VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, October 21, 2025
(Approved as Ammended)

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

The October 21, 2025, meeting of the Sister Bay Village Board of Trustees was called to order by President Nate Bell at 6:00 P.M.

Present: President Bell and trustees Denise Bhirdo, Patrice Champeau, Kurt Harff, Louise Howson, Brigid White. Excused: Chad Kodanko
Staff: Julie Schmelzer- Village Administrator, Vlad Gannik -Financial Specialist/Village Treasurer, Adam Ruechel, R.W. Baird & Associates, Julie Thyssen- Village Clerk.
Zoom: Ellie Soderberg-Guger, Karen Berndt, Megan Barnes, Dave Lienau, Jill Gohdes Wiebe, Erik Linczmaier
Audience: Laurel Harff, Andrew Martzel, Cynthia Geocaris, Steven Scripp

2. Approve Agenda

Motion by Harff, second by White, to approve the agenda. Motion carried – all ayes.

3. Approve Meeting Minutes: September 16 & 18, 2025 & October 13, 2025

Corrections were noted to the September 16 minutes.
No corrections were noted for the September 18 or October 13 minutes.
Motion by Bell, second by Harff, to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried – all ayes.

4. Comments, Correspondence and Concerns from the Public

Attorney Andrew Martzel spoke on behalf of clients Cindy Geocaris and Steven Scripp regarding a conditional use permit. Bell stated he would call on them when that agenda item came up.

5. Presentation & Recommendation for Publication

a. 2026-2030 CIP & 2026 Budget; Finance Committee

Schmelzer introduced the Capital Improvement Plan and proposed budget that Ruechel and Gannik prepared with Finance Committee Chair Bhirdo. The purpose of this agenda item was to gather comments before publishing the information in the newspaper.
Ruechel provided a detailed explanation of the budget, noting:

- The village assessed value is approximately $826,124,200
- The proposed levy is about $3,400,000
- When accounting for TID increment, the total levy would be approximately $4,011,386, reduced from $4.2 million last year
- The estimated mill rate would be $4.86, which accounts for general fund, debt service, capital projects, and TIF

Board members discussed several aspects of the budget:

- Expressed concern that the Village Hall renovations were not prioritized in the CIP, while the Community Center warming house had funds allocated ($100,000)

- There was discussion about Village Hall funding being scheduled for 2027 at $150,000 for three years
- Various board members discussed the need to balance road infrastructure with other community needs
- Inquiry about how the broadband bond would be handled, with Ruechel explaining three potential options: finding another broadband provider, reallocating funds to the administration building (Finance Committee recommendation), or defeasance of the bond

Motion by Howson, second by White, to recommend the budget for publication. Motion carried – all ayes.

6. Resolutions

a. Res. No. 2025–025; Adopting the 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan

Motion by Howson, second by Bhirdo, to adopt Resolution No. 2025-025 approving the 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan.

Motion carried – all ayes.

b. Res. No. 2025-026; Adoption of the 2025-2029 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

Schmelzer explained that the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan had been developed by the Parks, Property and Streets Committee over three years. The plan is necessary for grant funding eligibility.

It was requested that the bicycle and pedestrian trails section match exactly what appears in the Comprehensive Master Plan on page 29, noting some wording differences that change the meaning.

Motion by Bell, second by Champeau, to adopt Resolution No. 2025-026 approving the Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan with the amendment that the bicycle and pedestrian trails section match exactly what is in the Comprehensive Master Plan. Motion carried – all ayes.

c. Res. No. 2025-027; Designating Public Depositories & Signers

Schmelzer explained that this annual resolution verifies which banks the village does business with and designates authorized signers.

Motion by Bell, second by White, to adopt Resolution No. 2025-027 designating public depositories and signers as presented.

Motion carried – all ayes.

7. Discussion/Action Items

a. Conditional Use Permit; Nonconforming Structures & Uses; GEOS SB; 10849 N Bay Shore Dr.

Schmelzer reported that the Plan Commission had recommended approval of the conditional use permit with several conditions, including deed restrictions prohibiting short-term rentals in both cottages, converting the cottage by the water to storage use only, allowing the road-side cottage as a dwelling, and prohibiting structural alterations to either cottage.

Attorney Andrew Martzel, representing property owners Dr. Geocaris and Mr. Scripp, objected to the conditions, stating his clients were not given an opportunity to respond at the Plan Commission meeting and had never agreed to the restrictions. Dr. Geocaris stated she had owned the property for 23 years, planned to rebuild the main house as a retirement home, and opposed restrictions limiting her use of the cottages.

Bhirdo, Plan Commission Chair, noted that no conditional use permit had ever been approved without conditions and suggested returning the matter to the Commission if the board disagreed.

Schmelzer explained the zoning intent to bring nonconforming structures into compliance when redevelopment occurs. White expressed concern over restricting property rights, and Bell noted his original Plan Commission motion had included only the short-term rental restriction before additional conditions were added.

Following discussion, the board voted to modify and approve the conditional use permit with the following conditions:

1. Deed restrictions prohibiting short-term rentals in both cottages.
2. The cottage near the road may remain a dwelling unit.
3. No replacement, extension, addition, or structural alteration to either cottage without a separate conditional use permit; routine maintenance permitted.

Motion by Howson, second by White to approve the conditional use permit with the above conditions.

Roll Call Vote: Howson – Yea; Harff – Yea; Champeau – No; Bell – Yea; Bhirdo – No; White – Yea.

Motion carried 4–2.

b. Lease Agreement; 2026 Orchard Agreement; Seaquist; Former Wiltse Property

Schmelzer explained this agreement allows Seaquist Orchard to maintain the orchards on village property. The agreement includes a provision that allows the village to terminate if development of the property is planned.

Motion by Howson, second by White, to approve the 2026 orchard agreement with Seaquist for the former Wiltse property. Motion carried – all ayes.

c. Letter of Intent; Housing Development; Tim Halbrook Builders; Ava Hope & Northwoods Dr.

Schmelzer presented a letter of intent for Tim Halbrook Builders to develop apartments on village property at the corner of Ava Hope and Northwoods Drive. The agreement would transfer the property at no cost provided the developer enters into a development agreement and the project is approved.

Howson raised concerns about the affordability of the proposed rents ($1,350-$1,650) and the limited number of one-bedroom units. Schmelzer noted these issues would be addressed in the development agreement and that the RFP had required 20% affordable housing units.

White asked about the scale of the project, which would include 27 units across three apartment buildings, and expressed concern about potential overpopulation with multiple housing developments occurring in the area.

Schmelzer mentioned that the RFP had sought single-family homes, townhouses, or apartment buildings, but the only response received was for apartment buildings due to cost considerations. She noted the developer would likely build the project in phases.

Motion by White, second by Howson, to approve the letter of intent between Tim Halbrook Builders and the village concerning the property at the northeast corner of the intersection of Ava Hope and Northwoods Drive. Motion carried – all ayes.

d. Conceptual Plan Approval; Marina Building

Schmelzer presented a conceptual plan for the marina building, explaining that the Marina Committee sought approval before investing in further design details.

White emphasized that the marina boaters would pay for the marina building through increased seasonal and transient slip rates, not taxpayers.

Discussion ensued about various renewable energy options.

Motion by Howson, second by Champeau, to approve the functional layout provided there's research done into renewable energy sources for the building. Motion carried – all ayes.

e. Contract; Marina Building Design Development; MDT

Motion by Howson, second by Bhirdo, to approve the contract for the Marina building design development with MDT in the amount of $20,000. Motion carried – all ayes.

f. Committee Appointments; Technology & Telecomm Committee

Motion by Bhirdo, second by Bell, to appoint Steve Sauter and Jim Matson to the Technology & Telecomm Committee. Motion carried – all ayes.

g. Monthly Financial Report & Appropriations

The board reviewed the monthly financial report.

Motion by Bell, second by Harff, to approve the financial report in the amount of $886,714.02. Motion carried – all ayes.

8. Staff Reports

Howson commended Erik and his team for their excellent work managing Fall Fest, keeping everything orderly and clean.

Schmelzer clarified that the bicycle path along Highway 42 was planned for the east side of the road. She also confirmed that the state had verified a municipal administration building with green space and election space would be eligible for the $2,000,000 local government grant.

9. Committee Reports

Finance Committee minutes referenced allocating $5,000 from the undesignated balance fund for legal consultation regarding deed restrictions and housing models. Bhirdo inquired about addressing this matter. Schmelzer advised this should be an agenda item for the next meeting since it involved spending unbudgeted funds.

Harff reported nothing to add from the Fire Board beyond what was in the packet.

Bhirdo congratulated the Historical Society on receiving $50,000 in funding. Schmelzer reported they were working on Christmas events and would have people from a movie coming to do fundraising and sign posters on December 15.

The Housing Committee did not have a quorum at their last meeting but had an informative discussion with Tom Landgraf, a UW professor and development consultant who offered to volunteer his time to help with financial models.

Bell had nothing to add regarding the Library Commission.

Howson reported that Parks would be meeting with Erik to identify locations for planting trees north of Village Hall. She also noted concern about erosion at Pebble Beach potentially affecting tree roots.

Motion by Bell, second by Howson, to accept the committee reports. Motion carried.

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

The Finance Committee's request for $5,000 from undesignated funds for legal consultation on housing matters will be placed on the next agenda.

11. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be the public hearing for the budget at 5:30 PM on Monday, November 17, 2025.

12. Adjourn

Motion by Howson, second by Bell, to adjourn. Motion carried – all ayes.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Thyssen
Village Clerk