VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, May 20, 2025
(Approved Version)

Agenda Item No. 1. The May 20, 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, Chad Kodanko, Brigid White, Kurt Harff, and Patrice Champeau.

Staff: Village Administrator Julie Schmelzer, Finance Director/Treasurer Vlad Gannik, Utilities Director Megan Barnes, and Clerk Heidi Teich

Others: Laurel Harff, Hannah Paulus, Chris Janisse, Jill & Keith Wiebe, Rick Dahlstrom, Mickie Mostardi, John Lijewski, Deb Fitzgerald, Ellie Soderberg-Guger, Skip Heidler, Tim & Sue West, Tyler Duvall, Mike Laszkiewicz, Mike Goldstone and Scott Watts

Agenda Item No. 3. Approval of the Agenda
A motion was made by Kodanko, seconded by Harff that the Agenda for the May 20, 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 Bell, seconded by Kodanko that the minutes of the April 29, 2025 meeting of the Village Board of Trustees be approved as amended to note that Trustee White recused herself from that portion of the Executive Session when discussing her lawsuit. Motion carried – All ayes.

Agenda Item No. 5. Comments, correspondence, and concerns from the public
Correspondence received for this meeting and included in the meeting packet were:
- An email from Russ Carpenter regarding the property at 2387 Ava Hope Ct
- The County of Door Transportation Newsletter for the first quarter of 2025

Staff also received emailed correspondence earlier today from the following individuals, who all wrote in support of adding stakeholders to the Finance Committee:
- Cory Diltz, 2299 Maple Dr, Sister Bay
- Mickie Mostardi, 10867 N Bay Shore Dr, Sister Bay
- Tom Mostardi, 10867 N Bay Shore Dr, Sister Bay
- Nancy Akerly, 10810 N Spring Rd, Sister Bay
- Susan Gullick, 10813 Pheasant Ct, Sister Bay

President Bell asked if anyone wished to offer any additional comments and Tim West, 2217 Mill Circle, was recognized. West added his support in allowing stakeholders to sit on the village's Finance Committee as he believes it will increase transparency in the process. He also advocated for this as a training opportunity for young people to become involved with village operations. He added that those vetted for the position on the committee should not be friends or relatives of the trustees.

Agenda Item No. 6. Proclamations

a) Historical Society; 30th Anniversary
b) June is Pride Month

Draft proclamations in recognition of the upcoming 30th anniversary of the Sister Bay Historical Society and recognizing June as Pride Month were included in the meeting packet. After the proclamations were read for the benefit of the audience in attendance, the following motions were made:

A motion was made by Howson, seconded by Champeau to recognize the Sister Bay Historical Society for their thirty (30) years of service by proclamation as presented. Motion carried – all ayes.

A motion was made by Bhirdo, seconded by Howson to recognize the month of June as Open Door Pride Month by proclamation as presented. Motion carried – all ayes.

Agenda Item No. 7. Ordinances & Resolutions
a) Res. 2025-013; Recreating an Ad Hoc Village Hall Planning Task Force
Bell summarized the need to recreate the Ad Hoc Village Planning Task Force as discussed at the prior board meeting. Therefore, an applicable resolution was drafted and included in the meeting packet.

During discussion on this item, Howson asked if there should be a term limit for the task force. The members felt that it could remain open-ended with the understanding that the task force will be periodically reviewed until renovations on the village hall are complete. Funding was discussed, with Champeau noting that the task force felt the project be taxpayer-funded. Others disagreed, and opined that some degree of fundraising needs to occur as they felt there are individuals who will donate to the project. Bhirdo recalled that when this task force was initially established, the audience in attendance fully supported fundraising for the renovations.

A motion was made by Kodanko, seconded by Champeau to approve Resolution 2025-013 as presented to recreate the Ad Hoc Village Hall Planning Task, comprised of five to seven stakeholders, two of which are trustees, and include the Village Administrator and Village Clerk as ex-officio, non-voting members. Motion carried – all ayes.

b) Res. 2025-014; Modifying the Membership of the Housing Committee
The Housing Committee is currently comprised of five to seven stakeholders, one of whom is a trustee. Bhirdo asked for clarification about why the committee needed two additional trustees. Bell responded that there has been a trustee attending the meetings already so they should take advantage of her participation, and another was interested and had served previously on the Ad Hoc Land Acquisition Committee.

A motion was made by Bhirdo, seconded by White to approve Resolution 2025-014 as presented to modify the membership of the Housing Committee to include five to nine stakeholders, three of which are Village Trustees. Motion carried – all ayes.

c) Res. 2025-015; Modifying the Membership of the Finance Committee
The Finance Committee has always been composed of three village trustees, and Bell has proposed the addition of two stakeholders. Bhirdo stated that she was offended by the various comments received for this meeting that stated the Finance Committee is not being transparent. She added that numerous Finance meetings are held each year, and the public is always welcome to participate in the budget process. She asked if the stakeholders would be voting members and if they would be compensated. Bell

replied that the stakeholder members would be paid. Bhirdo also expressed concern over the $6000 - $8000 spent in training the new trustees on the Finance Committee this past year, and one of those members is no longer on the committee. She added that she does not want to see the board spending more money to train new members.

Howson proposed that the stakeholders have a longer term that would justify the training expense. White and Kodanko also spoke in favor of the addition of stakeholders who hold more than a year term on the committee.

After discussion, it was the consensus among the members that the stakeholder members have staggered terms of three years for continuity on the committee. To achieve this, one member would be appointed for three years now, and the second member would be appointed for only two years, with reappointment at that time. The majority of the board also favored the classification of "citizen" for the additional members as defined in the Village Board Bylaws, as stakeholders do not necessarily live and pay taxes in the village.

A motion was made by Howson, seconded by White to approve Resolution 2025-015 as presented and amended to modify the membership of the Village of Sister Bay Finance Committee to include three Village Trustees and two citizens who will serve staggered three year terms, and be compensated for their service. Motion carried – 6-1, with Bhirdo opposed.

Agenda Item No. 8. f) Ex Officio Discussion; Possible Amendment to Bylaws

Bell requested that the members hold this discussion before debating the next Resolution on the agenda, as the trustees' decision here will affect the way in which the bylaws will be amended tonight.

It was the consensus of the board that the following clarifications be made concerning the ex-officio role held by the Village President:

- *The ex-officio can be counted when needed to create a quorum of members*
- *The ex-officio may only vote when they are participating due to lack of quorum*
- *The ex-officio shall be compensated only when serving to fill the need for a quorum of members*

d) Res. 2025-016; Amending the Village Board and Committee/Commission Bylaws

After a brief discussion on the role of the ex officio member, Schmelzer walked the members through the various changes to the board and committee/commission bylaws highlighted in the drafts included in the packet for this meeting, as well as the changes just discussed.

A motion was made by Howson, seconded by Kodanko to approve Resolution 2025-016 to amend the Village of Sister Bay Board of Trustees Bylaws, and, the Village of Sister Bay Committee/Commission Bylaws and Rules, as presented and further amended to clarify the rules regarding participation by an ex-officio member; specifically, the village president, when acting in an ex-officio role, can vote and be compensated if participation is based on the need to create a quorum. Motion carried – 6-1, with Bell opposed.

Agenda Item No. 7. Discussion/Action Items

a) Highway 57 Trail; Award Contracts

Schmelzer reviewed the need for the village to select an engineer and construction oversight firm for the State Highway 57 trail, which was discussed at an earlier meeting of the Parks, Property & Streets Committee. The committee previously selected Stantec Consulting for those roles, but it was discussed that Stantec, who wrote the grant application and were named as lead on the contract instead of their partner firm, would not be approved by the Department of Transportation (DOT). The committee then forwarded a recommendation to award the contract to Robert E. Lee & Associates for both engineering and construction oversight. It was noted that the DOT would need to give their approval as well.

A motion was made by Bhirdo, seconded by Howson to enter an engineering contract with Robert E. Lee & Associates for the State Highway 57 Trail, and pursue a contract for construction services with Robert E. Lee & Associates for the same trail as presented. Motion carried – all ayes.

b) Housing Committee; "Wiltse" Property Funding Request

Schmelzer provided a brief overview of the work of the Housing Committee in developing a model for affordable housing in the village. The committee has now reached a point where they need to know the value of the land (which is debt-free) and necessary infrastructure to continue with the development. The committee cannot determine how many lots will be created until they know, via a land plat, what is available for their use after subtracting the buffer zone around the wastewater plant, the area for retention ponds, the areas that cannot be served by sewer and water, and that portion of the land that is unsuitable due to the contaminants found in the soil. Once the roads and infrastructure are mapped, they can identify the number of lots being created. Money has been committed to housing in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and they are requesting a commitment from the board that that money is available for their use.

Bhirdo felt that the board needed to commit to some point in time to pursue this project after the Finance Committee reviews it.

Kodanko requested a formal presentation by the Housing Committee and time to consider the proposal, noting that the property also needs to be zoned. Bell agreed, and requested a breakdown of the number and type of homes and at what cost.

Champeau clarified that the committee does want a mixture of housing styles, but they don't have drawings to present. Howson felt a plat was unnecessary until the funding of the project was determined. Champeau pointed out that the money for this project was included in the CIP for funding in 2024, but had been pushed out to 2025.

White asked to understand where the push to develop this affordable housing came from and was told that it is a shared desire to provide housing for the local workforce and those looking to make Sister Bay their home at an affordable rate. White opined that the board should dictate what they want on the property and find a developer who can provide that versus asking a developer to propose what can fit on the land. Schmelzer shared that the Housing Committee proposes a model in which the village provides the land and infrastructure, and then enters into a development agreement with a builder who will contract individually with the buyers of the lots to construct their home based on what has been approved through the development agreement. They also desire to see all lots be deed-restricted to prohibit short-term rentals.

Bhirdo added that the former board was committed to the affordable housing project, and perhaps that needs to be a discussion with this new board to determine their commitment level. She also requested that this be a top priority on the Finance Committee's next agenda so they can start figuring out how to work it into the 2026 budget.

Schmelzer concluded by repeating that the Housing Committee would like funding for an engineer to draw a plat based on the available land, while Bell proposed the board dictate to the engineer the type and number of houses desired and have the plat drawn in that manner. It was determined that nothing further could happen at this time until the public hearing to fix the zoning of the land which will take place a week from now.

c) Fire Board; Donation Request
A discussion was held at a recent Fire Board meeting wherein they learned of the Town of Liberty Grove's decision to donate a sum of $10,000 to Fire Chief Hecht's family, who is living in Indiana where he is undergoing treatment for an unexpected medical incident which occurred while attending a fire department conference. Assistant Fire Chief Goldstone was present to report that Hecht has undergone several surgeries but remains too unstable to transport back to Wisconsin. He shared that donations for the family can be made to a special fund set up at any Nicolet National Bank branch or through an online Go Fund Me account.

During discussion on this item, the board recalled a prior request in which they learned that taxpayer money cannot be donated to a particular individual. Donations to certain 501(c) organizations are possible, but the firefighters association is not one such organization.

Several suggestions were made including getting legal advice on how to proceed with a donation and then asking Finance to allocate the funds, taking the money from the unrestricted fund balance and making a donation to the Door County Community Fund which would then be forwarded to the family. Goldstone was asked about the timing of the donation, and he responded that the need is not immediate (as other donations are coming in) and waiting a month to receive a donation is perfectly fine.

It was the consensus of the board that a sum of money be allocated to the Hecht family in whatever method they determine possible in the next month or so.

d) Liquor License Request; One Star Burgers & Dogs; 10440 Orchard Dr; Hannah Paulus - Agent
The owners of One Star Burgers & Dogs, Chris Jannise and Scott Watts, were in attendance at this meeting to request a pro-rated Class B Beer and Class C Wine license for the property at 10440 Orchard Dr., Sister Bay, which they are renting. The term of the rental agreement does cover the full license year, which is required, and both owners meet the criteria for licensure under state statutes. They further requested that Hannah Paulus, also in attendance, be appointed as Agent for the business.

A motion was made by Bhirdo, seconded by Harff to approve the issuance of a Class B Beer and Class C Wine License to One Star Burgers & Dogs, Hannah Paulus – agent, for the premises located at 10440 Orchard Dr. for the remained of the current license year as presented. Motion carried – all ayes.

e) Revised Employee Handbook
An updated employee handbook was included in the packet for the members to review. Howson gave a brief overview of the work done by the Personnel Committee to update this manual, which was greatly lacking in its former iteration. Some of the major changes included an expanded explanation of benefits, a grievance procedure, and processes for how to deal with complaints about supervisors. Schmelzer noted that the manual had also been reviewed by staff for their feedback as well.

During discussion, the following comments or suggestions for changes were made:

- Page 2 of the handbook, paragraph 3 - Bhirdo stated that staff should be given notice of any changes in benefits, policy or procedures and not be expected to follow meeting agendas to see when/if this is ever being discussed. A statement to the effect of *"all attempts will be made to notify staff of changes will be made"* was discussed.
- Page 5, last bulleted point under Sexual Harassment – clarification needs to be made to identify the proper party to notify if the supervisor is the offender, namely the Village Administrator or Personnel Committee Chair.
- Page 8, Gifts and Gratuities – the monetary amount able to be accepted by staff is $100.00. Anything more needs to be reported to the Finance Director.
- Page 8, Gifts and Gratuities - delete the last line about donating any gift or gratuity to a non-profit.
- Page 9, Drug and Alcohol-Free Workplace – a lengthy discussion took place on whether THC should be specifically called out in this section.
- pg. 12, item 14 - the level of gas should be changed to a quarter-tank before refilling is required.
- A discussion should take place at the Finance Committee regarding the budgeting of up to 80 hours of employee comp time.
- A discussion should take place at the Personnel Committee regarding the payout of an employee's PTO when they leave employment, or if that can be used to pay for the employee's continuing insurance needs.
- Correct the typo on page 20, line 1, under Health Savings Account.

A motion was made by Bell, seconded by Kodanko to approve the newly revised Employee Handbook as presented and further amended as discussed at this meeting pending final review by the Personnel Committee Chair. Motion carried – all ayes.

g) Committee Appointments

A motion was made by White, seconded by Kodanko to appoint Mike Laszkiewicz and Andy Woerfel to the Finance Committee, with Laszkiewicz's term to expire in 2028 and Woerfel's term to expire in 2027. Motion carried – 6-1, with Bhirdo opposed.

A motion was made by Kodanko, seconded by Champeau to appoint Nate Bell and Steve Bacsi to the Sister Bay Plan Commission with Bell's term to expire in 2026 and Bacsi's term to expire in 2028. Motion carried – all ayes.

A motion was made by Kodanko, seconded by Champeau to appoint Louise Howson as Chair of the Ad Hoc Green Tier Legacy Community Committee. Motion carried – all ayes.

A motion was made by Bell, seconded by White to appoint Chad Kodanko and Louise Howson to the Housing Committee. Motion carried – all ayes.

A motion was made by Bell, seconded by Bhirdo to appoint Brigid White, Nancy Akerly, Kathy Van Gemert, and Doug Hanson to the Ad Hoc Village Hall Planning Task Force, with Patrice Champeau appointed to serve as Chair. Motion carried – all ayes.

A motion was made by Kodanko, seconded by Harff to appoint Terry Kelly as Chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals, with a term to expire in 2027. Motion carried – 6-1, with Bhirdo opposed.

No recommended appointments to the Personnel Committee were offered.

h) Monthly Financial Report & Appropriations
Finance Director Gannik prepared the monthly statements and included them in the meeting packet for the members to review. Several questions were asked by the members and responses were provided.

A motion was made by Bell, seconded by White to approve the monthly bills in the amount of $1,363,168,69 as presented. Motion carried – all ayes.

Agenda Item No. 9. Committee Reports
Minutes shared in the meeting packet included:

- Ad Hoc Admin Building Review Task Force: April 10, 2025 and April 30, 2025
- Door County Coastal Byways: 2025 Budget
- Sister Bay & Liberty Grove Fire Board: February 27, 2025
- Housing Committee: January 28, 2025 and April 22, 2025
- Sister Bay/Liberty Grove Library Commission Meeting: April 14, 2025
- Marina Committee: April 16, 2025
- Parks, Property & Streets Committee: May 5, 2025
- Personnel Committee: February 25, 2025 and May 13, 2025
- Plan Commission: April 22, 2025
- Door County Tourism Zone Commission: April 17, 2025
- Sewer & Water Utilities Committee: May 13, 2025
- Village Hall Planning Task Force: April 15, 2025

Champeau reported on the actions of the Sister Bay Historical Society, noting that the Christkindlmarkt profited $50,000 this year; the organization is still looking for an executive director; the boathouse museum does not require an elevator or a bathroom; the farmers market has been renamed to Open Aire Market; and Strawberry Fest will be held on June 28th.

Champeau inquired about the timeline for installing historical markers around the village, and Howson responded that they have been working with Terry Wolf of the Sister Bay Historical Society on this matter. There will be more to report after the Parks, Property & Streets Committee meets next month.

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

Agenda Item No. 10. Matters to be placed on a future agenda or referred to a committee, official or employee
It was the consensus of the committee that the following items be included on a future board meeting agenda:
- Continued discussion on funding of the former Wiltse property development project
- Discussion on a monetary donation to the Hecht family
- Discussion on the implications of comp time to be had by the Finance Committee
- Discussion on the implications of paying out an employee's PTO to be had by the Personnel Committee

- Discussion on the creation of a Village Newsletter

The next meeting of the Village Board of Trustees will take place on Tuesday, June 17, 2025 at 6:00 P.M.

At 8:41, the board took a brief recess.

Agenda Item No. 11. Executive Session

a) 1. Consider a motion to convene into Closed Session pursuant to Wis. Stats., §19.85(1)(g) to confer with legal counsel who either orally or in writing will advise the Village Board on strategy to be adopted with respect to current or likely litigation:

i. Preserving Foundations Agreement – 2387 Ava Hope Ct
ii. Bertram Contract Addendum
iii. Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant – Marketplace Property

2. Consider a motion to convene into Closed Session pursuant to Wis. Stats., §19.85(1)(c) to consider employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility: Village Administrator compensation and benefits

At 8:45 P.M., a motion was made by Bhirdo, seconded by Harff to convene into Closed Session pursuant to Wis. Stats., §19.85(1)(g) to confer with legal counsel who either orally or in writing will advise the Village Board on strategy to be adopted with respect to current or likely litigation as notated above, and pursuant to Wis. Stats., §19.85(1)(c) to consider employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility regarding Village Administrator compensation and benefits.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion, and the members voted in the following fashion:

Bhirdo – aye; Champeau – aye; Harff – aye; Howson – aye; Kodanko – aye; White – aye; Bell – aye

Motion carried.

It was noted that at 9:43 PM, Trustee Bhirdo left the meeting and President Bell recused himself from discussion. At 9:57 PM, President Bell rejoined the meeting and Village Administrator Schmelzer left.

b) Motion to reconvene into Open Session
At 10:14 P.M. a motion was made Bell, seconded by Champeau to reconvene into open session. Again, a roll call vote was taken and the members voted in the following fashion:

Champeau – aye; Harff – aye; Howson – aye; Kodanko – aye; White – aye; Bell – aye

Motion carried.

c) Motion for Action, if Appropriate

A motion was made by Howson, seconded by White to approve the addendum to the fiber agreement with Bertram Communications as discussed. Motion carried - all ayes, with Bell abstaining.

A motion was made by White, seconded by Champeau that no action be taken on the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Grant matter until Administrator Schmelzer obtains more information from the DNR. Motion carried – all ayes.

A motion was made by Kodanko, seconded by White direct staff to send the letter pertaining to the property at 2387 Ava Hope Ct. as discussed in the Executive Session. Motion carried – all ayes.

Bell noted that no further action was taken concerning the Village Administrator matter.

Agenda Item No. 11 Adjourn
At 10:16 P.M. a motion was made by White, seconded by Harff to adjourn the May 20, 2025 meeting of the Village Board of Trustees. Motion carried – all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,
Heidi Teich
Heidi Teich,
Village Clerk