VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, November 18, 2025
(Approved as amended)

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

The regular Board Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, by President Bell.

Present: President Nate Bell, Trustees Brigid White, Chad Kodanko, Denise Bhirdo, Kurt Harff, Louise Howson, Patrice Champeau.

Staff: Village Administrator Julie Schmelzer, Treasurer Vlad Gannik, Utilities Director Megan Barnes, Parks & Streets Director Erik Linczmaier, Marina Manager Dave Lineau and Village Clerk Julie Thyssen
Others: Laurel Harff, Ken Church, Rick Dahlstrom, Mary Smythe, Ellie Soderberg-Guger, S. Gullick
Zoom participants: Sarah Johnson, Don Knapp, iPhone, Jill Wiebe, Karen Berndt , Sara Anderson, Tyler Duvall, 19206349297, Adam White

2. Approve Agenda

Motion by Kodanko, second by White, to approve the agenda. Motion carries – all ayes.

3. Approve Meeting Minutes: October 21 & November 6, 2025

Bhirdo noted several corrections needed to the October 21, 2025, minutes:

- Page 1, Line 22: Corrections to September 16 minutes can they be identified in full in future minutes
- Page 4, Line 4: Corrected spelling of "Steve Sauder" to "S-A-U-T-E-R"
- Page 4, Line 8: Corrected "seconded by Hearth" to "seconded by Harff"
- Page 4, Line 21: Noted that an agenda item regarding spending unbudgeted funds had not yet been addressed and requested it be placed on next month's agenda

Motion by White, second by Bhirdo, to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carries – all ayes.

4. Comments, Correspondence and Concerns from the Public

Rachel Stollenwerk thanked the Board for its March 2024 resolution supporting the Peninsula Aquatic Center’s WEDC grant application. She reported the project was awarded a $250,000 grant in September and announced the new facility will open in January.

Mary Smythe shared her experience from the Mountain View School Board in Minnesota. She emphasized the value of professional expertise and training for effective board operations.

Schmelzer noted that the packet included three correspondence items: a letter from the attorney and emails from Russ Carpenter and Ellen Goodrich regarding Bertram and broadband issues. President Bell informed trustees they should have received an email from the attorney providing advice.

5. Ordinances & Resolutions

a. Ord. 2025-013; Ch. 66; Text Amendments; P-1, CS-1, Signs, Definitions

Schmelzer presented the text amendments that were forwarded from the Planning Commission. She explained these changes addressed some gray areas and inconsistencies in the zoning ordinance. The amendments specifically addressed the park district, countryside zoning district, and sign regulations.

White expressed appreciation for adding "public marina" back to the accepted uses, noting this would allow modifications to the marina building.

Motion by White, second by Bhirdo, to approve Ordinance 2025-013. Motion carried – all ayes.

6. Discussion/Action Items

a. Development Agreement; Accessory Use to Existing Business; Northern Haus; 10388 Fieldcrest Rd.

Schmelzer presented a development agreement for Northern Haus, which purchased a neighboring unfinished home to use as an accessory space for wedding events. The Planning Commission reviewed the proposal and recommended approval.

Motion by Bell, second by Bhirdo, to approve the development agreement for Northern Haus. Motion carried – all ayes.

b. Development Agreement Amendment; Mobile Food Court; RaeAnne LLC; 10563 Country Walk Dr.

Schmelzer presented an amendment to extend the deadline for completion of a mobile food vendor court by Mike Tomasian of RaeAnne LLC.

Bhirdo explained that the applicant had requested a two-year extension, but the Planning Commission compromised on a one-year extension that could be renewed if substantial progress was shown.

Motion by Kodanko, second by White, to approve the amended development agreement for the mobile food court. Motion carried – all ayes.

c. Development Agreement Amendment; Basement Revision; Preserving Foundations; 2387 Ava Hope Ct.

Schmelzer reported that Preserving Foundations constructed a 4-plex with an exposed basement and two small additions not included in the original development agreement. The Planning Commission recommended approving an amendment to reflect these changes.

Bhirdo noted that the Planning Commission felt they had "no choice" as the work was already completed.

Motion by Kodanko, second by White, to approve the development agreement amendment. Motion carried – all ayes.

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

Bhirdo requested the Board reconsider removing a condition from the previously approved GEOS SB conditional use permit, stating she believed the Board had been misled and wished to provide transcripts. She clarified she was not seeking to rescind the permit, only to revisit the condition regarding converting the cottage near the water into a boathouse/accessory structure. Several trustees opposed reconsideration, citing no new information, support for accessory units, long-standing use of the cottages, and misassociation with the request.

With no motion made, the Board moved on to the next item.

e. Contracts; Commercial Vendors; Marina

Schmelzer presented commercial marina vendor contracts and reported the Marina Committee's recommendation to extend them for two years through 2027. She noted one vendor would be charged a higher rate due to their boat extending past the dock.

Motion by Howson, second by Kodanko, to approve the commercial vendor contracts for the marina through 2027. Motion carried – all ayes.

f. Contract; Engineering Services; New Marina Building

Marina Manager Lienau presented two engineering contracts:

- $9,500 for structural studies related to the sewer outfall pipe located under the office building.
- $14,300 for the next phase of engineering to produce construction documents.

White, on behalf of the Marina Committee, recommended approval, noting the contracts provide necessary mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and structural engineering services.

Motion by Kodanko, second by Harff, to approve both engineering contracts. Motion carries – all ayes.

g. Boardwalk Wood Purchase; Marina

Marina Manager Lienau reported that October bids for a steel-and-concrete boardwalk replacement came in much higher ($380,000–$480,000) than April's $229,000 estimate. After review, the Marina Committee recommended using IPE, a dense, fire-resistant Brazilian hardwood with an estimated 80-year lifespan and low maintenance.

IPE must be ordered soon due to seasonal harvesting and shipping. Four material proposals were received, averaging $95,000–$100,000 for the 22' × 165' boardwalk. The project is fully funded by marina user fees (not taxpayers), is budgeted for 2025, and the village will act as general contractor using local installers familiar with the material.

Motion by Harff, second by White, to approve the purchase of IPE wood for the marina boardwalk at a cost not to exceed $110,000. Motion carries – all ayes.

Before leaving this item, Lienau noted that the marina fee schedule in the packet was for 2025, not 2026, and would need to be addressed at the next meeting.

h. Contract; Update Zoning Map; BayLake Regional Planning Commission

Schmelzer noted that state law requires updating the zoning map within a year of adopting the land use plan. She recommended contracting with Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission to complete the update, as the village lacks GIS tools and staff capacity. Bell said he had hoped for a fee schedule in the contract but acknowledged this is not typical for intergovernmental agreements with Bay-Lake.

Motion by Bhirdo, second by White, to approve the contract with Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission for updating the zoning map. Motion carries – all ayes.

i. Intergovernmental Agreement; Street Services; Door County Highway Department

Schmelzer presented the standard biennial agreement with the Door County Highway Department for road services such as snow plowing and street sweeping, noting the "town" language reflects their typical agreements. Howson added that service costs remain unchanged unless the Highway Department advises of increases.

Motion by Howson, second by White, to approve the intergovernmental agreement with Door County Highway Department. Motion carries – all ayes.

j. Ice Rink; Releasing Match Funds
Schmelzer explained that the village had previously committed $500,000 toward the construction of a new ice rink contingent on the Friends of the Sister Bay Ice Rink, Inc. obtaining matching funds. She reported that they now have those matching funds and have signed the lease and operating agreements that will take effect in April. The question before the Board was whether to release the funds now or wait until April when the agreements take effect.

After brief discussion, the Board agreed to release the funds immediately to allow progress on the project.

Motion by Howson, second by Bell, to release the $500,000 in matching funds for the ice rink. Motion carries 5-1. Champeau opposed.

k. ByLaws; Misc. Amendments
Bhirdo submitted several bylaw amendments. Kodanko raised process concerns, saying extensive changes drafted by one member with the administrator lacked transparency and should instead be discussed collectively.

The Board then focused on whether trustees may join closed sessions via Zoom. Bell cited confidentiality concerns based on past leaks. Options discussed included prohibiting remote participation or requiring an affidavit of confidentiality. After discussion, the Board's consensus was to prohibit remote participation in closed sessions for now, with possible future research on affidavit options.

Motion by Kodanko, second by Howson, to table the bylaws discussion until February 2026. Motion carries 5-1. Bhirdo opposed.

l. 2026 Fee Schedule
Schmelzer presented the proposed fee schedule changes that had been recommended by various committees:

1. Increase regular sign permit fees from $100 to $200
2. Set changeable script sandwich board signs at $50 and non-changeable script sandwich boards at $100
3. Set Marina Park rental fees at $2,500 in peak season (July-August) and $2,000 in off-season
4. Maintain current Village Hall rental rate of $200 per day, with further discussion at Parks Committee regarding potential resident and off-season rates

The Board discussed Village Hall rental fees and whether off-season or resident rates are needed, and referred the issue to the Parks Committee for review in December.

Kodanko questioned whether certain permit fees—such as $2,000 for siding and window replacements—are too high. Schmelzer noted the Planning Commission is working to streamline related processes.

The Board approved the current committee-recommended fee changes, with Parks Committee to further review Village Hall rental fees before December.

m. Final Cost Review; New Parks Building

Schmelzer reported that the new Parks Building was completed just under its $4 million budget, with about $36,000 remaining. A major unplanned cost was installing a new sewer lateral serving the park, concession stand, and TKH building.

In response to questions, Bhirdo confirmed the project stayed close to the original bid after removing some optional features. Schmelzer and Bhirdo added that commercial buildings with large doors and specialized needs are far more expensive than residential construction, and the design includes space for future growth.

n. Monthly Financial Report & Appropriations
The Board reviewed the monthly financial reports. Questions were raised about several purchases:
- A cappuccino/hot chocolate machine for the ice rink warming house
- A new Brother copier for the Marina ($941)
- Ice heaters for the Marina ($2,500)

Motion by Bell to approve payment of bills in the amount of $326,042.79. Motion carries – all ayes.

7. Staff Reports
The Board reviewed the staff reports with no significant discussion.

8. Committee Reports
During Parks Committee report discussion, Kodanko expressed concern about potential plans to tear down the Administration Building, which is located in a historical district. He suggested the full Board should consider this decision before further engineering work proceeds. The Board agreed to add this to a future agenda for consideration.

Bell indicated he would skip detailed Personnel Committee discussion as this would be addressed in closed session.

The Board reviewed other committee reports with minimal discussion.

9. Matters to be Placed on a Future Agenda or Referred to a Committee, Official or Employee
Items identified for future agendas included:
- Administration Building proposal from Parks Committee
- Village Hall rental rates for residents/off-season

10. Next Meeting
The next meeting was scheduled for December 16, 2025.

11. Executive Session
Motion by Bell, second by (not specified) to adjourn to 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, specifically regarding the Bertram Communications Contract.

Roll call: Bell – aye, White – aye, Kodanko – aye, Bhirdo – aye, Harff – aye, Howson – aye. Motion carried.

12. Adjourn
Motion Kodanko, seconded by Champeau to adjourn in closed session at 8:31 p.m. Motion carries – all ayes.

Meeting minutes by Julie Thyssen, Village Clerk