting for approval. Howson did not recall discussing any policies, which Schmelzer then summarized from her notes. Schmelzer was asked to draft a press release to communicate the board's decision that tax bills will not be remade and send it to the Finance Committee members electronically so they can provide feedback before it is issued to the public.

b) Post Office; Lease Update
Schmelzer shared her latest conversation with the post office regarding their lease, which expires in 2026. She communicated to USPS that the village has no desire to see them leave the community, but the village cannot provide a new facility for them at this time. The village would like to offer a new lease for the existing facility, for a four-year term, and a letter to that effect was sent to USPS. Howson inquired about the rental fee, and if it was negotiable, which Schmelzer believes is possible. The village is now awaiting a response from USPS about their future plans.

c) Contract; Administration Building; Construction Drawings; McMahon
A recommendation was forwarded by the Parks, Property & Streets Committee to approve a contract with McMahon & Associates for the construction design of the new village administration building to be located on the former Logerquist property on Woodcrest Road. A copy of the contract, at an approximate cost of $202,000, was provided in the meeting packet for the members to review.

Bell stated that he is not in favor of moving forward with this contract until the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) approved this past October is amended and adopted, and the overall village financial situation is clearer. Howson agreed, noting that she has heard comments from the residents that the village is not on solid financial ground. Werner expressed surprise at this item being on tonight's agenda as she believed the project was on hold.

Bhirdo reminded the board that this item was approved for 2025 in the prior CIP, and taking no action now would push it out for another year. Bell responded that they have been making decisions on less than complete information for years, so he is not opposed to putting this project off. Bhirdo added that the administration building was part of the debt service calculations Baird presented along with the Mill Road Triangle Project (also on the agenda for approval at this meeting), in which the village's debt service will remain at approximately $850,000 over the next several years to complete both projects. Bell responded that he has little faith in those debt projections and changes to the budget are needed. He added that, with many moving parts to the budget, a change made here will impact future items and he needs to understand that better with a new debt model before acting.

Champeau expressed concern about the increased costs that would come with delaying this project for a year or two, and Bhirdo and Harff agreed. Howson disagreed, stating that no one can predict future costs, and that she could not in good conscience vote to move forward with this item. Bell acknowledged that future costs may likely increase, but with only one productive finance meeting behind them which resulted in suggested revisions to the CIP, he felt they should work harder to further revise the document now in anticipation of future cost increases.

Bhirdo reminded the board that this contract is only to seek construction drawings, which, when let for bid, will get them some finite numbers on cost. There is no obligation by the board to proceed once those costs are known. Bell repeated that he wants a "big picture" of the finances once the revisions suggested by the finance committee are incorporated into the CIP and they meet again to review that document.

A motion was made by Bhirdo, seconded by Champeau to approve a contract with McMahon & Associates for the construction design of a new village administration building as presented. A roll call vote was taken on the motion, and the members voted in the following fashion:

Bhirdo – aye; Champeau- aye; Harff – aye; Howson – nay; Orozco – nay; Werner – nay; Bell – nay

Motion failed.

d) Contract; Administration Building; Civil Site Design; Stantec Consulting
A recommendation was forwarded by the Parks, Property & Streets Committee to approve a contract with Stantec Consulting for the preparation of civil site design services (engineering and land surveying) for the new administration building to be located on the former Logerquist property on Woodcrest Rd. The anticipated cost of services is $35,500.

Bell noted that there was no sense in discussing this matter as the previous item pertaining to a future administration building was voted down.

A motion was made by Bell, seconded by Howson to deny a contract with Stantec Consulting for engineering and land surveying services for a new village administration building as presented. Motion carried – 4-3, with Bhirdo, Champeau and Harff opposed.

e) Contract; Triangle Area Engineering; Robert E. Lee
Schmelzer provided a brief overview of the proposed project to repair the roads in the area around the existing administration building, consisting of Maple Drive, Bluffside Road and a portion of Mill Road west of Highway 42. This project was approved as part of the former CIP and the approximate contract cost of $110,00 will be paid from PRAT funds.

Howson asked if there would be a public meeting to discuss details of the project, such as the ornamental lighting and sidewalks. Schmelzer responded that the streetlight design and decorative touches will be completed by Robert E. Lee and reviewed by the Parks, Property & Streets Committee. A future meeting with the public to introduce the plan will be scheduled.

A motion was made by Bhirdo, seconded by Harff to approve a contract with Robert E. Lee for surveying and engineering of the area referred to as the Mill Road Triangle as presented. Motion carried – all ayes.

f) Contract; Marina Commercial Vendor; Sail Door County; Inksetter & Bayirli
A recommendation was forwarded from the Marina Committee to approve a contract with Marley Inksetter and Merih Bayirli for commercial services at the Sister Bay Marina. Inksetter and Bayirli purchased *Sail Door County*, which was under contract with the marina with the former owner, Peder Nelson.

A motion was made by Bell, seconded by Howson to approve a contract with Marley Inksetter and Merih Bayirli, operating Sail Door County, for commercial vendor services at the Sister Bay Marina as presented. Motion carried – all ayes.

g) Monthly Financial Report and Appropriations

The monthly financial statements were prepared and included in the meeting packet for the members to review. No questions were asked.

A motion was made by Bhirdo, seconded by Harff to pay the monthly bills in the amount of $2,100,508.38 as presented. Motion carried – all ayes.

Agenda Item No. 7. Staff Reports

Staff Reports from the Village Administration, Public Works Department and Sewer and Water Utility were included in the meeting packet. Howson asked for updates on the ice rink to be brought to a future Parks, Property & Streets Committee meeting.

Agenda Item No. 8. Department Annual Reports

Annual reports were prepared by the Administrator, Village Clerk, Utilities Director, Parks & Streets Director and Marina. The board had questions on the village's poverty data presented in the report and requested that this information be clarified before the combined reports are made available on the village website.

Agenda Item No. 9. Committee Reports

Finance Committee: Minutes of the January 7, 2025 meeting of the Finance Committee were included in the meeting packet. Bhirdo asked if Schmelzer has investigated the deadlines for requesting an extension of TID #1. It appears that there is time should the board choose to pursue that option at a future meeting of the Joint Review Board.

Fire Board: The Fire Board met on December 30, 2024. Harff shared that the department is exploring funding options from the county as a whole, rather than just locally, to obtain needed equipment, such as new radios. The new fire engine is in production, and the department is planning some fundraising to get additional equipment not currently budgeted.

Ad Hoc Green Tier Legacy Community Committee: The Green Tier Legacy Community Committee met, and minutes of the January 16, 2025 meeting were included in the packet. The committee is continuing to work on the development of a plastics recycling facility for the area and has been discussing ways to celebrate Earth Day this April.

Historical Society: Minutes were not provided. Champeau reported that bills are still be finalized for Christkindlmarkt, which saw less traffic this year than in 2023. A Sister Bay Marina Club has been formed to raise funds for converting the Sister Bay Boathouse into a nautical museum to house the *Shadow*, and provide a "members-only" boaters' lounge. This has not yet been discussed with the Marina Committee yet.

Housing Committee: The Housing Committee met on January 7, 2025. Champeau reported that they met with a speaker from Crested Butte, Colorado, a community similar to Sister Bay, who shared details on how they are addressing housing shortages in that state.

Library Commission: Minutes of the December 9, 2025 meeting of the Library Commission were submitted. Trustee Harff reported Martha Newkirk has stepped down from her position on the commission and Glenna Peters, Liberty Grove, will be taking her place.

Marina Committee: The Marina Committee met on January 8, 2025, but minutes were not provided for the meeting packet. Werner shared they the marina is planning for replacing the boardwalk, and they are meeting with the Sewer and Water Utility Committee regarding sewer billing.

Parking Committee: The Parking Committee has not yet met.

Parks, Property & Streets Committee: The Parks, Property & Streets Committee minutes from January 6, 2025 were included in the meeting packet. Howson noted that the committee invited current participants in the community garden to share information with the group. There is also a desire to hold a Volunteer Day for selected projects in the village.

Personnel Committee: Minutes from the January 8, 2025 meeting of the Personnel Committee were provided in the packet. Howson reported that the personnel handbook is being updated, as well as the creation of committee bylaws. She also shared the committee's desire to see the creation of updated staff evaluation forms.

Plan Commission: The Plan Commission did not meet in December.

SBAA: No minutes were provided. Orozco reported that the board is working on its 2025 brochure, with a goal of having it ready for distribution before the NFL draft. Orozco also shared that Tonya Crowell is the new SBAA president and they will be appointing two new board members.

Tourism Zone Commission: No minutes were provided. Howson reported the Destination Door County budget has been approved and adopted. They have also formed a committee to work on the strategic plan beginning 2026.

Sewer and Water Utility Committee: Minutes of the January 14, 2025 meeting of the Sewer and Water Utility were provided after the packets for this meeting were prepared. Bhirdo noted that the utility has identified and corrected several issues contributing to water loss in the village.

Village Hall Planning Task Force: The Village Hall Planning Task Force has not met recently.

Zoning Board of Appeals: Minutes of the December 19, 2024 meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals were provided. Howson inquired on the outcome of a motion should there be a tied vote. Schmelzer stated that a tie is equivalent to a "No" vote.

A motion was made by Champeau, seconded by Howson to approve the various committee reports as presented. Motion carried – all ayes.

Agenda Item No. 11. Matters to be placed on a future agenda or referred to a committee, official or employee

The board requested that the County Supervisor be contacted and asked to report to the board at its monthly meetings.

The next meeting of the Village Board of Trustees will be presented virtually only due to the Spring Primary taking place at the Fire Station on February 18, 2025. The meeting will begin at 6:00 P.M.

Agenda Item No. 12 Adjourn

At 7:46 P.M. a motion was made by Howson, seconded by Orozco to adjourn the January 21, 2025 meeting of the Village Board of Trustees. Motion carried – all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Teich

Heidi Teich,
Village Clerk