PARKS, PROPERTY & STREETS COMMITTEE MINUTES
MONDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2025
(Approved)

1. Call to Order & Roll Call
December 1, 2025, meeting of the Parks, Property & Streets Committee was called to order by Committee Chair Howson at 1:00 P.M.

Committee Members Present: Committee Chair Louise Howson and members Jerry Ahrens, Denise Bhirdo, Nate Bell, and Mike Laszkiewicz

Staff Members Present: Village Administrator Julie Schmelzer, Parks & Streets Director Erik Linczmaier, and Administrative Assistant Sarah Bertges

Public Present: Ellie Soderberg-Guger, Erin Peddle, Via Zoom: VNienow, Ben Andrews.

2. Approve Agenda
Motion by Bell , second by Bhirdo, to approve the agenda. Motion carried – all ayes.

3. Approve Minutes: November 3, 2025, Regular Meeting
Several corrections to the minutes:
- Page 3, line 12: change first word to "by consensus"
- Page 4, line 7: change "Nelson offered to ask the historical society's curator" to "John Nelson of the historical society"
- Page 4, line 14: regarding goose hunting on the Logerquist property, the committee had decided "no" rather than to verify the ordinance
- Page 4, line 47: specify that the sign being installed is the "historical sign"
- Page 5: questioned whether a letter had been sent to Sharon regarding the flowerpot angels report

Schmelzer confirmed no letter had been sent to Sharon yet. Bhirdo reported that Sharon had indicated she would have strongly opposed the committee's decision, as she feels maintaining the flowerpots is different from occasional volunteer work because it supplements department staff for a daily, ongoing task.
The committee agreed to invite Sharon to join the next meeting via Zoom to discuss the matter.
Motion to approve the minutes from November 3, 2025, as amended, by Bhirdo, second by Ahrens. Motion carried – all ayes.

4. Comments, Correspondence, and Concerns from the Public
No comments were received from the public.

5. Presentation
a) GIS Demonstration; Megan Barnes, Utility Director
Schmelzer introduced Megan Barnes, who has been developing the Village's GIS system. She explained that Barnes has been working on this project largely on her own time and has been adding parks-related data to the system, including bench locations and information.
Barnes demonstrated how the system works, showing the municipal boundary, parcel information, property documents repository, and various specialty layers including:
- Road and right-of-way information
- Traffic signs with visual representations
- Street poles with maintenance data

- Pavement condition ratings with color coding
- Memorial bench locations with dedication information and photos
- Memorial tree locations

The committee discussed the potential for expanding this work, with Laszkiewicz noting the importance of prioritizing what gets added to the system and determining resource needs. Barnes indicated she was willing to continue supporting the effort but acknowledged that larger projects might require external support.

Bell raised concerns about ensuring the work doesn't become a burden on Barnes' regular duties as Utility Director. Schmelzer noted that Stantec could help maintain the data under their existing service agreement.

The committee expressed appreciation for Barnes' initiative and the value of the GIS system for managing village assets.

6. Discussion/Action Items

a) Bench Policy; Fee; Consider Additional Locations

The committee reviewed the current memorial bench policy, noting that:

- A moratorium exists on new applications until the policy is updated
- Two outstanding bench requests are pending
- Current benches are displayed on the new GIS map

The committee discussed the need to update pricing to cover actual costs.

The committee debated whether to maintain the existing approach of evaluating applicants based on their significance to Sister Bay history, or to create a tiered system where prime waterfront locations would require meeting historical significance criteria while other locations could be made available with less stringent requirements.

Bhirdo emphasized that the original intent of the policy was to "tell the story of Sister Bay" through the benches, and maintained that the committee has not previously found it difficult to determine which applications should be approved.

The committee agreed to request that Linczmaier research current bench costs and options, including different frame styles and materials, before finalizing any policy changes. The committee also discussed the potential for additional bench locations along the future Highway 57 Trail.

The committee agreed by consensus to review this matter at the next meeting once cost information is available.

b) Fire Station Rental Policy; Fees

The committee discussed the current fire station rental policy and fees. Currently, the deposit is $500, with usage fees of $25 for the small room and $50 for the large room.

The committee discussed whether security deposits should be different based on the type or size of event. Schmelzer suggested maintaining the current fees until more information could be gathered about neighboring municipalities' practices and a more thorough analysis could be conducted.

The committee agreed by consensus to leave the current fees unchanged and revisit the issue at a future meeting after researching other municipalities' policies and exploring the application of a usage-based fee structure.

c) Facility Rental Fees; Consider Reduced Rate for Residents

Schmelzer explained that this item originated from a board discussion where a trustee questioned why residents didn't receive discounted rates for village facility rentals.

Bhirdo provided historical context, noting that Sister Bay previously had resident discounts but eliminated them because:

- The village couldn't break even on rentals with discounted rates
- The policy was frequently manipulated with residents making reservations for non-residents
- Taxpayers shouldn't subsidize private events through taxes

It was suggested that an off-season rate from October through April might make sense, even if it costs slightly more to heat facilities, as it would encourage community gathering.
By consensus, the committee agreed to maintain current fees while researching rates at neighboring municipalities (Ephraim, Baileys Harbor, and others) and analyzing whether the current fees appropriately cover the village's costs.

d) Pickleball Policy
Schmelzer presented information showing that a small number of groups were effectively monopolizing the pickleball courts during prime morning hours. The current system allows individuals to reserve courts, but the committee observed that what appeared to be the same people were booking under different names to secure consecutive time slots.
The committee discussed concerns about administrative burden for staff managing reservations and public accessibility issues.
By consensus, the committee agreed to implement a "first come, first served" policy for the pickleball courts, with only official clubs being permitted to make reservations, which would need to be approved by the committee. The committee would also develop new signage explaining court usage rules.

e) Mill Road Site; Review Soil Report
The committee reviewed a soil report for the Mill Road site that was commissioned to determine its suitability for development. The report indicated no extraordinary concerns that would prevent building on the site, though it noted some areas might require additional excavation and fill.
Bhirdo noted that while the report didn't identify major issues, it contained numerous disclaimers and was conducted during a relatively dry period, which might not reveal potential water issues.
Schmelzer mentioned that when the Parks building was constructed, excavation had to go quite deep to reach virgin soil due to extensive fill on that site.
By consensus, the committee agreed to forward the report to the Village Board without a specific recommendation, allowing the Board to make a final determination on the site selection.

f) Binocular Proposal; Reduced Price
The committee received information about a reduced price offer for installing binoculars at a village park. The committee had previously decided against this purchase and maintained that position despite the price reduction.
By consensus, the committee declined the binocular purchase offer.

g) Cold Storage Building; Next Steps
Linczmaier updated the committee on his efforts to get estimates from TK for repairs to the cold storage building. He reported that TK is still working on putting together quotes for:

- Residing the building (with options for different materials)
- Replacing the roof
- Adding a lean-to for the shuttle bus

Linczmaier noted that the current t-11 siding would need replacement, with options including another similar product with a 10-year lifespan or a newer product with a 25-year lifespan. The roof has some water damage that would require sheeting replacement.
The committee discussed budget constraints, noting that only about $36,000 remained from previous project funds. They agreed to wait for the detailed estimates before making decisions on how to proceed.
By consensus, the committee agreed to wait for TK's estimates and revisit the matter at a future meeting.

h) Grutzmacher Little Library Design

The committee reviewed options for a Little Free Library to honor Marge Grutzmacher. Bhirdo and Howson had researched various models.

The committee discussed size requirements to accommodate children's books, durability concerns in Wisconsin weather, and aesthetic considerations.

Bhirdo volunteered to share the options with Marge to get her input. The committee also agreed to purchase the commemorative plaque for an additional $75.

By consensus, the committee agreed to purchase a Little Library with Bhirdo coordinating design selection and painting.

7. Staff Report, Board Update

The committee briefly reviewed Linczmaier's written report.

Bhirdo expressed concern about the Village Board halting work on the administration building and Triangle Road projects. She questioned how to improve alignment between committee recommendations and board decisions, noting that the disconnect was leading to delays and wasted resources.

Laszkiewicz observed that the committee's role was to make recommendations based on their best judgment, while the board would ultimately make decisions, sometimes influenced by community feedback.

Bell suggested that developing a village-wide strategic plan would help create clearer direction for committees and reduce misalignment.

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

Items to be placed on future agendas included:

- Bench policy and pricing update
- Cold storage building next steps
- Fire station rental fees (for a future meeting)
- Facility rental fees research

9. Next Meeting: Regular Meeting January 5, 2026, at 1:00 PM

The committee discussed the next meeting date, noting that January 5, 2026, would be the new administrator's first day. By consensus, the committee agreed to cancel the January meeting and next meet on February 2, 2026.

10. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn made by Laszkiewicz, second by Ahrens. Meeting adjourned at 3:44 P.M. Motion carried – all ayes.

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Bertges, Administrative Assistant