VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, August 19, 2025
(Approved)

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

President Bell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, August 19, 2025.

Present: President Nate Bell and trustees Denise Bhirdo, Louise Howson, Chad Kodanko, Kurt Harff, and Patrice Champeau, and Brigid White remotely via zoom.

Staff: Village Administrator Julie Schmelzer, Finance Director/Treasurer Vlad Gannik, Utilities Director Megan Barnes, Parks & Streets Director Erik Linczmaier, Marina Manager Dave Lienau and Administrative Assistant Sarah Bertges.

Representing Sister Bay: Village Attorney Randy Nesbitt

Others: Laurel Harff, Surveyor Brian Frisque, R. Church, Vivian Nienow, Rick Dahlstrom, Erin Peddle of SBAA, Ellie Soderberg-Guger of SBAA, S. Gullick, Jill Wiebe, Karen Berndt and Nick Deviley.

2. Approve Agenda

Bell requested amendments to the agenda noting items 5A, 8B, and 8C would be removed. Item 5A was removed at Bhirdo's request, and items 8B and 8C were removed at the recommendation of the Village Attorney for further work.

Motion by Howson, seconded by Harff, to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried - all ayes.

3. Approve Meeting Minutes: July 15, 2025 & July 21, 2025

For the July 15, 2025, minutes, the following corrections were noted:

- On page 6, line 43: Correction to Bell's last name spelling
- On page 3, line 8 and line 16: Change "Harff" to "Laurel Harff" as the speaker was Trustee Kurt Harff's wife

No corrections were noted for the July 21, 2025, minutes.

Motion by Bhirdo, seconded by Champeau, to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried - all ayes.

4. Comments, Correspondence and Concerns from the Public

Nick Deviley addressed the Board regarding staff retention concerns. Mr. Deviley read from Clerk Sue Clarke's resignation letter expressing concerns about the future of the administrative office, particularly regarding losing Julie Schmelzer's leadership and knowledge. Mr. Deviley expressed frustration about employee turnover and stated concerns about the impact on his development project if Ms. Schmelzer were to leave in October, noting it would be difficult to find a replacement administrator. He cited Board leadership as contributing factors to staff departures.

Schmelzer noted correspondence was received from the library regarding upcoming events and information about recycling events taking place in Gibraltar.

5. Presentations

Item 5A (Debt & Administration Building Financing) was removed from the agenda.

6. Appointments

a. Appoint Interim Village Clerk

Schmelzer explained that the municipal official's handbook requires the appointment of a deputy clerk or interim to fulfill duties when a clerk departs. The Village needed to appoint an interim clerk to sign documents, issue liquor licenses, and maintain Village business until a permanent clerk is hired and sworn in. Discussion ensued regarding staffing options. Schmelzer and Bertges were identified as potential candidates, with Gannik having declined. Schmelzer stated she would be the most appropriate choice due to her familiarity with clerk duties, and because Bertges is still training in her current role. Bell suggested getting temporary outside assistance with clerk experience to help but acknowledged the immediate need for an interim appointment. Howson did not support an appointment at the current time and instead agreed with Bell that outside assistance should be pursued. Schmelzer clarified that the Village has received seven applications for the permanent clerk position, with one interview scheduled, so there was no need for long term interim assistance.

Motion by Bhirdo, seconded by Champeau, to appoint Julie Schmelzer as Interim Village Clerk. Motion carried - all ayes.

7. Ordinances

a. Ord. No. 2025-012; Amend Ch. 18 & 50; Garbage

Schmelzer explained the ordinance corrects an oversight in the short-term rental regulations. The existing ordinance addressed garbage requirements for properties where owners were off-site but did not cover situations where owners have rental units on property that is the residence of the owner. She informed the Board the Plan Commission unanimously recommended approval. Kodanko expressed support but suggested the Board should also address situations where short-term rentals are not operated year-round, noting that owners should not be required to pay for weekly garbage service when their property is not being rented. Schmelzer noted this issue had been previously discussed by the Board, with the decision that service should be continuous due to complications with starting and stopping service.

Motion by Bhirdo, seconded by Harff, to adopt Ordinance No. 2025-012, amending Chapters 18 & 50 regarding garbage. Motion carried - all ayes.

8. Discussion/Action Items

a. Resolution 2025-022; Certified Survey Map; Nick & Mary Deviley; Orchard Drive

Schmelzer presented the resolution authorizing a three-lot certified survey map, noting that staff had provided a written report, the resolution, and the proposed certified survey map in the meeting packet. The property owner and surveyor were present.

Motion by Bhirdo, seconded by Champeau, to approve Resolution 2025-022 authorizing the certified survey map for Nick & Mary Deviley on Orchard Drive. Motion carried - all ayes.

b. Lease Agreement; Sister Bay Historical Society; Marina Boathouse

This item was removed from the agenda.

c. Operational Agreement; Sister Bay Historical Society; Waterfront Museum

This item was removed from the agenda.

d. Operational Agreement; Friends of the Ice Rink; Ice Rink

Schmelzer presented the operational agreement for the ice rink, which outlines how it will be operated and the obligations of both the Village and Friends of the Ice Rink. The Parks Committee had recommended approval. Ellie Soderberg-Guger, representing Friends of the Ice Rink, clarified that the group was not planning to begin construction until after the upcoming winter season, focusing on fundraising efforts first, and requested the agreement be revised so it became effective after construction begins rather than immediately. Champeau expressed concerns about the long-term financial commitment in the agreement noting that the $52,000 annual operational cost would total $1 million over 20 years, in addition to the $500,000 already committed to the project. She suggested the Friends of the Ice Rink should assume operational costs. Bhirdo countered that many Village amenities benefit different segments of the community, noting that the ice rink serves local residents during winter when other amenities primarily benefit tourists. She emphasized that the facility builds community and attracts young families. Ms. Soderberg-Guger noted that the $52,000 was consistent with current budget allocations for the ice rink. She also clarified that residents from other communities were assisting with fundraising efforts. Harff and White both expressed support for the ice rink, noting the community benefits, particularly for local children.

*Motion by Bhirdo, seconded by Howson, to approve the operational agreement with Friends of the Ice Rink with an amended effective date of April 1, 2026. Motion carried 6-1: aye-six (*Bell, Bhirdo, Harff, Howson, Kodanko, White), *nay -1 (Champeau).*

e. Operational Agreement; Sister Bay Advancement Association; Promotional Services & Events

Schmelzer presented the annual operating agreement with the Sister Bay Advancement Association (SBAA), noting it was recommended for approval by the Parks Committee. The only substantial changes from the previous agreement were updated dates and a revision regarding an event.

Motion by Bhirdo, seconded by Howson, to approve the operational agreement with the Sister Bay Advancement Association. Motion carried - all ayes.

f. Contract; Design Services; Marina Office

Schmelzer presented a contract for design services for the Marina office building in the amount of $9,500. The Marina Committee had recommended approval. Bhirdo noted the contract mentioned both remodeling and new construction options and stated it was her understanding the Marina Committee had decided against remodeling. White clarified that while the contract language included remodeling options, the Committee had indeed rejected remodeling in favor of a complete rebuild. Bhirdo also requested that funding for public restrooms at the marina be included in the Capital Improvement Plan. Schmelzer confirmed this would be discussed by the Parks Committee.

Motion by Bell, seconded by Kodanko, to approve the design contract for the Marina office in the amount of $9,500. Motion carried - all ayes.

g. Liquor License; ZaZa's Pizzeria & Deli; 10553 Country Walk Dr.

Schmelzer presented an application for a Class “A” Beer and Class “A” Liquor license for ZaZa's Pizzeria & Deli. She noted the application was received while the previous clerk was still employed, and a fire inspection had been requested but not yet completed. Bhirdo questioned the premises description in the application, which referred to "merchandise, including beer and wine sales in the front customer area." Schmelzer explained this referred to the customer area of the pizzeria where sales are registered, and, a description was required, but a map was optional. Howson said she thought the application was clear as to where sales would occur.

Motion by Howson, seconded by Kodanko, to approve the liquor license for ZaZa's Pizzeria & Deli at 10553 Country Walk Drive. Motion carried - all ayes.

h. Monthly Financial Report & Appropriations

The Board reviewed the monthly financial report, with several trustees asking for clarification on specific expenditures.

Motion by Bell, seconded by Champeau, to approve payment of bills in the amount of $813,741.90. Motion carried - all ayes.

9. Staff Reports

Schmelzer reported that the Triangle Road project was starting, and an open house was being planned for the Parks Maintenance facility. Discussion ensued regarding plans for the current Village Administration building and how it will be impacted by the Triangle road project. Schmelzer explained that at the previous Parks Committee meeting, the engineer was directed to design the project with safety as the primary consideration. The preliminary design had a plan where the current administration building would need to be removed to allow for fire trucks to make the turn from Bluffside Lane to Maple Drive. Kodanko and Bell expressed concerns about removing the building, with Bell suggesting the property be appraised before any decision is made to surrender it for an intersection improvement. Schmelzer noted that Robert E. Lee Engineering would present conceptual designs at the September Parks Committee meeting. Regarding the new Parks Maintenance building, Schmelzer stated that an open house would be scheduled before staff could move in, with potential dates of September 3, 10, or 11. Internet installation was also pending but trustees would be sent an invitation.

10. Committee Reports

The Board reviewed reports from various committees. Key points of discussion included:

- Fire Board: Mike Goldstone was appointed as the new Fire Chief, and the new fire engine is expected to be delivered in October.
- Marina Committee: Concerns were raised about a proposed 30-year lease with the Historical Society for the Marina Boathouse. Trustee Bhirdo noted she was unaware of the lease duration change from 10 to 30 years and opposed the extended timeframe without inflation adjustments. The Board discussed the need to determine the property's value and consider adjustments based on the Consumer Price Index or similar metrics. The matter will be returned to the Marina Committee for further discussion.
- Housing Committee: Schmelzer provided an update on the Ava Hope housing project, explaining that the Village owns property at the corner of Ava Hope and Northwoods Drive and had sought proposals for a housing development. The selected proposal includes three apartment buildings with 21-27 units, with some units marketed toward those earning 80% of the county median income. The project also includes development of a public park. The proposal has been reviewed by the Planning Commission and Housing Committee and will next go to the Parks Committee.
- SBAA: Ellie Soderberg-Guger reported they are working on safety features for Fall Fest.

Motion by Bell, seconded by Trustee Harff, to accept the committee reports. Motion carried - all ayes.

11. Matters to be Placed on a Future Agenda or Referred to a Committee, Official or Employee

-Schmelzer noted that next month the Board would need to establish the public hearing date for the budget and CIP.
-Bell recommended that Personnel Committee examine options for temporary outside assistance and mentoring for clerk functions.

12. Executive Session

Adjourn into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stats. §19.85(1)(g) to confer with legal counsel for the governmental body who is rendering oral or legal advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved; and to remain in closed session pursuant to Wis. Stats. §19.85(c) to consider employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility: Discussion of administrative compensation package benefits.

Motion by Bell, seconded by Bhirdo, to adjourn to closed session at 7:33 pm. Roll call vote: Bell – yes; Bhirdo – yes; Howson – yes; Harff – yes; Champeau – yes; Kodanko – yes; White – yes. Motion carried - all ayes. (White left the meeting after roll call was taken and did not participate in the closed session.)

13. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn in Executive Session by Bell and seconded by Kodanko at 8:38 pm. Motion carried - all ayes.

Meeting minutes by Sarah Bertges, Administrative Assistant