

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 23, 2026, 1:00 PM

Approved

1. Call to Order

Chair Bhirdo called the Finance Committee meeting to order on Monday, February 23, 2026 at 2:00 PM.

Present: Chairperson Denise Bhirdo, and members Louise Howson, Brigid White, Mike Laszkiewicz and Andy Woerfel

Staff: Administrator Benjamin Andrews, Financial Specialist/Treasurer Vlad Gannik, Utilities Director Megan Barnes, Village Clerk Julie Thyssen

Other: Nick and Mary Deviley

2. Roll Call

Committee members present: Bhirdo, White, Laszkiewicz, Howson, and Woerfel.

3. Approve Agenda

Motion by Laszkiewicz, second by Howson to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried - all ayes.

4. Approve Meeting Minutes

a. February 9, 2026 – Regular Meeting

Bhirdo requested amendments to the minutes including striking a line about committee agreement on future budget documentation and clarifying the TID incentive request section to note that Deviley provided documentation confirming properties within TID 2 after initially being told he was not in the TID.

Motion by Howson, second by Laszkiewicz to approve the February 9, 2026 meeting minutes as amended. Motion carried - all ayes.

5. Comments, Correspondence, and Concerns from the Public

No public comments were made.

6. Discussion/Action Items

a. 2026 Budget; Review Allocation for SAIL

Andrews provided research on municipal donations to SAIL (Senior Advocacy for Independent Living). The findings showed that Sister Bay and Liberty Grove are the only municipalities within the county that contribute to SAIL, with both allocating \$10,000 for 2026. Some communities like Gibraltar have no donation policies, while Ephraim has a partial donation policy. SAIL's service area includes Bailey's Harbor, Ephraim, Liberty Grove, and Sister Bay.

Andrews explained that SAIL charges \$150 for nine visits over a period of time, with other donations potentially covering costs for those unable to afford the fee. Laszkiewicz inquired about the funding structure and whether Sister Bay's contribution would provide priority access for village residents. Andrews clarified this would be a general sustaining donation, not service-specific.

The committee took no action on this item.

b. Hwy-57 Trail-Utilities Infrastructure Discussion

Andrews presented the Highway 57 multi-use trail utility extension project, explaining that while initially planned for spring 2026, the trail project will likely be delayed. This presents an opportunity to extend utilities along the corridor before trail construction to avoid future disruption and relocation costs.

The utility extension was partially budgeted with \$650,000 allocated (\$400,000 for collection and \$250,000 for water distribution). The total project cost estimate from Robert E. Lee Engineers is \$921,600, not including the lift station, which could cost between \$1,000,000 and \$2,500,000 depending on design requirements.

Utilities Director Barnes joined remotely and confirmed she is working with engineers on lift station design. She explained that gravity service can reach approximately 400 feet south of Eagle Mechanical, but anything beyond requires the lift station.

Laszkiewicz expressed concern about approving an unbudgeted expense representing a significant budget variance two months into the fiscal year. He questioned the project's merit without a comprehensive process including public hearings and clear cost understanding.

Property owner Nick Deviley addressed the committee, explaining he initiated discussions with Barnes about bringing laterals to his properties. He expressed concern about potential special assessment costs, estimating \$750,000 over his quarter-mile frontage, which would result in \$75,000 annually over ten years plus taxes. Deviley indicated this would not be financially feasible and he might pursue private installation instead.

White raised questions about special assessment methodology, asking whether costs would be divided by total project linear footage or calculated per section. Barnes explained that assessments typically consider which properties benefit from specific infrastructure, with lift station costs allocated only to properties requiring that service.

Committee members White and Woerfel noted they own properties along the proposed route and would abstain from voting due to potential conflicts of interest.

Discussion revealed that properties requiring lift station service would bear both main line and lift station assessment costs, while properties served by gravity would only pay for main line infrastructure. This could result in significantly higher costs for properties south of Eagle Mechanical.

Woerfel suggested considering TID financing since most affected properties are within TID 1 and TID 2, noting that such infrastructure investments align with TID purposes and could generate increased property values and tax increment.

Laszkiewicz identified three concerns: lack of established special assessment methodology, unknown total project costs significantly exceeding the \$650,000 budgeted amount, and the need for a robust public process including stakeholder input.

Action Items:

- Staff will work with consultants to finalize engineering and develop financing alternatives
- Andrews and Barnes will collaborate on developing special assessment calculations and TID financing options
- Information will be brought back to Finance Committee for further review

1 **7. Matters to be Placed on a Future Agenda or Referred to a Committee, Official or Employee**

2 -TIF Incentive Policy

3 -Utility Extension

4 -Fiber optic bond discussion was added to future agenda items per board direction.

5 -A TID 101 presentation by Baird was discussed for scheduling after April 20, 2026 to accommodate the
6 new board composition.

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8 **8. Next Meeting**

9 **a. Monday, March 9, 2026 at 2:00 PM**

10 The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 9, 2026 at 2:00 PM

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12 **9. Adjourn**

13 *Motion by Laszkiewicz, second by White to adjourn at 3:19 PM. Motion carried - all ayes.*

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15 Minutes by Julie Thyssen, Village Clerk