



Village of Lawrence  
157 N. Paw Paw St.  
Lawrence, MI 49064  
PH: 269-674-8161 Fax: 269-674-3004  
[www.lawrencemi.org](http://www.lawrencemi.org)



**Village of Lawrence Regular Common Council Meeting**  
**157 N. Paw Paw St., Lawrence, MI 49064**  
**February 10, 2026**

**Call to Order:** The Regular Common Council Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Led by President Gritter

**Roll Call:**

- **Present:** John Gritter, President; Alicia Lorenzo, Trustee; Annette Crandall, Trustee; Phil Glennie, Trustee; Chuck Rowlee, Trustee
- **Absent:** David Deloach, Trustee
- **Also Present:** Brian Johnson, DPW Supervisor; Amy Cordes, Village Manager; Kim Thompson (via Teams), Finance Manager/Treasurer; Donna Spenner, Township Supervisor; Matthew Sanborn, Lawrence Township; Bill Featherstone, LTES; Ryan Williamson, LPS Superintendent; Rich Glista, Cannabis Administrator

**Additions to Agenda:**

- None

**Conflicts of Interest:**

- None

**Approval of Agenda Month:**

Motion by Crandall, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lorenzo  
All Aye. Motions Carried.

**Approval of Budget Workshop Minutes Month Prior:**

Motion by Crandall, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Glennie  
All Aye. Motions Carried.

**Approval of Prior Council Minutes Month Prior:**

Motion by Lorenzo, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Rowlee  
All Aye. Motions Carried.

**Finance Manager Report-Kim Thompson:**

- **Audit and Reconciliation:** The 2023-2024 bank reconciliations are processing faster than anticipated. Bank reconciliations for 2023/2024 have begun. All February FYE23 bank reconciliations were duplicated in the FYE25 database (to be used for both FYE24 and FYE25 audits) to ensure the beginning balances for FYE24 are accurate. I am 1/12 done with the FYE24



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bank reconciliations. It's going very quickly, so far. The files for FYE23 were sent to the auditor and they are actively working on the audit. Their anticipated completion is by month end February 2026.

- Budget Discussion and Approval: The Budget Workshop was scheduled for January 31, 2026, from 9am until noon. We went over the time allotted by an hour and a half and were able to get ALL funds reviewed. A huge THANK YOU for your time Saturday. After the workshop, a few corrections were identified as well as a few items changed for the Police Fund and funds that should have included split salaries based on the 2026/27 Wages Report. After discussion with Chief Cordes, the Special Permit fund was revised to transfer \$280,000 to the Police Fund instead of the \$210,000 discussed on Saturday. A revised budget was emailed to the Council. The summary of the budget was distributed. Budget amendments are needed this month to correct the GL account numbers used for various transactions and to recognize additional expenses over what was budgeted, based on information provided at the 2026/27 Budget Workshop. A police car needs replacement, so the transfer from the Special Permit Fund to the Police Fund was increased from \$210,000 to \$280,000 to cover the cost. A long-term plan for future vehicle replacements is in place. Wage updates were incorporated into the adjusted budget, and all funds are in positive numbers.

Motion to approve budget amendments for current fiscal year as presented by Crandall, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Glennie.

Rollcall:

Aye: Glennie, Gritter, Crandall, Rowlee, Lorenzo

Nay: None

Absent: Deloach

All Aye. Motions Carried.

Motion to approve proposed budget as amended by Lorenzo, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Crandall.

Rollcall:

Aye: Rowlee, Gritter, Glennie, Lorenzo, Crandall

Nay: None

Absent: Deloach

All Aye. Motions Carried.

- Treasurer Duties: Tax payments are still trickling in. As of January 6, 2026, 81% of tax payments have been received. Expect that that will go up to 85-86% by the end of February. All property taxes were due September 15. Delinquent taxes can be paid to the Village through 2/28/2026. Thompson modified the issues list as the last fiscal year took longer because of system issues and limitations. So far, she has been able to identify workarounds and provide all of the necessary information needed for the auditor but the dates for completion have been pushed back. The end of April or May is now the target to have 24/25 completed. Fiscal year 26 should be done within the six months after the end of the fiscal year.



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- Financial Statements: Financial statements, including budget performance and bank balances, were distributed with any changes in earnings percentages highlighted in yellow for comparison to the previous month. The current grand total for all funds is \$2.3 million, which is favorable compared to the anticipated ending balance for February, which was projected to be \$2.1 million. The current higher balance is logical as it includes recent tax revenue; after accounting for upcoming February expenses, the fund balance is expected to align with the \$2.1 million projection, indicating the budget is in good shape.
- The water tower painting loan will be reflected in February's statements. The target to complete the 2024-2025 financial work is now late April or May.

**Approval of Bills & Review of Bank Balances Month Prior:**

Amy Cordes presented an addition to the bills for Kim's expense report related to travel for the budget meeting. The expenses consisted of a \$249 flight and \$51.36 for airport parking, totaling \$300.36.

Motion by Crandall, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lorenzo to approve addition of Kim's Expense Report of \$300.36 for Budget Workshop.

Rollcall:

Aye: Gritter, Glennie, Lorenzo, Crandall, Rowlee

Nay: None

Absent: Deloach

All Aye. Motions Carried.

Amy Cordes requested adding \$2,500 to the water bill postage fund due to rising postal rates. This amount is intended to cover the fiscal year at approximately \$200 per month. The current postage account for February is covered, but funds are needed for March. To ensure water bills can be sent out on the same day as the next Council meeting, the Council needs to pre-approve the expenditure on the next fiscal year's budget. The check for this expenditure will be written and sent after March 1st, once the new fiscal year's budget is active.

Motion by Lorenzo, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Glennie to approve addition of water postage in the amount of \$2,500 to be paid after March 1, 2026.

Rollcall:

Aye: Rowlee, Lorenzo, Crandall, Gritter, Glennie

Nay: None

Absent: Deloach

Motion by Crandall, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lorenzo to approve outstanding bills and reviewed bank balances.

Rollcall:

Aye: Gritter, Crandall, Rowlee, Glennie, Lorenzo

Nay: None



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Absent: Deloach

### Presentations & Guests:

#### Lawrence Township: Donna Spenner

- The posting for the Board of Review, which includes all relevant dates, has been distributed.
- Budget dates are set for February 28th and March 7th. Kim Thompson (Donna) confirmed she will attend the budget meeting via Zoom with Rich.
- An update was provided on the relationship and ongoing negotiations with the District Library Board. The library board did not meet last month due to inclement weather. The next meeting is scheduled for February 24th at 4:30 PM, which Gritter plans to attend. The Friends of the Library held a successful meeting on Saturday at 10:00 AM, where members asked many questions to get factual information, countering "rhetoric that was put on Facebook." The Friends of the Library reportedly have many questions for the District Library Board for the upcoming meeting. The township board's position was reiterated: they have no plan to push the library out of the building. The primary goal is to update the building's heating system, but the library must contribute to the cost, as it cannot be funded solely by taxpayers. It is believed the Van Buren District Library Board now understands this financial necessity, and a new contract is anticipated, leading to a positive resolution.

#### Lawrence Township Emergency Services: Bill Featherstone

- The department responded to 50 calls in January (5 fire and 8 medical in the Village), a busy month due to significant snowfall.
- A notable response involved a ~~barn~~ fire on 681, assisting the Hartford Fire Department. The driveway to the structure, located about 300 feet from the road, had not been plowed all winter. The new plow on truck 1780 was used to clear the driveway, allowing other fire trucks to access the fire. Without the plow, they would have had to pull hand lines a long distance, and the building might have burned to the ground. The cause of the fire was an attempt to thaw frozen pipes with a space heater after applying flammable spray foam insulation, which caused an explosion.
- The department has also begun distributing new address signs.
- The fire department is in negotiations with Arlington Township to expand its service coverage area. Arlington Township has proposed that the department cover an additional six square miles for both fire and medical calls. The expanded territory would extend up to M-43 between 52nd and 46th in Arlington Township. The department has been conducting time studies and found that response time to the furthest point in the proposed new area is approximately 9 minutes and 15 seconds. The current contract with Arlington Township, which covers 11 sections, expires at the end of March. The negotiation involves renewing this contract, adding the new territory, and determining the new cost. There is a possibility of the department utilizing a brand-new pole barn, originally built for Bangor's use, located next to the Arlington Township hall. Housing a truck there could improve service times.

barndominium



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- The department continues to do regular truck maintenance.

#### **Lawrence Public Schools Superintendent: Ryan Williamson**

- Enrollment is holding steady at over 400 students, an increase of 15 from the previous year. This is the first time in at least 11 years that enrollment has not declined.
- ~~The fund balance, which was \$1.7M in July 2024, is now projected to be \$11.9M.~~ *New projected fund balance is 11.970.*
- The principal completed a student and staff climate survey, with key takeaways being that students feel safe and staff feel supported.
- An update on school athletics programs, including a potential football co-op and the addition of varsity soccer, was provided. After parent forums, coaches' meetings, and student-athlete meetings, the school is continuing to explore a football co-op with Bangor. A key goal is to establish a JV football team, but neither school has sufficient numbers to support one independently. The athletic directors will present a plan to the superintendents next Monday covering coaching staff, game/practice locations, transportation, team name, jerseys, and verified participation numbers. The football co-op would begin as an 8-man team with the goal of transitioning to 11-man. An 8-man team is necessary initially to ensure both varsity and JV levels can be fielded. The long-term goal is to move to 11-man football, which would allow the team to participate in the state tournament. Football co-ops are a growing trend, with 26 currently in existence, including nearby examples like New Buffalo/River Valley and Kalamazoo United. They will be able to offer Varsity soccer next year.
- The Governor signed a bill requiring schools to have a cell phone policy in place for instructional time by the 2026-27 school year. This law is seen as providing support and "teeth" for schools to enforce such policies, which can be difficult to implement consistently among all staff. While some apps are useful in classes, the mandate is expected to strengthen enforcement. A "shoe holder" system, where students place their phones upon entering a classroom, is a method currently being used successfully by some teachers.
- Updates on school programs and grants include:
  - The before and after school care program, which started on January 9th, had a rocky start due to 7 snow days but has now served 22 different students. The program is fully funded by a grant.
  - The school applied for the 99H robotics grant yesterday to support its new junior high and senior high robotics teams. The school was also awarded the Robotics FIRST grant.
  - A 31AA grant was awarded in the February state aid payment, which must be spent directly on safety and security. The grant funds will be used to update the camera system, cover blind spots, and add cameras to the athletic facilities which currently have none.
- A "no mill increase" bond initiative for May 2027 is in development to address facility needs and create new programming space. A needs assessment identified necessary plumbing and electrical updates for the elementary (built in '53) and high school (built in '62). An architectural firm was selected last Friday, and the next step is to hire a construction company. Specific needs include replacing original plumbing in all elementary classrooms (which are desired by the



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Kohler museum) and updating splintered original cubby storage. Bathrooms in K-2 classrooms will be converted into closets. A major component of the vision is to repurpose the home economics room, unused for at least 10 years, into a "Life Skills" center. The proposed center would be divided into four quadrants:

- A career exploration lab with a job interview hub.
- A maker space with a t-shirt press, laser engraver, and 3D printer.
- Two apartment-style kitchens.
- A small classroom for about 15-20 students.

The goal is to provide intentional instruction in financial literacy and life skills, such as getting a driver's license, banking, and leasing a car or apartment.

- The School has used seven snow days so far. Six are typically covered automatically or by waiver, leaving two more "flex" days.

#### **Cannabis Administrator: Rich Glista**

- The new tax, implemented at the wholesale level, has had no reported impact on retail prices. Retail prices have been holding steady since the end of December after a period of decline. The industry filed a lawsuit in December to block the law, but the request was denied. The government then filed a motion in January to have the entire case dismissed, which was also denied. The lawsuit will proceed to trial, although no date has been set.
- If marijuana is rescheduled federally, businesses will be able to write off many more expenses on their income taxes. Reclassification will also open up access to traditional banking services. These financial benefits are expected to help offset the impact of the new state wholesale tax. The federal rescheduling process is still underway but is anticipated to be completed before the end of the year.

#### **Lawrence Township: Matthew Sanborn**

- An Intergovernmental agreement between the Township and the Village was presented. Matthew Sanborn's primary role will be to scout grants from State websites and other sources, then vet them for the Village's eligibility. A list of promising grants will be presented to the Council for approval before significant time is invested in any single application. Sanborn emphasized the need for a clear understanding of expectations and for the Village to provide direction on strategic priorities (e.g., downtown development, infrastructure). Cordes confirmed the Village would provide specific directions, citing examples like infrastructure or Police Department updates. The process would involve Sanborn proactively alerting the Village to grants (e.g., CDBG) that align with their stated goals. Sanborn expressed concern about being responsible for all grant reporting paperwork, especially if multiple grants are secured. Cordes clarified that for more complex grants, like a CDBG, it is assumed that Sanborn would manage the process up to a certain point and then hand it off to a Third-Party Administrator (TPA) who would handle the detailed administrative work. confirmed they are comfortable with the terms of the agreement. A question was raised about potential fallout from changes at Market One, a subsidiary of Kinexus, with the announcement that long-time Director, Zach Morris, is no longer



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in that role. Cordes noted it is too early to know the full impact, as the announcement was recent. Sanborn suggested that if they were to hire Market One as a TPA, they should first contact the parent company, Kinexus, to understand Market One's new direction. Sanborn explained that having a clear direction from the Council is very helpful, as many grant opportunities are time sensitive. Using the Township's focus on housing as an example, he noted that pre-approval for a target area allows them to apply immediately without waiting for a Council meeting. Cordes proposed creating a list of 3-4 key priorities (e.g., infrastructure being a top priority and housing) for the Village. Sanborn noted they are aware of Village-specific opportunities they haven't previously researched for the Township, such as Downtown Development grants and the infrastructure side of CDBG. Cordes recalled a prior discussion about a CDBG grant for a project on Corwin Rd., but there was uncertainty about qualification. Sanborn suggested that if the Village needs to replace lines anyway, a grant could provide up to \$1.5 million for that purpose in conjunction with a housing development. He advised that it's best to have a solid plan and unified stakeholder support before approaching the state for funding, as they look for that level of preparedness.

Gritter inquired about the compensation from the Village to the Township. Cordes stated the compensation is \$6,000 for the year and explained that she based the new agreement on a previous one with Cannabis Administrator, Rich Glista, because it had already been approved by an attorney and signed off on. A provision is included in the agreement that allows for changes or adjustments to be made with written consent from both parties. Sanborn clarified that the payment goes to the Township, which then compensates them for hours worked for the Village.

Motion to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement for Grant Writing with the Township in the amount of \$6,000 by Crandall, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Rowlee.

Rollcall:

Aye: Lorenzo, Glennie, Gritter, Rowlee, Crandall

Nay: None

Absent: Deloach

All Aye. Motions Carried.

- Sanborn inquired what legal firm the Village uses. Miller Johnson is the legal firm used and it was noted that they bill by the tenth of an hour. To manage costs, information should be prepared and presented efficiently to the attorney. Sanborn stated he would consult with the group internally before posing questions to the attorney to avoid unnecessary legal fees, contrasting this with the Township lawyer (Catherine Kaufman) who sometimes answers simple questions without charge.



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### **Reports:**

#### **President's Report:**

- No Report

#### **Clerk's Report:**

- No Report

#### **Village Manager:**

- Cordes introduced a proposal from Chris to create a revised and updated fee schedule to better account for his time and associated legal costs. The proposed model involves applicants paying an estimated cost into an escrow account. If project costs (e.g., zoning review, legal review) exceed the escrow amount, the applicant would be billed for additional funds. If project costs are less than the escrow amount, the remaining balance would be refunded to the applicant. Thompson strongly cautioned against this escrow-based model, describing it as an "administrative nightmare" based on the Township's past experience. The process requires tracking every application to issue either a refund or an additional bill, creating significant administrative work for the clerk's office. The Township attempted this model for six months before abandoning it and returning to a flat-fee system. An alternative was proposed: using a flat fee based on the average total anticipated costs. This "one and done" approach is administratively simpler, the flat fee can be adjusted annually if revenue is not covering expenses, and while simple projects might pay slightly more and complex projects slightly less, the primary goal of covering the Village's out-of-pocket costs is met more efficiently. Crandall added that the fee structure should be attractive to developers, as development increases the Village's tax base by uncapping tax rates. She suggested benchmarking against what other communities charge and how they structure their fees.

Motion to table the fee schedule discussion to allow for further research by Crandall, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lorenzo.

All Aye. Motions Carried.

- Cordes presented a proposed Floodplain Ordinance as part of the National Floodplain Insurance Program for floodplain management. The group discussed joining, with an understanding that there is no cost to join and minimal requirements. The discussion identified a low risk of flooding, with the exception of a small possibility for properties along the Paw Paw River, which are not officially considered floodplains. A concern was raised about potential lawsuits if a basement floods and the Village lacks a floodplain ordinance, though it was noted this is already



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Motion to pursue replacing current IT vendor with Clark Technical for all Village IT needs by Crandall, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lorenzo.  
All Aye. Motions Carried.

### Community Development:

- The committee briefly discussed Christmas in the Village and will have notes for next year.
- A representative from Market One, Katie Multhauf, mentioned that John Lanphear is looking to build a 40,000 sq. ft. facility and is considering leaving the area, potentially due to high taxes in Lawrence. The Village has two available lots in the industrial park that are believed to total approximately five acres, which should be sufficient for his needs. Council members expressed a strong desire to keep the business in the Village, and a suggestion was made of possibly offering him the land for free as an incentive. It was noted that Mr. Lanphear would also qualify for an industrial tax abatement. The current building he occupies is owned by Duane Packer. Mr. Lanphier previously tried to purchase it, suggesting the owner is not willing to sell. Another tenant, A&B, is renting the back part of the property. Council determined that a formal motion was not necessary at this stage, as it was a "consensus check" to move forward. Crandall noted that if Lanphear requires formal reassurance, a motion can be taken at the following month's meeting. The consensus is to allow Glennie to approach Lanphear about the offer, and if he agrees, the Council can then formalize the arrangement regarding the industrial park opportunity. Crandall proposed including a mandatory build-out timeframe in future lot sale contracts for the industrial park to prevent speculative holding. A key term for future contracts should be that the offer is valid for a specific timeframe, and the agreement must be renegotiated if building does not commence within that period. In response to a query about a timeline, Annette Crandall suggested a period of 18 months to pull permits and begin construction. It was clarified that businesses in the industrial park are not restricted to manufacturing; any commercial or office use is permitted. The primary building requirement per the deed restrictions is that structures must be made of steel, glass, brick, or block.
- A Community Development Committee member reported on a meeting and expressed a desire for more consistent involvement from a development professional to guide the committee's strategic direction. Multhauf offered to help "spruce up" the Master Plan after its revision completion. ~~Crandall~~ stated a goal to have this representative attend all committee meetings to help maintain forward momentum on community development, rather than focusing on smaller-scale activities like bake sales. The committee wants to learn more about the Site Strategic Readiness Program (SSRP), a topic that was not discussed in depth at their recent meeting.
- Amy Cordes suggested the representative could help the committee fill in the pieces once they have a general vision, similar to their work with Matt. Glennie noted that Matt has expressed interest in being active with the committee but is still assessing his time and responsibilities. Crandall provided a formal definition of the SSRP: "The SSRP in Michigan aims to create investment-ready sites to attract and promote economic development through financial incentives and support for eligible projects. It is designed to enhance Michigan's

Lorenzo



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covered by Michigan Building Code. Cordes will conduct further research with Jared from EGLE to understand the pros and cons of participating in the program.

Motion to table the discussion until further evidence provided that the ordinance is necessary by Crandall, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Glennie.

All Aye. Motions Carried.

- Cordes presented an offer from Walter Elsner at the County for free address management for the Village and other municipalities. Key benefits of the program include: No cost for the Village to participate, the County will manage all administrative responsibilities and collect any associated fees directly from applicants, it will ensure consistent addressing for new developments, and it will help reduce duplicate addresses, errors, and inconsistencies, which is particularly useful for the 911 system. It will also allow the Village to assign an official address to the park, which it currently lacks for dispatching purposes.

Motion to participate in the County-Managed Addressing Services by Glennie, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Crandall.

All Aye. Motions Carried.

### **Police Department:**

- Council reviewed the new, more detailed police report format. The new report breaks down: Types of activities and hours spent (including sick time, PTO, and part-time hours), addresses and types for all calls for service, updates on radar enforcement, news, training, and equipment (e.g., patrol cars), Police Department News, Department Training, the Department Moving Forward, and a "Words from the Chief" section providing his perspective.
- For the IT audit, Tony Clark from Clark Technical performed the necessary work free of charge as part of their service pitch and example of the work they can perform. National Technology Management (NTM) approved the use of this other company for the audit and Clark was able to then complete the work in under an hour. Cordes expressed high confidence in a successful audit outcome, noting that Lawton, another client of Clark Technical, scored 100% on their audit and ranked highest in Van Buren County. The on-site audit for the police department is scheduled for February 25th. Thompson commented that while she typically prefers a more in-depth vendor analysis when changing companies, Clark Technical is on the short list to become the full IT replacement vendor due to the expertise they have already demonstrated. The current vendor, NTM, is considered incapable of servicing the Village's IT needs because the Village operates a single, unified network for both municipal and police department functions, which NTM cannot support. The Council feels a degree of urgency to find a compliant replacement vendor. It was noted that an RFP is not required if the Council is satisfied with Clark's professionalism and service. Clark Technical serves numerous other municipalities of various sizes. Cordes affirmed her positive experience with Clark, highlighting their responsiveness, direct access to support personnel (no AI chatbots), and proactive identification of opportunities.



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competitiveness for attracting investment by developing a statewide inventory of sites that are ready for business development."

- Glennie noted that Rachel Ferrell's name was missing from the attendance and minutes of the meeting and will get that corrected.

### DDA:

- The primary action of the DDA was to review and pass its budget. The meeting was kept short as Dale had another commitment. The DDA has funds available for additional projects. Thompson talked to Dale regarding the budget and with the surplus they could look at adding the playground replacement project to the budget at the next meeting.
- Pavilion Update: Contractors have started work on the pavilion, with one person seen shoveling the roof. Dale emailed before the meeting to state that Orla plans to have the work completed by Thursday.
- Farmer's Market Update: The Farmers Market has a new Market Master, Tad Moody. Moody has been a vendor at the market since approximately 2009. His wife and son will now run their booth. He was known for organizing "earthworm races," which was a fun activity at the market. The Market Master position includes compensation, which was thought to be a stipend of around \$3,500 for the season. The market is scheduled to start the weekend after the Fourth of July and will relocate from ~~River street~~ to Elizabeth street for safety and logistical reasons. The move to Elizabeth street is also closer to the playground and pavilions and is expected to be easier for vendors. A suggestion to use the new pavilion for vendors was initially met with an objection that pavilions are frequently rented. However, it was concluded that pavilion rentals for events like birthday parties usually do not start until 11:00 AM, making early morning use by the market acceptable.
- Council debated using the Vacant Building Ordinance versus the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) to address blighted properties in the DDA district. Enforcement of the Village's vacant building ordinance has stalled due to a lack of funding for legal action, and members disagreed on its fairness. Some members oppose the ordinance, arguing it infringes on property rights, while others support enforcement due to the negative impact of long-term vacant properties. The International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) was proposed as a more effective and legally sound alternative to address public health and safety violations (e.g., broken windows, unsafe structures). It was argued that using the IPMC to force repairs could incentivize owners to rent or sell. Discussion clarified that property owners are paying their taxes on these buildings. The initial approach to vacant buildings will be to use the IPMC to enforce safety and maintenance standards, rather than the controversial vacant building ordinance. The proposed process involves sending letters detailing IPMC violations and offering a list of potential buyers as a friendly initial step, with legal action as a last resort. Cordes suggested presenting the problem to Market One, a group the village is already a member of, to get their perspective on opportunities and options. Market One could provide valuable contacts, networking opportunities, and insights into how other communities have handled similar situations.

East Saint  
Joseph



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### Joint Parks & Recreation:

- **Donation Portal Update:** The electronic donation portal is now active and has been successfully tested; it works with methods like Apple Pay and has a simple user interface. They will begin publishing the donation link on the village website and social media to launch the public fundraising campaign. Lorenzo will check in monthly to get an updated balance on the fundraising account to report to the Parks and Rec committee.
- **Park Playground Project Update:** The Park grant operates on a reimbursement model, creating a significant cash flow challenge as the Village must front payments. Lorenzo stated for a \$605,000 project, the committee should aim to fundraise around \$400,000 or secure a bridge loan of ~\$100,000 to cover the cash flow gap. The committee is exploring finding a partner (DDA or marijuana funds) to match donations and act as a cash flow "reservoir." The DNR grant contract is expected around August. After signing, there is a one-year window before work must begin, providing a two-year total timeframe. Fundraising can continue after the agreement is signed, and the project can be started in phases once initial funds are raised. The project will be scaled down if fundraising goals are not met. Joelle confirmed that reducing the project scope or returning the grant would incur no penalties and not impact future grant eligibility. Discussion shifted to the practicalities of demolition and repurposing materials from the old playground structure. Joelle confirmed there are no special environmental rules for disposal; materials can be taken to the dump but not the village's waste site. Ideas for old materials include selling assets and directing funds to the project or repurposing wood for non-play-structure elements like a new archway. The committee plan already includes an effort to repurpose what is feasible.
- **Donation Tax Deductions:** The possibility of using a 501(c)(3) for fundraising was revisited. Lorenzo is having Dave Van Zoeren investigate this option. A question was raised about the tax-deductibility of donations through the new electronic portal. Thompson clarified that government entities are automatically considered nonprofit under the tax code (believed to be Section 117) and do not need to apply for this status. A simple receipt from the Village is sufficient for a donor's tax deduction. The Point and Pay online donation system's receipt needs to be updated to say, "thank you for your donation" and include the Village of Lawrence's name. The Village's EIN should be on donation receipts, especially for businesses. While some large foundations may not donate to governments, it's not a universal rule. A major drawback of a separate 501(c)(3) is that no government resources (money, equipment, staff time) could be used for the project. Thompson recommended continuing to operate directly under the Village of Lawrence to utilize village resources and simplify the process. The project will continue to operate under the Village of Lawrence entity rather than forming a separate nonprofit, in order to maintain access to Village resources like equipment for demolition.
- **Planning the demolition of the old playground equipment:** Q2 goals include getting demolition estimates, with an initial figure of \$5,000 mentioned. A phased approach to demolition was proposed based on fundraising success. The possibility of selling or giving away old equipment was supported, with proceeds going back to the project. A potential issue was raised regarding community members who funded the original "palace" playground and have family connections



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to it. It was agreed that this needs to be handled carefully, potentially offering "first dibs" to those with personal connections to specific items.

- A meeting is scheduled for Sunday to update Dale on the project's progress. Dale's previous uncertainty was attributed to a "cash flow issue." The group believes presenting a clear plan will make Dale and the DDA more comfortable committing funds.

**LDFA:**

- No Report

**Personnel:**

- Police Chief Hiring Update: The Personnel Committee recommends that the Council approve the hiring of the Interim Chief Cordes as the permanent Police Chief. Key contract terms include \$45/hour for 26-30 hours/week, a retirement contribution, and PTO. A significant change is that the Police Chief will report to the Village President, not the Village Manager. The contract is annual and renews automatically unless a change is made. The MERS disbursement was confirmed to be a retirement contribution of \$96.42 per biweekly paycheck, totaling approximately \$2,500 per year. The Chief will serve as the Interim Chief for Lawton until they find a replacement, reciprocating a courtesy. It was noted that Lawton Village was made aware of the Chief's departure through other police officers, not the Chief himself. The contract does not specify a start date, as the Chief must provide 30 days' notice to Lawton. It is expected the Chief will begin work after his notice period.

Motion to hire Interim Chief Cordes for the permanent part-time Police Chief position by Glennie, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lorenzo.

Roll call:

Aye: Glennie, Lorenzo, Rowlee, Crandall, Gritter

Nay: None

Absent: Deloach

All Aye. Motions Carried.

- Insurance Compensation: It was discovered that Officer Vande Voren has not received his "payment in lieu of insurance" (two hours of pay per month), totaling approximately \$700 owed for the fiscal year.

Motion to pay the amount due for the Payment in Lieu of Insurance to Officer Vande Voren by Lorenzo, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Rowlee.

Roll call:

Aye: Crandall, Gritter, Lorenzo, Glennie, Rowlee

Nay: None

Absent: Deloach

All Aye. Motions Carried.



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- Crandall asked if pay increases discussed at a budget workshop needed formal ratification. It was confirmed that by adopting the budget, which included the wage summary, the council had already automatically approved the increases.

### **Planning Commission:**

- Master Plan Update: The committee is working to streamline the Village Master Plan, removing overly complicated and legally unenforceable requirements.
- The committee decided against changing their meeting schedule from monthly to quarterly and will continue to hold monthly meetings on the fourth Monday of the month. Monthly meetings are necessary to avoid delays for processes like site plan reviews and prevent the need for special meetings.

### **Public Services/DPW:**

- Public Services department reports that January was primarily occupied with snow removal with the significant snowfall in January consuming most of the department's time. The department experienced a few minor equipment breakdowns, such as hydraulic hoses on the salters, but these issues were resolved quickly.
- After a meeting to discuss water issues, an email from the owner of Myndset created confusion about whether they proposed testing their building's water or the entire municipal system. The Village has not received a response to a request for clarification. The root cause of the water issue is identified as high electrical conductivity, likely exacerbated by a lack of flushing capability on their private water line. The problem of high Electrical Conductivity (EC), which affects their business operations, is not a regulated drinking water contaminant. The high EC is suspected to be caused by a lack of flushing on the private 6-inch water main that exclusively serves their building. A reduction to a 2-inch pipe inside the building prevents the high-velocity flow needed to clear out sediment. The group discussed potential solutions for flushing the private water main, concluding that the Village should not invest in or set a precedent for a private company's infrastructure and he should come to Council if he wants to further discuss the issue.
- Water/sewer rates are set to increase 3% on March 1<sup>st</sup>. REU (Residential Equivalent Unit) changes will also be implemented on March 1st.
- Three recent water violations are being communicated simultaneously with a detailed explanatory letter and preemptive social media post. The notices now explicitly state the cause, such as a lab misplacing a sample, to clarify that Village staff were not at fault. A procedural change has been made: the lab now directly picks up samples to avoid reliance on mail services. It is hoped that this transparent approach helps prevent the public backlash experienced previously.

### **Citizen Police Committee:**

- Did not meet; Meetings scheduled upon request.



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**ZBA:**

- No Meeting Held.

**New Business:**

- Rowlee is interested in talking to the Chief about establishing a reserve department. Logistical and liability considerations were discussed, including supervision requirements and the trend of municipalities discontinuing such programs. Potential benefits include backup for patrol officers and presence at community events. The Harford Reserve Department was cited as a model where unpaid volunteers can be paid for specific details. The council is open to exploring the idea of a reserve police department and will await a formal proposal from the new Chief. Rowlee will discuss the concept of a reserve police department with the new chief to gauge his interest and get his expert opinion.

**Old Business:**

- None

**Public Comment:**

- None

**Council Comment:**

- None

**Motion to Adjourn:**

Motion by Glennie, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Lorenzo  
All Aye, Motion Carried.  
Meeting Adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted:**

  
Amy Cordes, Village Manager

  
John Gritter, Village President