



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
March 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; Annette Crandall, Trustee; Chuck Rowlee, Trustee; David Deloach, Trustee; Phil Glennie, Trustee; Alicia Lorenzo, Trustee
- **Also Present:** Amy Cordes, Village Manager; Brian Johnson, DPW Supervisor; Greg Cordes, Interim Police Chief; Kim Thompson (video conference), Finance Manager; Mike Chappell, Van Buren County Commissioner; Rich Glista, Cannabis Administrator

Additions to Agenda:

- None

Conflicts of Interest:

- None

Approval of Prior Council Minutes Month Prior:

Motion by Crandall, 2nd by Glennie to approve Prior Council Minutes with the following amendments: During the Community Development report Lorenzo, not Crandall, stated a goal was to have this representative attend all committee meetings; during the LTES report the fire on 681 was at a barndominium, not a barn; during the DDA report the Farmer's Market is being moved from East Saint Joseph, not River St., to Elizabeth; and during the Superintendent's report the fund balance is 11.9%, not \$11.9M.

All Aye. Motions Carried.

Finance Manager Report-Kim Thompson:

- **Bank Reconciliations:** Progress has slowed due to the need to reconcile the Police and Tax funds. The Tax fund was last dispersed correctly in 2020, with outstanding disbursements for 2021, 2022, and 2023 identified. The auditor suggested Kim make adjusting entries for 2022 and 2023 and resubmit trial balances to speed up the audit.
- **Tax Fund and Audit Status:** The final settlement package for the tax season was submitted on time. Once the County confirms, final disbursements will be made, and for the 2025 tax year, 100% of taxes collected will be dispersed for the first time since 2020. The reconciliation issues create a risk of a "soft year-end close" to meet the August 31, 2026, deadline.
- **Fund Balances and Transfers:** The Police fund balance, previously \$13,400, is now closer to \$60,000 after identifying unmade disbursements. Money has not yet been moved to the



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Equipment Replacement fund. The Water checking account is high because online payments are deposited there, but transfers to the Sewer fund have not been made.

- **Total Balances:** The total balance of all accounts was \$2.3 million at the end of January and \$2.4 million at the end of February.

Approval of Bill Additions:

Motion by Lorenzo, 2nd by Deloach to approve addition of \$271.37 for Intermedia (consent item); \$99.00 for MMTA (Michigan Municipal Treasurer's Association); and \$6,000 for Lawrence Township for Intergovernmental Agreement for Grant Services.

All Aye. Motions Carried.

Approval of Bills:

Motion by Lorenzo, 2nd by Deloach to approve the bills as presented with additions.

Roll call:

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

Nay: None

All Aye. Motions Carried.

Presentations & Guests:

Van Buren County Commissioner: Mike Chappell

- The Board approved the 2026 claims in the amount of \$4,419,517.97. The Board also approved the 2026 Annual Borrowing Resolution for the Delinquent Tax Revolving Fund, authoring the County Treasurer to borrow up to \$8 million to provide cashflow for paying out delinquent real property taxes.
- The Board approved a contract with MDOT to acquire \$99,788.00 in Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant funding for bus replacements. They also approved to hire two new full-time bus drivers because they are getting really busy.
- There is a Board vacancy with the passing of a Board member last month. During the meeting today the Board reappointed Mike Toth, the original holder of that seat, to the position until the next election.

Lawrence Township: Donna Spenner

- Not present, however, Manager Cordes gave a quick update from the Library Board meeting last month that was attended by members of Lawrence Township and the Village of Lawrence. No progress has been made on an agreement to update the Library contract. Alternative options are being researched at this time if an agreement cannot be reached.

Lawrence Public Schools Superintendent: Ryan Williamson

- Not present but a report was sent prior to the meeting outlining updates for the March Superintendent Report including Budget Amendment Update: Reevaluating for April (at this



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time no amendment is needed); Partnering with the VBISD and the Village of Lawrence for June submission for the Safe Routes to School Grant; the VBISD will be offering LPS the opportunity to host Career Readiness Programming; and an LPS Football update that included the BOE approval for Co-Op with Bangor Public Schools.

Cannabis Administrator: Rich Glista

- Pure Options and Myndset renewed their State licenses for another year. Rich is still trying to meet with John Wellehan but he is very busy. Invoicing for licenses is currently in June and Rich is waiting for the Marijuana Ordinance to be codified so he has a point of reference before moving those to January dates.
- The Township has been doing their Budget Workshop the last couple weekends. One of things they've budgeted for out of the cannabis license fees is \$10,000 for matching funds for the Park project. The contingency is that the Village would need to match them, whatever the amount, up to \$10,000, is.

Reports:

President's Report:

- No Report

Clerk's Report:

- No Report

Village Manager:

- **CDBG Grant Update:** The Village's Request for Proposal (RFP) was posted to the Village website and directly solicited to Market One and McKenna. A proposal was submitted by Market One by the deadline, however a proposal was not received from McKenna. Manager Cordes directly solicited Great Lakes Housing Services from a list provided by MSHDA and received a proposal. After reviewing both proposals, it is the Village Manager's recommendation to select Market One as the Third-Party Administrator for the CDBG Grant disbursement.

Motion by Crandall, 2nd by Glennie to accept the recommendation to select Market One as the Third-Party Administrator for our CDBG Grant disbursement.

Roll call:

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

Nay: None

All Aye. Motions carried.

Motion by Lorenzo, 2nd by Deloach to authorize Manager Cordes to enter into a Third-Party Administrator agreement with Market One based on their proposal.

Roll call:

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



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Nay: None

All Aye. Motions carried.

- **SRTS Application Update and Grant Opportunities:** It was determined that there were more documents that needed to be updated than anticipated in order to meet the February deadline for the Safe Routes to School application. We also do not want to run into an issue funding the engineering portion of the grant at the same time we are working on the N. Paw Paw St. project. We are now targeting the June 17th deadline and have made significant progress in updating the necessary documents. There will need to be an updated resolution from both the Village and the County as the amounts for the Grant have changed. We have partnered with the Township for Grant services provided by Matt Sanborn. He will report back to the Village with grant opportunities that align with projects the Village wishes to pursue. From there the Village can assess which are the best options to follow-up on and utilize Matt's knowledge to begin the grant process.
- **Rental Property Registration Policy & Vacant Property Ordinance:** The Village currently has a Rental Property Registration and Responsible Party Policy, however, because it is not an ordinance it is not legally enforceable. The purpose of the policy was to identify properties used as rentals and assign responsibility for payment of Village utilities. Manager Cordes will work on drafting a Rental Property Registration and Responsible Party Ordinance based on the current policy. The Village does currently have a Certificate of Occupancy requirement in our Ordinances that requires an inspection every time there is a change in residents. Questions regarding our Vacant Property Ordinance have also come into conversation recently. There are multiple vacant properties in highly trafficked areas of the Village in various states of being maintained. Many of the property owners live out of town, with several out of state. The purpose of the Vacant Property Registration Ordinance is to identify those properties and their subsequent owners to prevent blight, discourage nuisances, and protect property values. We have created a list based off of our Active Shut-Off utilities list that identifies the majority of these properties. In partnership with the DDA and our Ordinance Enforcement Officer we plan to send letters to the owners making them aware of this ordinance and also offering the opportunity to qualify for assistance from the DDA.
- **Sidewalk Ordinance:** Manager Cordes has drafted a Sidewalk Ordinance that is pending additional input from Risk Control through our insurance. It is recommended to remove language that assigns responsibility for repair or replacement on the property owner. The purpose of the ordinance would be to protect public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring sidewalks throughout the Village are maintained in a safe condition for pedestrian travel throughout the year.

Police Department:

- **New Police Chief:** Greg Cordes introduced himself as the new part-time Chief of Police for Lawrence, with 32 years of experience. He is also serving as the Interim Chief in Lawton. He announced this was his last Council meeting with Lawton, with his official last day being the day of the meeting.



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- **Monthly Report:** The monthly report included 12 reports written. Officer Vande Voren is working 40 hours a week and performing well. The Chief plans to adjust schedules for more evening coverage.
- **CJIS Audit:** The in-house portion of the Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) audit achieved 100% compliance. The IT portion requires updated Memos of Understanding for the report writing system to complete the audit.
- **Equipment and Policies:** The Chief is updating department policies, aiming for completion by mid-summer. The department is in good shape with equipment, apart from the car. The department needs to replace a 2016 vehicle, with the current 2020 car becoming the backup. Chief Cordes located a replacement interceptor model and has it on hold. The cost for the car is around \$53,000, with an additional \$15,000 for interior outfitting (lights, mounts) and \$1,200-\$1,400 for a wrap. The total cost of \$68,000-\$70,000 is within the \$75,000 budget. The 2016 vehicle, which has a wreck salvage title, will be sold outright after removing police equipment, with an estimated sale price of \$6,000-\$8,000. Proceeds will go back to the Police fund. The current computers in the vehicles are old and need replacement. "Rough Books" were suggested at a cost of a couple grand each. The budget surplus from the vehicle purchase could potentially cover this. The Chief will consult with IT. Existing workable body cams will be used while the Chief seeks grant money for new ones. A temporary car camera solution, costing around \$120, will be implemented, though it lacks cloud integrity for court evidence. The long-term plan is to apply for grants, starting with car cameras, then body cameras. The Michigan Par Plan Risk Reduction Grant (\$5,000) was mentioned as a possibility for the fall application cycle. Motion by Crandall, 2nd by Deloach to authorize the purchase of a fully equipped Police Department vehicle not to exceed budgeted \$75,000 pending completion of all the PD bank transfers.

Roll call:

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

All Aye. Motions carried.

Community Development:

- **Christmas in the Village:** Community Development plans to purchase a new Christmas in the Village tree for the park. It was determined the best spot for the tree would be where the old fountain was located.
- **Music in the Park:** Booking for Music in the Park is in process. Phil is checking with Friends of the Library to coordinate with any of their summer events.
- **Recognition Day & Pavilion Signs:** A Recognition Day has been suggested with possible candidates such as the Garrod family, the Amish community (possibly with a Farmer's market type event), and the basketball teams. There are signs that will be hung up at the pavilions. The sign at the East Pavilion will be the Kid's Palace Pavilion and the West Pavilion sign will recognize James and Gayle Crandall for their contributions to the Village of Lawrence.
- **New Business:** Rachel Ferrell is requesting a hitching post in the Village parking lot. The committee will work to find the best location for a hitching post that will not interfere with



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utilities or other tenants. Manager Cordes will work with the committee to create a business directory for the Village website that will benefit residents and visitors alike. There is also the opportunity to create a list of buildings in the DDA for rent. A Welcome Wagon sub-committee was proposed to welcome new residents, both commercial and residential, to the Village. The new residents could be identified by changes in utility bill responsible parties and communicated to the Welcome Wagon committee.

DDA:

- Report covered Treasurer's report, foreclosure hearing for Fruit Street Kitchen (they have until 3/31/26 to pay back taxes), and confirmed DDA could pledge \$75,000 towards the Park Playground project.

Joint Parks & Recreation:

- The committee is continuing their fundraising efforts. The project was presented to the Van Buren County Commissioners at their Board Meeting. A sponsorship package will be sent to the committee. The current fund balance is \$11,595.05, with the DDA also contributing \$75,000. A virtual and physical fundraising thermometer will be created.

LDFA:

- No Report

Personnel:

- No Report

Planning Commission:

- Continue to work on the Master Plan and blight issues.

Public Services/DPW:

- **Park Redevelopment:** The basketball court will be ripped up and reoriented, opening up green space. New pickleball courts are planned. A new tree will be planted at the old fountain location. The DDA plans to add sidewalks.
- **North Poplar Street Project:** A public informational meeting is scheduled for May 11th at 5:30 PM. The project involves reconstructing the 19-foot-wide road and boring a new force main. A proposed fee for Geotechnical Evaluation in the amount of \$3,950 was received. Motion by Deloach, 2nd by Rowlee to approve professional services authorization for up to the proposed fee of \$3,950.
Roll call:
Aye: Lorenzo, Gritter, Rowlee, Crandall, Deloach, Glennie
All Aye. Motions Carried.



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- **Ditching Project:** The ditching project on Michigan is ongoing. A ditch next to a Consumers substation may be usable.
- Lagoon spring discharge is March, April, and May.

Citizen Police Committee:

- Meetings scheduled upon request.

ZBA:

- No Meeting Held.

New Business:

- None

Old Business:

- None

Public Comment:

- None

Council Comment:

- Lorenzo: Follow up with Point and Pay to see if Tax Donation message and EIN can be included on Park Playground donation receipt.
- Glennie: Variance for a sign for the VBISD was approved with the understanding that the light brightness would be dimmed in the evening time, but this has not been happening. The minutes for that particular ZBA meeting do not reflect that and Phil is going to speak with Dave Manson at the VBISD to make that request.
- Crandall: There will be a comedian at the Methodist church on Friday, February 27th at 7:00 pm. You can go to the church website or Facebook page for more details and to purchase tickets. The show is called Unequally Joked and ticket price is \$15.

Motion to Adjourn:

Motion by Deloach, 2nd by Lorenzo

All Aye, Motion Carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

 04/14/2026
Amy Cordes, Village Manager



John Gritter, Village President