

DDA Meeting Minutes

July 22, 2026

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Dale Gribler, Kim Thompson, Rachel Ferrell, Phil Glennie, Steve Petersen

Also Present: Tad Moody

Meeting Notes

- Approval and Distribution of Minutes
 - o A motion to accept the minutes as presented was made by Glennie and seconded by Ferrell. Vote passed with all ayes.
- Treasurer's Report,
 - o FY23 Audit Outcomes, and Fund Balance
 - The Revenue/Expense/Budget Report covered the current fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, including activity and budget year-to-date.
 - FY23 final audit was approved by council.
 - The Trend Budget Analysis Report was modified to reflect the FYE22 and FYE23 auditor adjustments and carryover surplus and fund balances were updated. FYE23 has been closed. Columns now show "audited actuals" where available; others remain "estimated."
 - Budget guidance is to keep 3–4 months of estimated expenses as a carryover, approximately 33%, in surplus; current carryover is about 85%.
 - Prior month fund balance was noted at \$207,000; current balance shows approximately \$197,000, reflecting maintenance costs such as flagpole, lights, and other expenses.
 - Some checks, including pickleball-related expenses, will post in July and are not reflected on the June report.
 - Working assumption is that at least \$200,000 is available, though caution was advised due to pending commitments.
 - o Tax Capture Timing and Distributions
 - Township's first major distribution usually occurs in December.
 - Township Summer captures include the Van Buren allocated portion.

- Township Winter captures cover everything else (ie: Township, VBCo, VBISD).
 - DDA and township operate on 100% distribution.
 - Delinquent payment distributions do not apply to the DDA under this model.
 - o Bank Balances and Pickleball Invoices
 - Farmers Market balance: \$2,200.
 - DDA checking balance: \$197,906.
 - DDA checking balance does not include additional identified distributions or summer/winter tax capture.
 - All pickleball invoices have been submitted, but not all have been processed and paid.
 - More pickleball expenses will appear on July's reports.
 - o Motion by Glennie, supported by Petersen to approve the financial reports as presented. All aye. Motion carried.
- Capital Projects and Budgeted Amounts
 - o Listed projects and amounts included:
 - Bathrooms: \$15,000.
 - Sidewalks: \$25,000.
 - Pickleball: \$75,000.
 - Old Town Hall HVAC: \$30,000.
 - o Asphalt work on Elizabeth Street had not yet been factored into the budget.
 - o Need to ensure all discussed projects are included in budget planning.
- Transfer to Parks and Recreation for Kids' Palace Playground
 - o Kim made a motion to transfer \$75,000 to Parks and Recreation for the new Kids' Palace playground.
 - o Funds are needed now to engage engineering.
 - o Estimated engineering fees are approximately \$78,000.
 - o Motion by Thompson, supported by Glennie to transfer \$75K to Parks & Rec for new playground. All aye. Motion carried.
- Paving Project, Parking Lot, Exchange Street, and Power Line Relocation
 - o Gribler confirmed two separate projects:
 - Move power lines from the current location back to near the bank. Tino confirmed this can be done soon.
 - Pave the parking lot. Motion by Glennie, supported by Petersen to pay the 50% costs to pave the public parking lot (area where striped), Exchange St and behind the DPW building. Scope includes striping and catch basin near Baker Street. DDA costs estimated to be \$37K. All aye. Motion carried.
- Town Hall HVAC and Electrical Upgrades
 - o Plan is to obtain multiple HVAC quotes:

- One from a Three Rivers contractor (Glennie).
 - One from Fields.
 - One from the township's preferred vendor.
 - o Electrical is not up to code, with multiple panels/subpanels and three meters. Consolidating to one meter would trigger code upgrades.
 - o HVAC design constraints discussed:
 - Cold air returns.
 - Potential attic work.
 - Preserving historic character.
 - Limited-use needs, such as heating/cooling for 4-hour events.
 - Possible spiral ducting.
 - Adding large fans when access is opened.
 - o Dale offered to coordinate site walkthroughs if specific requirements are provided.
- Orr Building Status and Disposition Options
 - o Kim met with Roy, who is actively selling the bar and does not want to continue prior plans related to the Orr building.
 - o Building is on the tax rolls and accruing property taxes because it is not used for a nonprofit purpose.
 - o Two options were discussed:
 - List the building with a professional to sell it.
 - Invest DDA funds to stabilize it, starting with the roof, to protect it and sell later.
 - o Buyer expectations discussed included building use, timeline, business plan, and ability to fund a new roof.
 - o Roof is the biggest repair priority.
 - Building Maintenance, Roof/Exterior Skin, and Bathroom Renovations
 - o A roof and exterior skin project is being considered for the park bathrooms, with Orla Bontrager (who built the new pavilion and reroofed the old pavilion) involved in approval.
 - o Dale expressed concern about potential damage to new siding due to poor bathroom conditions, park use and risk of kids damaging the skin.
 - o Kim believes the new basketball court location and fenced pickleball court will reduce damage risk and park security cameras help too. Perhaps signage that the park is covered by video surveillance?
 - o Building is structurally sound, but interior bathrooms need significant improvement.
 - o Bathrooms have exposed wires.
 - o Group discussed painting bathroom walls, ceiling, and floor to freshen the space. Phil will get interior paint quotes.
 - o Bathroom painting estimate is approximately \$2,000-\$5,000 due to specialized floor paint and prep work.

- o Group discussed improving bathroom stalls, referencing high-quality private stalls at Buc-ee's.
 - o Dale will investigate whether Special Light in Decatur manufactures bathroom stalls.
- Budget Amendments, Spare Lights, and Legal Fees
 - o Motion by Thompson, supported by Ferrell to approve up to \$2,000 for spare street lights. All aye. Motion carried.
 - o Motion by Thompson, supported by Ferrell to amend the DDA budget to add a \$5,000 line item for legal fees related to blight enforcement. Legal fee funds may cover potential litigation costs. Costs may be recouped by adding them to the offending party's property taxes, if Village ordinances allow.
- Basketball Court Replacement and Layout Coordination
 - o Pickleball courts have reduced basketball availability.
 - o Intent is to build a new basketball court and remove old asphalt at prior locations.
 - o Proposed plan:
 - One full court replicating the current popular half court.
 - Potential smaller court for younger kids later.
 - Keep baskets at standard height to avoid damage from hanging off the basketball rims.
 - Coordinate layout with Parks & Recreation master footprint near Kids' Palace and bathrooms parallel to Baker Street.
 - o Charlie Weeden provided a quote.
 - o Target work window is September, weather permitting.
 - o Estimated costs discussed:
 - Approximately \$31,000 based on itemization. Including:
 - \$8,700 for court.
 - \$3,600 for removal of old asphalt court.
 - Additional items such as striping may be included.
 - Dale penciled in \$35,000 as a high estimate.
 - o Plan to reuse two large goalposts if possible.
 - o Smaller kids' court may wait until park footprint is finalized.
 - o Joel to draft blueprint after the footprint is finalized.
- EV Charging Station Exploration
 - o Discussion covered Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 EV charging:
 - Level 1: 110V trickle charge.
 - Level 2: 30A charging, similar to Phil's home setup.
 - Level 3: DC fast charging, viewed as the future due to growing EV adoption.
 - o Phil described a 30A subpanel installation enabling approximately 2-hour charge for his plug-in hybrid.

- o Tesla Superchargers can replenish in approximately 45 minutes and provide around 350 miles of range.
 - o Library area remains a favored potential site, pending township cooperation.
 - o Potential grants and programs may be available through EGLE and Consumers Energy.
 - o Awaiting callback from Steve's daughter/daughter-in-law at EGLE regarding programs.
 - o Federal incentives may change over time.
 - o Phil's home charger cost approximately \$2,200 including electrician and station.
- Park Tree Health Assessment
 - o Declining trees were observed, including pines with bark coming off and wind-risk concerns.
 - o Group agreed professional assessment is needed to determine which trees to remove or save and how to plan replacements.
 - o Dale reached out to MSU Extension and the Conservation District for contacts and will gather quotes.
 - o Professional guidance was emphasized to reduce public outcry.
- Industrial Park Pond — Power, Trees, and Fountain Operations
 - o Current solar-powered fountain underperforms.
 - o Trees on the east side shade solar panels until approximately noon.
 - o Proposal discussed:
 - Remove trees/brush to improve sunlight and allow mowing.
 - Consider installing an electric pump.
 - Add a new power pole near the site.
 - o Maple Court lacks power.
 - o Potential to bring service from CR365 and add a pole near the culvert/picnic area.
 - o Plan to contact Consumers Energy for cost and feasibility.
 - o Need to identify a tree removal contractor; Township has used a provider similar to "JC and Sons."
 - o Fountain service timing has been affected by site conditions. Trees block the solar panel until approximately noon and then the fountain turns on.
 - o Tree and brush removal could also improve access and drying.
 - o Aim to schedule tree work before bird nesting season.
 - o Contracting out cleanup was discussed.
- Farmers Market Operations, Vendors, Promotions, and Parking
 - o Vendor counts:
 - Week 1: 11 vendors.
 - Week 2: 10 vendors.
 - Fair week expected to be lower.

- o Popular sourdough vendor was absent.
- o New “Market Box” promotion:
 - Free entry for all.
 - Extra entries with purchases.
 - Weekly \$25 credit usable at vendors to boost traffic and word-of-mouth.
- o Outreach to gardeners includes a \$5 booth option for surplus produce such as tomatoes and watermelons.
- o Peaches were discussed as a major draw that affects market sales.
- o Rachel Ferrell will contact the “peach gal” about completing an application.
- o Traffic cones:
 - Tad purchased 3 cones and is seeking 3 more.
 - Existing cones have gone missing from storage.
- o Vendors driving through the park again were captured on cameras.
 - Past incident included a light pole crash.
 - Need for clear market rules covering parking and traffic.
 - Preference to update rules in the vendor application rather than issue a separate memo.
 - Amy from the village is concerned about liability and sidewalks cracking from vendor vehicles.
 - Phil is worried about losing vendors if access is too restricted.
Proposed compromise:
 - Vendors selling from vehicles may pull in and cross sidewalk.
 - Vendors may back out across the sidewalk once.
 - No through-driving in the park.
 - DDA funded the sidewalk.
 - If sidewalk damage occurs, the group expects to address repairs financially.
 - Enforcement discussed:
 - Repeat rule-breaking vendors may be told not to return unless there is a true emergency that required driving through park.
 - Area has cameras and behavior is recorded.
- o Street Barricades and Market Layout
 - Plan to block Elizabeth Street about halfway to support vendor placement.
 - Barricade locations discussed:
 - At St. Joel and Elizabeth.
 - Near the Kids’ Palace sign to manage parking.
- o New pavilion reserved for Farmers Market until 1:00 PM.
- o Pavilion use is intended to provide cover, enhance use, and host musicians/vendors.
- o Parking near pavilion may affect flow.
- o Goal is to wrap market around the corner to draw visitors.

- o August Co-located Farmers' Market Events
 - August health and safety fair planned to coincide with the Farmers Market.
 - Artisan fair also planned.
 - Goal is to co-mingle the Farmers Market, Health/Safety Fair, and Artisan Fair rather than splitting sides.
- o Vendor Rules Document and Communication
 - Need a concise handout outlining vendor do's/don'ts and vehicle policy.
 - Current rules/regulations PDF exists on the DDA Farmers Market website.
 - Plan to convert/edit the PDF, potentially using Word.
 - Updated rules should be attached to applications so vendors cannot claim ignorance.
- Facade Program and Murals Status
 - o Facade report: no applications yet.
 - o Village Council approved use of a wall for a mural but not the specific design.
 - o Conservative mural style is preferred.
 - o Prior artist's style was deemed not a fit.
 - o Project is tabled pending a different artist.
 - o Outreach was sent to "Mister Jones" near the feed mill; waiting for response.
 - o Krista Goens is open to hosting a mural in the future, but did not like the proposed abstract design.
 - o Late July timing may limit chances to install a mural this year.
- Ox Roast Event Coordination and Scheduling
 - o Village deadline is 08/01 for submitting event details to coordinate with police and village.
 - o Ox Roast schedule is finalized and circulated to committee.
 - o Flyer "cosmetics" are still being worked on.
 - o Plan to submit an event form to the village for the full Ox Roast.
 - o Request made to send all event details to Amy for coordination with the police chief.
 - o School Coordination — Fireworks and 3-on-3 Basketball
 - Calls/messages were placed to Superintendent Ryan and the new Athletic Director, also Ryan, regarding fireworks permissions and the 3-on-3 tournament.
 - Prior organizer Noah is out.
 - New lead is needed.
 - Tournament fees were reduced.
 - \$400 donated to subsidize costs.
 - Entry could drop to \$10/team if needed.

- o Risk of cancellation remains.
 - o Tournament is listed on the schedule pending confirmation.
 - o Pickleball, Cornhole, Volleyball, Equipment, Classes, and Safety
 - Pickleball tournament is planned; The Ox Roast Committee is organizing.
 - Cornhole tournament will be held on pickleball courts due to flat, fenced space.
 - Volleyball was removed from schedule due to lack of volunteers.
 - Denise plans to offer pickleball classes, potentially through the library.
 - Dale purchased four paddles at approximately \$9 each and packs of balls due to high demand.
 - Equipment was left at the library; total cost was around “sixty some bucks.”
 - Dale suggested installing a gate at the opening by the pavilion to prevent people in the pavilion from being hit by stray pickleballs.
- Pavilion, Flagpole, and Pickleball Court Lighting
 - o New lights were installed on each end of the pavilion building.
 - o Pavilion lighting provides strong ambient light to the pickleball courts at night.
 - o Phil monitors the area nightly while out with his dog.
 - o Phil noted the new flagpole light needs adjustment to properly illuminate the flag. Tino indicated the adjustment would take about an hour. Phil volunteered to adjust the flagpole light himself.
- Chamber Relationships and Local Business Networking
 - o Discussion held about relations with Hartford Chamber versus other chambers such as South Haven.
 - o Cost concerns were noted.
 - o Interest expressed in keeping community relations under the DDA and starting local business meetups.
 - o Proposed format:
 - Bi-monthly or quarterly gatherings.
 - Local venue such as conference center, Freedom, or hosted at the Village or Township.
 - Simple format with possible light catering or pizzas.
 - Attendees buy their own drinks.
 - o Goals include networking, information exchange, understanding chamber roles, sharing issues such as laundromat water, and exploring grants.
 - o Events could be segmented by business size if needed.
 - o Invite home-based businesses, Amish businesses, marijuana-related businesses, and all local businesses.

- o Tentative timing: October, likely Wednesday or Thursday evening to avoid sports conflicts.
- Community Recognition for New Hair Salon
 - o A welcome ad was considered for a hair salon discussed in September.
 - o Salon is outside the DDA district.
 - o Current policy is not to sponsor that under DDA.
 - o Possible informal welcome gesture was mentioned.
- DDA Website Proposal and Vendor Outreach
 - o Group discussed creating a dedicated DDA website to promote downtown, businesses, and events such as the Farmers Market.
 - o Goal is to create an advertisement for the town, separate from the official village website used for village business.
 - o Concern raised about possible confusion between DDA, village, and township.
 - o Website must legally focus on the DDA district but can link to village and township sites.
 - o Existing marketing budget estimated at \$3,000-\$5,000 could potentially be used.
 - o Rachel offered to reach out to website developers for quotes.
 - o Rachel proposed contacting three vendors to present website solutions to the DDA.
 - o Presentations should include scope, pricing, and tiered packages.
 - o One-time creation fee likely separate from ongoing maintenance/promotion.
- Motion by Thompson, supported by Ferrell to adjourn. All aye. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:07 pm.