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
November 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; Phil Glennie, Trustee; Alicia Lorenzo, Trustee; David Deloach, Trustee
- **Absent:** Chuck Rowlee, Trustee
- **Also Present:** Donna Spenner, Brian Johnson, Amy Cordes, Felix Torres, Mike Chappell, Rich Glista, Andrew Rudd

Additions to Agenda:

- None

Conflicts of Interest:

- None

Approval of Agenda Month:
Motion by Crandall, 2nd by Deloach
All Ayes. Motions carried.

Approval of Prior Council Minutes Month Prior:
Motion to approve October Council minutes with the spelling correction on page 2 in the County Board Report by Crandall, 2nd by Lorenzo
All Ayes. Motions carried.

Finance Manager Report-Kim Thompson:

- **Audit & Reconciliations:** 2023–2024 bank reconciliations were completed and sent to the auditor; work on 2024–2025 has begun. Property tax collections reached ~80% (typical average is ~85%) and will continue through February.
- **General Fund & Decorative Lighting:** A $2,000 budget increase was recommended for Village Property Repairs and Maintenance (budget was $2,000; year-to-date expenses were $3,800). A decorative-lighting invoice under Municipal Streets traffic services will be reviewed by Amy to determine if it belongs to the DDA or requires a budget amendment.

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Motion to approve Village Property Repairs & Maintenance budget amendment increase of $2,000.00, as is, and approve Municipal Streets Decorative Lighting budget amendment increase of $2,300.00, contingent on reclassification, by Crandall, 2nd by Lorenzo.
Roll-call:
Aye: Deloach, Glennie, Gritter, Crandall, Lorenzo
Nay: None
All Ayes. Motions carried.

Approval of Bills & Review of Bank Balances Month Prior:

- **CDL Training:** The Council discussed a one-week CDL training program starting December 14 for Chris to provide driving coverage.
  Motion to amend budget to add line item to Municipal Streets for CDL training in the amount of $2,650.00 to come from line item 204-545-864.000 by Crandall, 2nd by Glennie.
  Roll-call:
  Aye: Lorenzo, Glennie, Gritter, Crandall
  Nay: Deloach
  Motions carried.

  Motion to approve the addition of the CDL Training for $2,650.00 from Municipal Streets to the bills by Crandall, 2nd by Lorenzo.
  Roll-call:
  Aye: Glennie, Deloach, Lorenzo, Gritter, Crandall
  Nay: None
  All Ayes. Motions carried.

Motion by, 2nd by
All Ayes. Motions carried.

Presentations & Guests:

Van Buren County Commissioner: Mike Chappell

- The Board approved a three-year renewal contract with Southwest Michigan Behavioral Health, with the County's estimated pass through of PA2 funds to SWMBH for 2026 $205,000.00.
- The Board approved a renewal agreement with Domestic Violence Coalition for the new fiscal year, representing a continuation of our long-standing partnership, with $35,000 allocated in the County budget for services rendered under this agreement.
- The Board approved an agreement with Safe Harbor for Fiscal Year 26-27, granting them $25,000 of funding.
- The Board approved a renewal agreement for fiscal year 26-27 with Van Buren Conservation District, continuing our long-standing partnership with a budgeted amount of $100,000 for service rendered under the agreement.

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Lawrence Township: Donna Spenner

- Veteran's Day service will be held at 10 am at Veteran's Park.
- This election was the highest mid-term turnout with roughly a 50% turnout.
- The Township spent $292,634 on Township roads this year, supported by the two-mill road levy.
    - 50th Street: Planned wedge-and-seal work from Red Arrow to 64th, supported by solar farm contributions and funds from the renewable energy grant.
    - 70th Avenue (Christie Lake): The Township agreed to pay $64,000 for winter engineering to address chronic flooding, with plans expected in spring.
- The next Joint Township and Village meeting will be held November 17th at 6 pm at the Township Hall.

Cannabis Administrator: Rich Glista

- Awaiting attorney review of revised Marijuana Ordinance.

Wightman & Associates: Andrew Rudd

- **Lead Service Line Replacement:** The State revolving fund program offers ~$1.99 million in principal forgiveness (100% principal forgiveness across project costs) via a bond cancelation process. 101 service lines will be replaced from the main into each home (reaching 18 inches past the first valve). Final pipe material (copper preferred) will be finalized during design.
  Motion to accept the proposal by Wightman authorizing them to proceed with federal-equivalency requirements by Glennie, 2nd by Deloach.
  Roll-call:
  Aye: Gritter, Crandall, Lorenzo, Glennie, Deloach
  Nay: None
  All Ayes. Motions carried.
- **Water & Wastewater Asset Management Plan:** An optional $47,000 proposal ($12,000 water, $35,000 wastewater) to assess system assets, capacity, and rate planning was presented.
  Motion to amend Water budget to add $12,000 to Administrative-Contracted Services and amend Sewer budget to add $35,000 to Administrative-Contracted Services by Deloach, 2nd by Glennie.
  Roll-call:
  Aye: Lorenzo, Gritter, Crandall, Deloach, Glennie
  All Ayes. Motions carried.

  Motion to accept Water and Wastewater Asset Management Plan proposal by Deloach, 2nd by Crandall.
  Roll-call:
  Aye: Glennie, Gritter, Deloach, Crandall, Lorenzo
  Nay: None
  All Ayes. Motions carried.

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Pipe televising was deferred pending initial assessment results.

Reports:

President's Report:

- No Report

Clerk's Report:

- No Report

Village Manager:

- **Title VI Non-Discrimination Plan:** Cordes presented a draft Title VI Non-Discrimination Plan.
  Motion to approve Title VI Non-Discrimination Plan, pending attorney review, by Crandall, 2nd by Lorenzo.
  All Ayes. Motions carried.
- **Credit Card Policy:** The policy was updated to assign cards by position/title rather than individual name.
  Motion to adopt the revised credit card use policy by Deloach, 2nd by Crandall.
  Roll-call:
  Aye: Crandall, Deloach, Glennie, Gritter, Lorenzo
  Nay: None
  All Ayes. Motions carried.
- **Sidewalk Ordinance:** A revised sidewalk ordinance was presented for adoption.
  Motion to adopt sidewalk ordinance, pending attorney review, by Crandall, 2nd by Glennie.
  Roll-call:
  Aye: Deloach, Lorenzo, Crandall, Gritter, Glennie
  Nay: None
  All Ayes. Motions carried.
- DDA proposed a $50 non-resident fee for Pavilion Reservations at the October Council meeting, however, a motion was not made to adopt.
  Motion to adopt $50 non-resident fee for Pavilion Reservations by Crandall, 2nd by Lorenzo.
  Roll-call:
  Aye: Gritter, Deloach, Glennie, Lorenzo, Crandall
  Nay: None
  All Ayes. Motions carried.
- Two quotes received for replacing the lobby window and door. Requested a more comprehensive quote from one vendor so that the scope of work is as similar as possible to compare.
- **Village-Owned Parcel Sale:** An offer of $1,500 was received with proof of funds.
  Motion to accept $1,500 bid with Amy and Alicia authorized to negotiate closing costs and title fees with the buyer by Crandall, 2nd by Lorenzo.

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Roll-call:
Aye: Gritter, Deloach, Glennie, Lorenzo, Crandall
Nay: None
All Ayes. Motions carried.

- **Subpoena Regarding Safebuilt (*Sun v. Village of Decatur*):** A subpoena to produce records pertaining to the Village and Safebuilt was received on November 5th. Twelve municipalities were listed as receiving the subpoena. A proposal was received to file a joint motion to quash the subpoena as the Defendant, Safebuilt, already has these records.
  Motion to approve proceeding with filing a joint motion to quash the subpoena regarding Safebuilt by Deloach, 2nd by Crandall.
  All Ayes. Motions carried.

Police Department:

- Police Chief Felix Torres introduced himself and clarified reporting metrics (verbal warnings are recorded under citizen contacts rather than moving citations).
- DPW and Police are covering interim crossing guard duties until a permanent hire is found.
- An internship program for students aged 18+ was established with Van Buren Tech. The program will run for 6 weeks, with students riding Monday-Wednesday from 8:30-10:30 am.
- The out of service patrol car is still sitting in the lot. Chief has recommended donating it to the Van Buren Tech program with decals removed.
  Motion to donate the out of service patrol car to the Van Buren Tech Center law enforcement program by Crandall, 2nd by Deloach.
  Roll-call:
  Aye: Lorenzo, Gritter, Crandall, Deloach, Glennie
  Nay: None
  All Ayes. Motions carried.

Community Development:

- Trunk or Treat in the Park did not have the anticipated participation expected. Multiple factors likely contributed including the date that Halloween fell this year.
- Christmas in the Village has been rescheduled from December 5th to December 12th so that it will coincide with the Red Arrow Lighted Truck Convoy and the Community Lighted Parade. There will be no pancake breakfast but there will be a craft fair, tree lighting, and visit with Santa.
- The seasonal Christmas tree has been purchased and planted in the park.

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- The Revenue/Expense Report through the end of September showed property tax capture revenue roughly $15,000 above budget. Farmers Market income also exceeded projections, and additional interest income was expected.
- **Business Retention:**
  - No formal facade applications have been received this month.
  - The feed store experienced equipment failure after an elevator belt came off and is seeking repair quotes from an Indiana vendor. The committee discussed and approved providing $10,000 from the business retention fund, structured with a loan forgiveness rate of 20% per year that the store remains operational.
- **Proposed Paw Paw Artist Mural:** The artist has experienced delays due to a child's illness/injury and vehicle issues; portfolio and availability updates are pending. The project may wait until spring. Wall measurements remain pending.
- **Christmas Tree:** Badger Christmas Trees planted a Norway spruce east of the old pavilion for $425; the invoice was approved. Trimming will be required over the next 5–6 years to maintain full shape.
- **Fountain Design & Considerations:** The Village Council favors adding a fountain, planned for next year's budget. Options discussed include a three-tier model ($5,547 list price; installation $6,500; total approx. $12,300) and a two-tier model ($8,091 list price; total with installation and tax $14,591). Discussions included a 12-foot to 14-foot circular footprint, pool vs. rock base, pedestrian access/pavers, utility requirements (water/power), serviceable perimeter lighting, and liability/insurance. No final option was selected.
- **Tree Removal Approval:** The board reviewed estimates for removing three hazardous trees and stump grinding from trees located in the Village park. A motion was made by Kim and supported by John to authorize the tree removal and stump grinding for an amount not to exceed $12,000 (based on an $11,980 quote). All ayes. Motion passed.
  Motion to approve arborist recommended tree removal to be paid by the DDA by Lorenzo, 2nd by Crandall.
  Roll-call:
  Aye: Lorenzo, Glennie, Deloach, Crandall, Gritter
  Nay: None
  All Ayes. Motions carried.
- **Building & Infrastructure Maintenance:** Juriga Brothers completed emergency bracing, water redirection via downspout, and enclosure of three windows and a door on the south side of a Village-managed building (Orr building). Annette will reach out to their realtor to look into listing the building. The invoice is pending. Sticking bathroom doors in the park bathrooms were inspected by Kenny Fields and require replacement; a quote from Specialite will be sought. Consumers Energy was scheduled to connect streetlights between Village Hall, the stoplight, and the Old Town Hall on October 28. Park bathroom metalwork is slated for November.
- DDA is pursuing a $7,500 Consumer's Energy grant to help fund a dual-port EV ChargePoint station in the municipal lot.

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- **DDA Website and Branding:** A separate DDA website linked to the main Village site will begin development under a 3-month term starting November 1. Terms and fees will be reviewed 30 days prior to term expiration. The committee discussed using a previously developed logo featuring farmland and downtown buildings.
- Candidate properties were prioritized for submission to Chris Mihelich for enforcement of vacant and blighted properties.
- No meeting will be held in November 2026. A combined November/December board and budget meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2026, at 5:00 PM.

Joint Parks & Recreation:

- **Fundraising, Grants, and Donations:**
- Funding Status and Project Gap:
    - Approximately $204,000 was reported as secured, with roughly $100,000 still needed to meet the project funding goal. These figures may not reflect later grant assumptions discussed at the meeting: participants also estimated a $75,000 gap after a possible $25,000 governing-body contribution. The current total, remaining gap, and any committed versus anticipated funding need to be reconciled.
    - A $5,000 ITC donation was reported, but it was unclear whether it had been received or merely committed. Alicia said it could “turn into ten thousand,” though the matching arrangement was not established.
- Patronicity Campaign:
    - The group discussed a possible spring Patronicity campaign, potentially running March through May for up to 90 days; a 60-day campaign or less was also mentioned as preferable. No target or schedule was finalized.
    - A $50,000 campaign goal might receive a $50,000 match, for a potential $100,000 total. A lower target, such as $40,000, was also discussed as potentially more attainable.
    - The group needs to verify the matching cap, eligible target amounts, whether the match can count toward the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) match, and whether campaign proceeds can exceed the project’s remaining funding gap.
    - Alicia said Patronicity requires disclosure of existing project funding and may provide matching funds only if the campaign reaches its goal. She also referenced a $10,000 limit for an individual donation through the campaign; the scope and handling of larger donations need clarification.
    - Participants favored coordinating larger gifts with the campaign where practical, while accepting a donation immediately if a donor is ready rather than risking the commitment.
    - Campaign preparation may need to begin in January, although grant decisions are expected later. A spring launch could be more credible once bids, an engineered draft, and possibly a contractor commitment are available.
    - Prerequisites discussed include a five-year maintenance plan with DPW, an updated Disability Network letter, and project details sufficient to support the campaign. The

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maintenance plan could include routine walkthroughs, monthly equipment checks, removing bins, and reporting repairs to DPW.

- Community and student surveys are underway, with designs targeted for December and construction planned for May/June.
- Van Buren County Recreation Grant: Alicia said the application had been submitted, with additional narrative pages still to complete. The application is due in December and requires a governing-body resolution of support and site-control documents

  Motion to approve resolution to authorize Lorenzo to apply for the Van Buren County Recreation Grant and sign necessary documents by Crandall, 2nd by Deloach.
  Roll-call:
  Aye: Lorenzo, Glennie, Gritter, Crandall, Deloach
  Nay: None
  All Ayes. Motions carried.

LDFA:

- **Financial Reporting and Lift Station Funding**
  - Fiscal year 2024 records were completed and scheduled to be sent to the auditor the following morning. Work on fiscal year 2025 would begin next.
  - The water tower loan balance and any remaining reimbursement due will be clearer after the other audits are completed.
  - If no reimbursement is due, the group may consider modifying the TIFA plan to include the James lift station infrastructure cost. The proposed change would require approval, and the tax capture could help fund the lift station.
- **Township Representation**
  - Kim will ask Donna to ask the board whether it wants a township representative or wants the current representative to continue in the role.
  - The group noted that it currently has four members and agreed to leave the arrangement as is for now.
- **Bank Balance and Certificate of Deposit**
  - The bank balance was approximately $175,000, excluding the township's winter tax distribution.
  - A motion was made to move $150,000 into a three-month CD at Sturgis. The group may continue rolling over the CD, depending on future rates. These funds will be earmarked for the James St lift station replacement.
- The next LDFA meeting was set for Wednesday, January 6, at 5:30. The budget will be the primary discussion item.

Personnel:

- Personnel recommends that the policy be revised to implement a uniform 90-day waiting period for both the Defined Contribution (DC) and 457 plans, default new hires to 0% in DC unless

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chosen otherwise, remove employer contribution vesting periods, and establish a 50% match up to 3% for both plans that can be combined for a total of 3% if split between plans.
Motion to modify MERS policy to Personnel committee recommendations by Crandall, 2nd by Deloach.
Roll-call:
Aye: Lorenzo, Glennie, Deloach, Gritter, Crandall
Nay: None
All Ayes. Motions carried.

Planning Commission:

- Worked on revising Sidewalk Ordinance in preparation for presentation to Council for approval pending attorney review.
- Discussion on proposed zoning request for the next phase of the Corwin Meadows project. The engineer for the project will be attending the next Planning meeting to discuss it in further detail.

Public Services/DPW:

- Continue to work on patching spots on the road and the municipal lot before the plants shut down for the winter.
- There has been a delay in the property purchase, pending a Tier 1 Environmental Review, and attorney review.
  Motion to authorize Amy to work on Tier 1 Environmental Review for purchase of property by Deloach, 2nd by Crandall.
  Roll-call:
  Aye: Glennie, Gritter, Crandall, Lorenzo, Deloach
  Nay: None
  All Ayes. Motions carried.
- Waste site brush pile burned down thanks to training by the Lawrence Township Emergency Services and John Gritter. A quote of $3,850 was received for bulldozer work to level the area out and make room for millings, with $1,925 to come from Local Streets and $1,925 to come from Major.
  Motion to approve the quote for $3,850 with $1,925 to come from Local Streets and $1,925 to come from Major Streets by Glennie, 2nd by Lorenzo.
  Roll-call:
  Aye: Deloach, Gritter, Crandall, Lorenzo, Glennie
  Nay: None
  All Ayes. Motions carried.

Citizen Police Committee:

- Meetings scheduled upon request.

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ZBA:

- No Meeting Held.

New Business:

- Those re-elected and newly elected will begin their terms on 12/1/26.
- The Village office will be closed from 12-2 pm on Thursday, December 3rd for an office holiday lunch.
- Meeting with Jill Bland with Southwest Michigan First provided some helpful insight into strategic planning needed to help market opportunities for businesses interested in establishing themselves in Lawrence, including potential tax abatement opportunities.
- New property owner at 112 E. St. Joseph is looking to turn the building into a sports retail shop and has begun work on the building.

Old Business:

- None

Public Comment:

- None

Council Comment:

- None

Motion to Adjourn:

Motion by Deloach, 2nd by Lorenzo
All Ayes, Motions carried.
Meeting Adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Amy Cordes, Village Manager

John Gritter, Village President

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