



Village of Lawrence
157 N. Paw Paw St.
Lawrence, MI 49064
PH: 269-674-8161 Fax: 269-674-3004
www.lawrencemi.org



**Village of Lawrence Regular Common Council Meeting
157 N. Paw Paw St., Lawrence, MI 49064
December 9, 2025**

Call to Order: The Regular Common Council Meeting was called to order at X: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
- **Absent:** David Deloach, Trustee; Chuck Rowlee, Trustee
- **Also Present:** Brian Johnson, DPW Supervisor; Paul Bianco, Police Chief; Kim Thompson, Finance Manager; Amy Cordes, Village Manager; Ryan Williamson, LPS Superintendent; Donna Spenner, Township Supervisor; Rich Glista, Cannabis Administrator; Bill Featherstone, Fire Chief

Approval of Prior Council Minutes Month Prior:

Motion by Crandall, 2nd by Lorenzo

All Aye. Motions Carried.

Finance Manager Report-Kim Thompson:

- **Status of Bank Reconciliations:** All bank reconciliations and associated journal entries are complete.
- **Due To/Due From Reconciliations:** All Due To/Due from reconciliations and associated journal entries are complete.
- **Bank and CD Issues:** All bank account and CD issues have been researched and are complete. Kim met with PNC Bank and they held 3 CDs as of the 2021 audit. It took some time, but they were able to pull details from their archives and provided the missing interest information from the CDs so appropriate journal entries could be made to record the interest earnings. The CDs have been added to the revised Bank Balance report. The report has been re-ordered so that all accounts for each fund are together and summarized. This will allow us to easily see the amounts held for each fund. A correction was made to reclassify two CDs, one to "water" and one to "sewer." An entry will be made to transfer a significant balance (\$124,400 as of Feb 2023) from the water fund to the sewer fund.
- **Audit:** The files for FYE23 are being sent to the auditor on Monday, December 8, 2025. Included will be the Due To/From Interagency report showing zero discrepancies. The FYE2024 reconciliation process should go much faster. There will still need to be correcting entries from errors made in FYE2023 that were posted to FYE2024, but those have already been identified.
- **Budget:** The Michigan Department of Treasury reached out to Amy and me and offered additional funds to cover the additional hours needed for me to bring the fiscal years up to date.



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They have agreed to fund the entire additional \$17,000 approved last month. Kim also submitted the Act51 report. It has been verified as received and the funds have been requested to be paid this month. We should have the funds early January 2026. During the course of Act 51 annual report submission, it was identified that we have been charging salaries incorrectly to the GL. The Act51 report portal has been updated and many audit checks have been incorporated into the submission process. These audit checks revealed that we have been charging salaries incorrectly to the GL. Under Act51, only 10% or less of monies received can be charged to administration costs. That is the cost center the salaries have been posted. I was able to identify the amount of salaries that should be charged to the Maintenance/Preservation street GL and made the appropriate adjustments. I am documenting the report submission process along with the corresponding GL accounts we use to make future reporting easy and accurate. No Budget Amendments are needed for December. We will need to amend the budget next month for the revision is the Major and Local Streets salary adjustments (required by MDOT).

- Treasurer Duties: Tax payments are still trickling in. As of December 5, 2025, 80.4% of tax payments have been received. All property taxes were due September 15. Delinquent taxes can be paid to the Village through 2/28/2026.
- Winter Planning: Kim will be out of the office the week of Christmas preparing for my temporary move to Florida. The Tech has my remote workstation set up and I was able to successfully test all aspects of my computer work. While she may not be able to work the 30-35 hours per week she's been doing these past few months, will be able to work at least 24. Kim will have the budget process streamlined and will be available for all meetings (Council as well as Budget) via Zoom.
- Budget Workshop: Kim will meet with Council via Zoom January 31, 2026 from 9 am-12 pm to begin the Budget Workshop process. A tentative second date of February 7, 2026 from 9 am-12 pm has been set to complete anything from the January 31st meeting.

Additional Bills for Approval:

- \$1,268.00 from Ruddell Repair to repair air leaks on the single-axle plow truck.
- \$3,610.00 from Ruddell Repair to repair salt truck.
- Motion to approve payment for \$1,268.00 plow truck bill and \$3,610.00 salt truck repair bill by Crandall, 2nd by Lorenzo.

Rollcall:

Aye: Glennie, Gritter, Crandall, Lorenzo

Absent: Deloach, Rowlee

All Aye. Motions carried.

Approval of Bills & Review of Bank Balances Month Prior:

Motion by Lorenzo , 2nd by Crandall

Rollcall:

Aye: Crandall, Gritter, Lorenzo, Glennie



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Absent: Rowlee, Deloach
All Aye. Motions carried.

Presentations & Guests:

Lawrence Township: Donna Spenner

- Library Update: Two of the four boilers are completely out. They were able to use electric heaters through the weekend but had to close Monday when the heaters couldn't keep up with the frigid temperatures. They are in discussions regarding the contract. The Library is proposing an addendum to the contract that would provide \$7,500 annually (retroactive two years) to the municipalities of the Van Buren District Library for maintenance costs. Current quote for two boilers is \$26,000. The proposal includes some conditions that have not yet been disclosed.
- Solar Farm Update: The paperwork, including Decommissioning paperwork, has been signed. They plan to break ground mid-January.
- Crystal Flash Update: Crystal Flash has notified us that they will closing down their fueling station in town. Craig McDonald has offered to house temporary fuel tanks for the Township and the Village while we both work on a permanent solution. Crystal Flash will supply the fuel tanks and Craig McDonald will supply the electric to run the pumps. In return, the Village and the Township will partner to plow the parking lot of McDonald's Towing. Both the Village and the Township will have one diesel tank and one regular tank.
- There will be a visitation for Charlie Moses Saturday, December 13 from 11 a-1 pm at Adam's Funeral Home in Paw Paw. The memorial service will begin at 1 pm with a gathering following at Lawrence Town Hall at 2 pm.
- It is appreciated that the Fire Department removed the large tree limb that came down at the school.
- The updated Senior Services calendar is available to post on website and at Village Hall.
- Kallie from the Conservation District reached out to Tracie at the Township office regarding partnering for a Recycling Transfer Station grant. Interested in working with the Village to see if there is an opportunity there.

Lawrence Township Emergency Services: Bill Featherstone

- Report of Calls-November 2025: Fire 14 (Village 14), QR 31 (Village 4)
- Fire Chief Report:
 - Called Sustainable Construction by Anthony Charron- Recommended by Meyer Wood Products. Quote to repair shed was honored to fix the shed for \$2,200. Copy of invoice given to Village to coordinate payment.
Motion to pay Fire Department shed repair for \$2,200 payable to Sustainable Construction by Anthony Charron by Crandall, 2nd by Glennie.

Rollcall:
Aye: Glennie, Gritter, Crandall, Lorenzo
Absent: Deloach, Rowlee



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- Appreciation to Brian for allowing them to use the dumpster to clear out the station of old and outdated clutter and rubbish. Thanks also given for allowing them to store extra construction barrels in the Village storage yard.
- Worked with Roy at Freedom Bar to get his documentation for his occupancy at the bar.

Lawrence Public Schools Superintendent: Ryan Williamson

- Fund balance is improving and projected to be 10.6% for 2026.
- They expect to start the Before/After School Program January 16, 2026, which will be free. It is covered by a grant through the ISD. It will be available 6:45-7:45 am and 2:45-5:30 pm.
- Remaining bond money is being used for LED lighting upgrades in the classrooms.
- Meeting on Thursday, December 11th at 5:30 pm in the library to discuss the state of the football program. They are also looking into offer Varsity Soccer next year.
- The District is planning a “Pathways Academy” for career readiness in the next two to three years.
- Awarded a Robotics First grant with \$10,000 in supplies and funding for staff, as well as a robot.
- They were able to move the wrestlers from the gym to a better location in the building.
- Acknowledged Brett and Brian’s effort to coordinate the tree removal. Due to winter snow removal and maintenance, they were not able to get to it before the Fire Department did. So far this winter they have adhered to the plowing at 4” standard and used 3,000 lbs. of salt so far.

Cannabis Administrator: Rich Glista

- John Wellehan is behind on taxes, but he is in the process of restructuring. Pure Options is also behind but it paying rent as the property belongs to 305 Farms.
- A judge ruled against an injunction to halt a 24% marijuana industry tax, which is expected to take effect in January and may reduce sales.
-

Reports:

President's Report:

- A Resolution to recognize Gary Barton has been tabled for January 13, 2026, Council Meeting, however, would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment he has made to the community.

Clerk's Report:

- No Report

Village Manager:



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- Worked with MERS to find the best option for matches to the 457 plan. We now have an agreement that would allow up to a 3% match of 457 contributions made by full-time employees that chose not to/defaulted to 0% contribution amount for the DC plan.
Motion to approve MERS 457 Employer Contribution Addendum for DC Eligible Employees who Contribute 0% to DC on a Pre-Tax Basis by Crandall, 2nd by Lorenzo.
Rollcall:
Aye: Lorenzo, Glennie, Gritter, Crandall
Absent: Deloach, Rowlee
All Aye. Motions carried.
- A note was left with the utility bills for Roy Cogar. He stated he's been paying the utility bills for 107 W. St. Joseph even though the paperwork to transfer ownership was never completed. He requested to be reimbursed for the amounts he has paid.
Motion to reimburse Roy Cogar for up to \$2,055.88 by Glennie, 2nd by Crandall.
Rollcall:
Aye: Glennie, Gritter, Lorenzo, Crandall
Absent: Deloach, Rowlee
All Aye. Motions carried.
- Presented CLS Service Agreement. Brian had met with the CLS rep regarding uniforms and it was brought to his attention that our Service Agreement should have been renewed in January.
Motion to approve Service Agreement with CLS by Lorenzo, 2nd by Crandall.
Rollcall:
Aye: Crandall, Glennie, Lorenzo, Gritter
Absent: Rowlee, Deloach
- Received the draft of the Memorandum of Understanding from Treasury that outlines the funding of \$17,000 to cover the cost of the additional hours for Finance Manager, Kim Thompson, to complete audits through the end of the fiscal year.
Motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding by Crandall, 2nd by Lorenzo.
Rollcall:
Aye: Lorenzo, Glennie, Gritter, Crandall
Absent: Deloach, Rowlee
- Update on several residents. 725 N. Paw Paw has a letter condemning the house that will be provided to the property owners. They are in the process of moving items into storage and moving into Blueberry Hill Assisted Living in Lawton. The permits for 205 W. St. Joseph will be expiring on December 20, 2025. At that point they will need to start the process over with the current vendor, Michigan Code Inspection. 301 Main St. is still on our radar. Ordinance Officer Mihelich made contact with the resident and was given a tour of the premise. During the tour they discussed items that needed to be remedied in order to avoid ordinance violations. They made an agreement that there would be follow up visits and on the last visit it was seen that no progress had been made. Will continue to discuss options on how the Village wishes to proceed. Parking on the street during the winter continues to be an issue particularly around 129 W. St. Joseph. The vehicles parked on the road overnight force plowing to become an issue for those



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whose driveways border the parked vehicles. Ticketing the vehicles with towing as a last resort was suggested to enforce the ordinance.

Police Department:

- We wrote 21 LPD incident reports during the period 1 Nov to 30 Nov 2025 which ranged from a Damage to Property, Obstructing Justice, Larceny from vehicle, Violation of Controlled substance, Assist other Dept, Intimidation/Stalking, Ordinance Violation, Welfare Check, EMS/Fire incident(s), Civil Issue, Driving Law Violation and General Assistance.
 - Ran radar and watched for violations all over town to bring speeding down and make streets safer.
 - Continue to monitor traffic in front of the elementary School before/after school day.
 - Daily vehicle patrol in the business park to keep an on eye on businesses. Stopping in to check w/employees as well.
 - Contact with citizens/kids as opportunities present themselves in the park and around town.
 - Continue to keep an eye out for blight issues and parking Violations. Also, educate citizens on the parking ordinances via verbal warnings and tickets to correct violations.
 - Chief Bianco attended the First Responder Service at the United Methodist Church on 23 Nov 2025 from 11a to 1p.
- During the month of November LPD issued 18 - written traffic citations, took 0 - UD10 traffic crash report(s) and made approximately 26 traffic stops for traffic offenses of which 8 resulted in verbal warnings to citizens.
- During the month of November 2025 LPD responded to 13 calls for service that originated from the Van Buren County 911 dispatch Center. 8 police calls, 4 medical and 1 fire/rescue call(s). MSP was dispatched to 5 calls (5 -primary & 0 - as back-up to Lawrence PD or VBCS) and the VBCS was dispatched to 5 calls (4-primary and 1-as back-up to Lawrence PD or MSP). Note: all calls that VBCS & MSP were primary are when LPD did not have an officer on duty(nights/weekends).
 - Continue to search for potential part-time officer candidates.
 - Continue to mentor Ofc Vande Voren on various training points. He was given his first evaluation in November.
 - Ofc Vande Voren & I are up to date on our Yearly mandatory MCOLES training modules (24hrs worth).
 - Radio Encryption update as of 9 Sep 25 from Tim McGee – replaced/upgraded radios ...will have a solution by Jan 2026 with a deadline of 1 Oct 2026 to go live. Still waiting on solution.
 - Chief Bianco continues to respond to medical calls both in the Village and Township when on duty to assist Township with the QR team & Fire support/manning.
 - Attended Fire Dept Meeting on Thursday, 6 Nov 2025 as well as Fire Truck maintenance & training on Thursday, 13 Nov 2025 at the Lawrence FD while I was off duty.



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- Opioid Settlement funding – Paw Paw PD and Decatur PD submitted a request on behalf of most of the departments for AEDs. We were notified by Chief Rotman that the whole proposal was denied by Van Buren County.
- No citizens police committee meeting was scheduled for this month. Per counsel they will only be scheduled as needed going forward.
- As of today's date we have had 3 candidates interviewed for the Chief's position (final decision pending).
- Greg Cordes was asked to be the interim Chief starting the week of 15 Dec 2025 and a final decision should be made by the January 2026 Village Council meeting for the permanent chief.
- Chief Bianco's last workday is scheduled to be Thursday, 18 December 2025 so I can have a hand-off with the interim Chief from 15 to 18 December.

Community Development:

- No meeting in November

DDA:

- Next meeting Wednesday, December 10, 2025 at 5:30 pm.

Joint Parks & Recreation:

- Received the news that they were awarded their Grant for \$301,200 and were #1 on the list. They have a year to raise the matching \$301,200 funds.

LDFA:

- Next meeting Wednesday, December 10, 2025 at 6:30 pm.

Personnel:

- No Report

Planning Commission:

- Continue to monitor properties in the Village for blight and will work on the Master Plan as time allows. The updated Master Plan will removed outdated plans and unnecessary content.

Public Services/DPW:

- The Dixon contract is in the final steps of being finalized so that the water tower inspection can be completed.
- The first snow fall was a little rough as there were multiple pieces of equipment that had issues but were able to partner with Hartford to complete necessary tasks to maintain the safest road conditions possible.



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- 1000 Crandall Parkway Update: Sent everything to the State for review and guidance as there are no regulations for the issues they are having regarding water quality. They will contact a neighboring grow facility to see what steps they took to combat their similar issue.
- The discussion of transferring ownership of Brant Dr. to the Village once the ISD completes paving it has come up again. It was discussed previously that if the ISD paved the drive, the Village would be willing to assume ownership and maintenance. The ISD contacted the Village to see if this was still something that was willing to be discussed.
Motion to approve concept of transferring ownership of Brant Dr. to the Village from the ISD after paving project is completed by Crandall, 2nd by Lorenzo.
All Aye. Motions carried.
- Christmas in the Village went well. The lights and decorations were put up in time and events went smoothly.
- Blackman Waste Site Opportunity was brought up. Initial idea was to allow residents, Village and Township, to help themselves to compost materials from the Waste Site. After discussion, it was determined that the better approach was to offer the compost to interested parties and coordinate for access.
- Proposed reciprocity in working with Hartford, the Township, and the school in a coordinated effort to maximize our assets and assist each other when possible. Agreed that was the best direction for all parties.

Citizen Police Committee:

- Meetings scheduled upon request.

Motion to Adjourn:

Motion by Crandall, 2nd by Lorenzo
All Aye, Motion Carried.
Meeting Adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Amy Cordes
Amy Cordes, Village Manager

John Gritter
John Gritter, Village President