VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, June 17, 2025
(Approved)

Agenda Item No. 1. The June 17, 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, Parks & Streets Director Erik Linczmaier, Marina Manager Dave Lienau, Administrative Assistant Sarah Bertges, departing Clerk Heidi Teich and incoming Clerk Susan Clarke

Others: Laurel Harff, Amber Drewieske, John Blossom, Ellen Roberts, Jerry Phelps, Tyler Duvall, Elizabeth McMasters, Mike Goldstone, Walt Swietlik, Sally Pfeifer, "19206349297", Andrew and Christina Torcivia, Benjamin Andrews and David Schwartz.

Agenda Item No. 3. Approval of the Agenda
Prior to the motion, Bhirdo questioned Bell on why the Administrative Building Task Force Report, which was supposed to be on the agenda, per the Resolution that authorized that committee, was not on the agenda. Bell explained he decided not to put it on the agenda since the Chair of that task force could not be present. Bhirdo objected to the matter not being on the agenda as has been assured via the resolution.

A motion was made by Howson, seconded by Kodanko that the Agenda for the June 17, 2025, meeting be approved as presented. Aye – 6; Nay -1 (Bhirdo).

Agenda Item No. 4. Approval of Minutes
A motion was made by Howson, seconded by Kodanko that the minutes of the May 20, 2025, meeting of the Village Board of Trustees be approved as presented and amended to correct several typos. 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:
- A letter from Donna Johnson which spoke about the need to preserve the charms of the village.
- An email from Wendy Cooper who spoke about the need to preserve the wild areas of Sister Bay and limit development.

President Bell asked if anyone wished to offer any additional comments. Jerry Phelps, manager of the Yacht Club at Sister Bay, was acknowledged and spoke about the disruptions to the condo residents with the on-going construction happening at 2399 Maple Dr. They are not opposed to the time extension for the development, as they would like to see it completed, but ask that the timeline for loud work begin at 9:00 AM.

Trustee Bhirdo requested to read the resignation letter from Clerk Teich, who resigned her position this month. Bhirdo then read a letter she composed to Teich thanking her for her service.

Trustee Howson requested that the late correspondence they received from Lilly Orozco be included again as correspondence in the July meeting packet. Bell announced the letter would be referred to the Plan Commission.

Agenda Item No. 6. Recognition: Tom Sadler; Years of Service

Tom Sadler, former Village Board President, Plan Commission member, and most recently Chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals, has tendered his resignation from service this year. Sadler was recognized by the trustees for his service and commitment to the village for the past 30+ years. A plaque was presented by President Bell. Schmelzer offered her own words of thanks, and Bhirdo read a prepared statement personally thanking Sadler for his service. Sadler thanked the board and his colleagues who served with him on the Zoning Board of Appeals over the years.

Agenda Item No. 7. Presentation 2024 Audit

Amber Drewieske and Elizabeth McMasters of CliftonLarsonAllen were present to lead the trustees through the 2024 Audit report, which was distributed at the start of the meeting. After their presentation, Kodanko raised a question on the cash flow of the marina accounts. Drewieske explained that both the seasonal slip fees, commercial vendor fees, and daily dockage were all included in the figure presented.

Drewieske thanked the village staff for all their efforts in preparing the audit report and noted that she and her staff would be available after the meeting to address further questions.

A request was made by Trustee White to receive the audit report a bit earlier to give them a chance to thoroughly review before the board meeting at which it is presented. Gannik explained he first received the report the day the meeting packets were organized.

Agenda Item No. 8. Ordinances & Resolutions

a) Ordinance 2025-009; Map Amendment; Former Wiltse Property; I-1 to R-4 & P-1

A recommendation was made by the Plan Commission to change the zoning of Sister Bay Parcel 181-00-04312831Q from I-1 Industrial to R-4, Small Lot Residential and P-1 Park District. The entire parcel would be placed in the R-4 Small Lot Residential zoning district, except for the easternmost 10.6 acres which would be zoned P-1 Park District.

A motion was made by Bhirdo, seconded by Harff to approve Ordinance 2025-009 as presented to rezone Sister Bay Parcel 181-00-04312831Q from I-1 Institutional to R-4 Small Lot Residential and P-1 Park District as illustrated. Motion carried – all ayes.

b) Ordinance 2025-010; Map Amendment; Former Logerquist Property; I-1 to I-1 & P-1

A recommendation was made by the Plan Commission to change the zoning of Sister Bay Parcel 181-00-04312822A, consisting of 40 acres, to 20 acres designated as I-1, Industrial and 20 acres designated as P-1 Park District. This change would make zoning consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the village.

Trustee Kodanko asked for the rationale in rezoning 20 acres as I-1, and Bhirdo responded that prior discussions considered the need to preserve the existing farm buildings, with potential for other village facilities and/or a fire station in the future. Schmelzer further explained that the 20 acres designated as P-1 does not necessarily mean that the land would be a park, as many uses are permitted in that zoning district. Other considerations for the land include urban gardens and a dog park area that would allow space for both a large and small dog area.

A motion was made by Bhirdo, seconded by Champeau to approve Ordinance 2025-010 as presented to amend the official map of the Village of Sister Bay to rezone Parcel 181-00-04312822A to I-1 and P-1. Motion carried – all ayes.

c) Ordinance 2025-011; Text Amendment; R-4 Dimensional Standards

A recommendation was made by the Housing Committee, to the Plan Commission, to revise the rules of the R-4 Small Lot Zoning District as the affordable homes they are exploring for that area will not fit on an R-4 lot. Proposed amendments to Chapter 66 of the Village of Sister Bay Municipal Code were included in the meeting packet for the members to review.

Trustee White spoke in support of the side yard setbacks concerning accessory structures to accommodate safety equipment which could be needed in the event of a fire. She recommended a change to the setback to at least eight (8) feet.

A motion was made by White, seconded by Champeau to approve Ordinance 2025-011 which revises portions of Chapter 66 of the Zoning Code as presented and amended to clarify that the side yard setback for Accessory Structures be eight (8) feet on one side. Motion carried – 6-1, with Bell opposed.

d) Resolution 2025-017; Adopting the 2024 eCMAR

The Compliance Maintenance Annual Report prepared by the Utilities Department and submitted to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was included in the meeting packet. The utility received a rating of 4.0, which is considered good standing.

A motion was made by Howson, seconded by Kodanko to approve Resolution 2025-017 as presented which adopts the 2024 eCMAR. Motion carried – all ayes.

e) Resolution 2025-018; Concession Stand Bids

A bid was recently let for work to construct restrooms at the Sister Bay ballfield concession stand. The village received multiple bids, all of which were considerably higher than the anticipated budget for the project of $75,000. State law requires that the lowest bid be accepted, in this case $193,900, unless the board chooses to reject all bids which can be done via resolution. The trustees determined that all bids be rejected based on the cost, which the village does not have a budget for.

A motion was made by Howson, seconded by White to approve Resolution 2025-018 which rejects all bids received for the concession stand restroom addition at the ballfield as presented. Motion carried – all ayes.

Agenda Item No. 9. Discussion/Action Items

a) Appoint Village Clerk & Oath of Office; Susan Clarke

The Village Clerk position was recently vacated with the resignation of Heidi Teich. Susan Clarke was hired to fill the position effective immediately with formal board approval and upon taking the oath of office. Teich, as a notary public authorized to administer oaths, was present to administer the oath after the board motion to approve the appointment.

A motion was made by Bhirdo, seconded by Howson to appoint Susan Clarke as Clerk for the Village of Sister Bay, effective immediately. Motion carried – all ayes.

Sarah Bertges, the new Administrative Assistant for the Village of Sister Bay was also introduced.

b) Development Agreement Waterfront Museum; 10697 N Bay Shore Dr; Sister Bay Historical Society
The Sister Bay Historical Society has been working for the past several years on a plan to convert the village's boathouse, formerly used as a summer rental property, into a waterfront museum. In order to move forward with the project, formal approval of the village board is required, and a discussion on the terms of development between the parties regarding use and maintenance of the building needs to take place. A draft development agreement was included in the meeting packet for the members to review.

A special request was made to pour concrete in the interior during the summer months. This would take about an hour of pouring time. Blossom stated that no jackhammering would be required. They would simply open the door and set up a chute to fill the area, then smooth the concrete to create a level walkway. Schmelzer explained that state approvals and permits are still required, so this would not be happening in the next couple weeks. It was suggested that they aim to work on the slowest tourism day of the week, with approval from the Marina Manager.

It was also clarified that an event is more than just a meeting, so a meeting of the Historical Society members would not be an event which requires approval from the Marina Committee per the terms of the development agreement.

A motion was made by Kodanko, seconded by Champeau to enter an agreement between the Village of Sister Bay and Sister Bay Historical Society regarding the conversion and use of the village boathouse as a waterfront museum, subject to the terms and conditions presented and discussed at this meeting to allow pouring of concrete yet this summer. Motion carried – all ayes.

c) Development Agreement Amendment; 10553 Country Walk Dr.; Za Za's Pizzeria/Lundquist Realty; Torch Brothers LLC
The village previously entered into an agreement with Torch Brothers LLC for the development of a pizzeria and realty office at 10553 Country Walk Dr. It was anticipated that the project would not take the standard two years offered by a development agreement, but the original agreement was only for ten months. Torcivia was present to explain that unforeseen setbacks require that they now ask for additional time to complete the renovations.

Torcivia asked the board if an amendment could also be made regarding the need for him to plant trees along the property lines where a neighboring property already has a full line of trees planted. Bhirdo noted that this would need to go back to the Plan Commission and Schmelzer explained that the amendment being reviewed tonight does not mention landscaping, so a new amendment would be needed.

A motion was made by Howson, seconded by Kodanko to amend the Development Agreement between the Village of Sister Bay and Torch Brothers LLC to extend the deadline for completing the renovation at 10553 Country Walk Dr. as presented. Motion carried – all ayes.

d) Development Agreement Amendment; 2399 Maple Dr.; Luna View; Al Gokey

The village has entered into a development agreement with Allen Gokey – Packerland Builders, for the construction of a 15-unit hotel/motel/condominium on property located at 2399 Maple Dr. The agreement was for two years, commencing May 22, 2023. At this time, the building is constructed but a stormwater pipe, which has been delayed to the vendor's shipping schedule, has not been installed. Gokey is requesting that he be given an extension to install the pipe once it arrives.

Schmelzer noted that they heard concerns from the Yacht Club at Sister Bay tonight regarding the early start time of exterior work. Gokey was contacted about the issue and Schmelzer indicated that he is agreeable to not starting loud construction activity until 9:00 AM.

Bhirdo raised the concern that the subcontractors at the development are consistently violating the parking rules of the village. She recommended that enforcement be increased to ensure that the road is passable as intended. Bell suggested that the Plan Commission review this issue. Schmelzer noted that they can be told to park at the beach in the designated lots. Phelps was asked for his opinion, and he noted that the cars parking along the road do obstruct the view of the condo owners to enter and exit the condominium lot.

It was the consensus of the village board that this matter be referred back to the Plan Commission for further discussion. The work at the site will therefore cease immediately, other than general cleanup to prevent runoff to neighboring properties.

e) Contract; Irrigation System; Jaco Management

Chris Schmeltz of Jaco Management owns several lots adjacent to Sister Bay parcel 181-53-0006. He is requesting the village grant him permission to install an irrigation system on village lands as he has done for his properties to keep the entire area aesthetically pleasing.

A motion was made by White, seconded by Harff to enter an agreement between the Village of Sister Bay and Jaco Management. Motion carried – all ayes.

f) Contract; Ice Rink Land Lease; Friends of the Ice Rink

A recommendation was forwarded from the Parks, Property & Streets Committee to enter into a land lease with the Friends of the Ice Rink group.

A motion was made by Howson, seconded by Kodanko to enter an agreement between the Village of Sister Bay and Friends of the Ice Rink. Motion carried – all ayes.

g) Fire Board Donation Request

It was the opinion of the village attorney that the village could reimburse the Hecht family for their housing costs as they await improvements in his health out of state.

Bhirdo shared high praise for Chief Hecht and all he has done for the community but cautioned the board that this action could be considered unethical. She believes that they all feel this would be a good gesture to the family, but the village did not respond in the same manner when a former village employee had a serious health concern in the past. She did suggest an alternative option of participating in a benefit with the proceeds to go directly to the family. Harff agreed, noting that the GoFundMe account established for Hecht had a substantial amount available and questioned why this isn't being used. Goldstone replied that those funds are being set aside for Hecht's return home and his rehab needs.

Kodanko was in support of the donation, stating that Hecht was attending a fire department function when his health crisis occurred. Goldstone clarified that the expenses accruing now are due to the fact that he is still too unstable to be transported back to Wisconsin and his family is with him in Indiana.

A motion was made by Kodanko, seconded by White to reimburse the Hecht family for lodging costs and related expenses not to exceed $10,000 while they are in Indiana awaiting improvements in Hecht's health. Motion carried –5-2, with Bhirdo and Harff opposed.

h) Annual License Review; Cigarette, Electronic Vaping Device, and Tobacco Licenses
Prior to recusing herself from the discussion on this agenda item, Bhirdo pointed out that the applications from Sister Bay BP and Sister Bay Petro had checked the box that they had an overriding entity, but did not include the name of that entity on the application.

At 8:26 PM, Bhirdo recused herself from further discussion and vote.

A motion was made by Howson, seconded by Bell to approve Cigarette, Electronic Vaping Devices and Tobacco Licenses as presented with the condition that Rana LLC correct their applications to include their parent company. Motion carried – all ayes.

At 8:27 PM, Bhirdo resumed her duties on the board.

i) Annual License Review; Alcohol Beverages and Operators
A report was prepared for the meeting packet which included all applicants for the various alcohol license types being sought for the 2025-2026 license year. Bhirdo stated there were incomplete and/or incorrect applications from the following establishments: Boat House on the Bay, Chop, Church Hill Inn, Country House, Dorr Hotel, Goose & Twigs, Grasse's, Lou Group and McEvoy's.

Bhirdo recused herself at 8:36 PM.

A motion was made by Howson, seconded by Harff to approve the issuance of Class A/Combination Class A Liquor Licenses presented in packet, as corrected to address the incompleteness and errors discussed. Motion carried - All ayes excepting Bhirdo's recusal.

A motion was made by Howson, seconded by Kodanko to approve the issuance of Class B/C Liquor Licenses as presented in packet. Motion carried - - All ayes excepting Bhirdo's recusal.

Kodanko recused at 8:38 PM.

A motion was made by Howson, seconded by White to approve the issuance of Class B Liquor Licenses as presented in packet. Motion carried - All ayes excepting Bhirdo's and Kodanko's recusal.

At 8:39 PM, Howson recused.

Bhirdo stated discrepancies with operator's licenses from Northern Grill, Open Hearth, Steamboat Missy's and Roots.

A motion was made by Bell, seconded by White to approve the issuance of Operator's Licenses.

Motion carried - All ayes excepting Bhirdo's, Kodanko's and Howson's recusal.

Bhirdo, Howson and Kodanko resumed their duties on the board at 8:40 PM.

j) Utilities; Simplified or Conventional Water Rate

Utility Director Barnes was present to discuss the options in pursuing a Simplified or Conventional Rate Case Study for future rate studies.

A motion was made by Howson, seconded by Bhirdo to proceed with a Simplified Rate Case Study Application as presented. Motion carried – all ayes.

k) Monthly Financial Report & Appropriations

Bhirdo asked if it was necessary to include multiple versions of the same bills in the meeting. Staff explained the copies were actually from two months, and therefore not duplicates.

A motion was made by Bell, seconded by Kodanko to approve the monthly bills in the amount of $385,248.14 as presented. Motion carried – all ayes.

Agenda No. 10 Committee Reports

Bell opened up discussion on the minutes in meeting packet.

Questions on the committee reports raised by the members included: A question from Bhirdo on whether the husband of the Chair of the Library Commission is a conflict of interest for the commission. The attorney will be asked.

Bhirdo also asked for clarification on the Personnel Committee minutes referencing the supervisor contracts. Schmelzer responded to her inquiry.

A motion was made by Kodanko, seconded by Harff to accept 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

It was the consensus of the committee that the following items be included on a future board meeting agenda:

- Report from the Ad Hoc Administration Building Review Task Force
- Request of Andrew Torcivia regarding tree planting be referred to the Plan Commission
- The Luna View Development Agreement Extension be referred to the Plan Commission
- Operating Agreement with the Friends of the Ice Rink Group
- Review of the village's Fee Schedule

The next meeting of the Village Board of Trustees will take place on Tuesday, July 15, 2025, at 6:00 P.M.

Agenda Item No. 12. Executive Session

Bell announced he was exercising his authority as Village President that he would no longer be admitting any trustees participating remotely to attend executive session without prior notice, citing the Board Bylaws allowed him to do so. Champeau logged off from the meeting.

a) Consider a motion to convene into Executive 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.Alliance Construction Contract

b) 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 8:55 P.M., a motion was made by Bell, seconded by Bhirdo to convene into Closed Session pursuant to Wis. Stats., §19.85(1)(g) and §19.85(1)(c).

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

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

Motion carried.

b) Motion to reconvene into Open Session
At 9:31 P.M. a motion was made Bell, seconded by Kodanko to reconvene into open session. Again, a roll call vote was taken and the members voted in the following fashion:

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

Motion carried.

c) Motion for Action, if Appropriate

A motion was made by Bell, seconded by Harff to extend the contract with Alliance Construction per the schedule discussed. Motion carried - all ayes.

A motion was made by Bhirdo, seconded by Kodanko to amend the document as discussed in Closed Session and be presented by the Village Attorney. Motion carried – all ayes.

Agenda Item No. 13 Adjourn
At 9:33 P.M. a motion was made by Bhirdo, seconded by Kodanko to adjourn. Motion carried – all ayes.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Clarke
Village Clerk