



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
April 8, 2025

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
- **Absent:** David Quick, Trustee
- **Also Present:** Theresa Stroud, Village Manager; Brian Johnson, DPW Manager; Donna Spenner, Township Supervisor; Paul Bianco, Police Chief; Paul Kolon, Resident

Additions to Agenda:

- None

Conflicts of Interest:

- None

Approval of Agenda Month:

No changes, no approval needed

Approval of Prior Council Minutes Month Prior:

Motion by Crandall, 2nd by Deloach

All Aye. Motions Carried.

Approval of Bills & Review of Bank Balances Month Prior:

Motion by Glennie, 2nd by Crandall

All Aye. Motions Carried.

Presentations & Guests:

Van Buren County Commissioner: Mike Chappell

- Not present, no report

Lawrence Township: Donna Spenner

- Township meetings are now the third Thursday of the month, next meeting is April 17th at 6 p.m.



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- CR 215 N is getting ready for a big project and will be closed. They are marking it and getting detours set up.
- Township received a MISHDA Grant and revisiting Zoning with those funds. They will be doing a survey soon and will include Village residents.
- James Fein will be taking the position of Medical Assistant Chief. His and Chief Richardson's shifts will overlap to provide more coverage for the Township.
- Presented a pie chart to show the distribution of Lawrence Township Property Taxes: Lawrence Public Schools 44% (\$2,980,205); Van Buren County 17% (\$1,168,621); Van Buren Intermediate School District 16% (\$1,070,254); Lawrence Township Emergency Services 9% (\$572,921); Lawrence Township Roads 5% (\$315,065); Van Buren District Library 4% (\$231,931); Lawrence Township General Fund 3% (\$221,037); Lawrence Township Senior Services 1% (\$78,759); Other Schools (Hartford, Paw Paw, Decatur) 1% (\$70,207); Paw Paw District Library 0% (\$2,151).

Lawrence Township Emergency Services: Steve Richardson

- Not present, report given by Chief Bianco
- Fire calls for the month: 8 from the Township, 5 from the Village, and 0 from Arlington Township (13 fire calls for March 2025)
- QR calls for the month: 17 from Lawrence Township, 12 from the Village, and 5 from Arlington Township (34 QR calls for March 2025)
- James Fein and Sam Stafford have completed the State of Michigan Bureau of Fire Services, Fire Instructor I class with written and practical testing and are now certified. Both have taken over the responsibility of training officers for LTES and are now enrolled in the State of Michigan Fire Officer I course.
- Two LTES members are nearing the completion of the Fire Fighter I and II, and Hazardous Materials-Operations course.
- Five LTES members will be completing the State certified Emergency Driver's Training Course in April, hosted by Bangor Community Fire Department.
- Ordered 25 new SCBA air cylinders to bring SCBA into compliance for NIOSH certification. The shipping date for the new air cylinders is May 6, 2025.
- A committee has been appointed to plan a Centennial celebration for LTES for this summer. Planning meeting scheduled to decide on a date in August to hold the celebration.
- James Fein, Medical Assistant Chief, is being moved from part-time status in the position to full-time. He will begin in full-time status on April 14, 2025.
- LTES would like to thank all agencies that were involved with several emergency calls that occurred in Lawrence Township recently. We would like to thank Sheriff Abbott for this leadership and the Van Buren County Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team that provided assistance to all agencies that responded to the fatal crash that occurred on County Road 215.

Lawrence Public Schools Superintendent: Ryan Williamson

- Not present, no report

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Reports:

President's Report:

- No Report

Clerk's Report:

- No Report

Village Manager:

- Presented a proposal from Lauterbach & Amen, LLP for \$7,500 to finish up our audit process. The Treasury Department has said that they will pay the \$7,500 fee. Initially will be paid by General Fund and reimbursed when Treasury issues the Village a check.
- Motion to move forward with the proposal and get the audit finished.
Motion by Crandall, 2nd by Lorenzo.
All Aye. Motion Carried.
- Announced she will be retiring on August 1, 2025.

Police Department:

- We wrote 24 LPD incident reports during the period 1 Mar to 31 Mar 2025 which ranged from a Property Damage accident(s), Larceny from Bldg, Assault, EMS/Fire incident(s), Suspicious Situations, Welfare check, Assist other Dept, Civil Matter, Trouble with Subject and General Assistance.
- Ran radar and watched for violations all over town to bring speeding down and make streets safer.
- Daily vehicle patrol in the business park to keep an on eye on businesses. Stopping in to check w/employees as well.
- New tenants at 305 Farms continue to move in. In touch w/ the state inspectors to ensure all is good.
- During the month of March LPD issued 15 - written traffic citations, took 1 - UD10 traffic crash report(s) and made approximately 34 traffic stops for traffic offenses of which 19 resulted in verbal warnings to citizens.
- During the month of March 2025 LPD responded to 12 calls for service that originated from the Van Buren County 911 dispatch Center. 6 police calls, 3 medical and 3 fire/rescue call(s). MSP was dispatched to 8 calls (7-primary & 1-as back-up to Lawrence PD or VBCS) and the VBCS was dispatched to 3 calls (2-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. Gave application to one candidate 3/26/25
- Working on various training points with Ofc Vande Voren...he is making progress slow but sure.
- Both Ofc Vande Voren & I continue to work on our Yearly mandatory MCOLES training.



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- Radio Encryption update – If you have not already replaced/upgraded radios...Wait until we get answers from the federal & state levels of government. Expecting further updates in late 2025 per Tim McGee.
- Chief Bianco has been responding to medical calls both in the Village and Township when on duty to assist Township with the QR team & Fire support/manning.
- Attended Lawrence QR training on March 26, 2025 @ 6p & Emergency Services Meeting on March 6, 2025 @ 7p, March 20, 2025 Fire Training & March 27, 2025 Fire Truck Maintenance all while off duty from the PD.
- Ofc Vande Voren took the state MFR test and failed it the first time. Retook it a second time and passed. Took the National test on 18 Mar 2025 and did not pass. Scheduling to retake in April sometime.
- Opioid Settlement funding – VB County has been utilizing this funding. Update to share with council.
- Chief Bianco addressed both incidents involving the Amish buggy accident on County Road 215 and the drowning accident at the bridge.
- Next Citizen's Police Committee meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

Community Development:

- No meeting due to Spring Break schedule. Next meeting is scheduled for May 1, 2025.

DDA:

- Discussion held regarding two pickle ball courts in the park. Dale will contact the Village engineer about design and cost.
- Discussed whether we wanted to do drains on Elizabeth St. or pickle ball courts; had earmarked \$50,000 for drains on Elizabeth St. Engineering fees for pickle ball would be approximately \$80,000 with a total cost of approximately \$100,000.
- For Community Development, Phil is working on the performers for Music in the Park and the Easter Egg Hunt in the Village Park will be April 19th at 11:00 a.m.
- The 6 new benches for the east, west and north side of the park are in. As discussed earlier, people may cost share with the DDA to memorialize a bench with a donation of 50% of the cost. The cost of each bench was \$1,124. Motion by Phil supported by John to set the cost to memorialize a person at \$550. Carried. The DDA will purchase the plaques for the benches so they will be consistent. Crown Trophy in Portage can make plaques for approximately \$10.
- Next meeting Wednesday, April 23rd at 5:30 p.m.

Joint Parks & Recreation:

- They submitted their grant application on April 1st. Still looking into fundraising ideas and donation methods.

LDFA:

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- No Report; Next meeting April 16th at 6:30 p.m.

Personnel:

- No Report; Next meeting Wednesday, April 9 at 1 p.m.

Planning Commission:

- General Ordinance changes and updates regarding Animals, Secondhand Goods, Golf Carts, Anti-Noise, Adoption of the International Property Maintenance Code, and Noxious Weeds were presented for approval by Council.
Motion to approve changes to the General Ordinances as proposed.
Motion by Glennie, 2nd by Rowlee.
All Aye. Motion Carried.

Public Services/DPW:

- Training on GIS system went well. We will be working on our own with it and April will help with anything we need.
- Not finalized but planning to hold a Project Planning Public Hearing April 21st at 5:00 PM at Village Hall for the Water Service Line Replacement Grant that we are pursuing. There will be more information once Andrew has everything in order.
- Dave Deloach-Oder Parallel Parking signs for around the park to keep people from pulling in over the sidewalk and also to keep cars from sticking out into the road.

Citizen Police Committee:

- Next meeting is Tuesday, May 20th at 6:30 p.m.
- Motion to purchase a battery operated sign for Ron for crossing students.
Motion by Crandall, 2nd by Glennie.
All Aye. Motion Carried.

ZBA:

- No Meeting Held.

New Business:

- None

Old Business:

- None

Public Comment:

- Paul Kolon: Property of neighbor, Jason Johnson, has been cleaned up and came to the Village office to find out if there was any information he could get regarding the conditions of the out building that is not appropriate. He was given no information and thought that was strange



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since he assumed the plaintiff was the Village of Lawrence vs. Clark Matheny. Chief Bianco reminded Mr. Kolon that the information we get is received from Safebuilt, who are the ones who enforce the blight regulations per the Village request. Chief Bianco also let Mr. Kolon know that Mr. Johnson was remedying the violations that were provided by Safebuilt. Chief Bianco has also spoken with Mr. Matheny about putting in a driveway to alleviate the issue with the cars parked in the driveway. Manager Stroud informed Council and Mr. Kolon that Safebuilt is the one who monitors the progress on violations. If Safebuilt gives 30 days to remedy the violations, they go back to check on day 31. Mr. Kolon said he had contacted the court and was told Mr. Johnson would be on continual monitoring until September. His concern is that the accumulation of articles considered to be blight has already started and wants to know what the process is going forward. If the property is cleaned up and meets the requirements of the violation, the process would start over again with them getting notices to clean up the blight, then ticketing if nothing is done and/or court mandated requirements.

Council Comment:

- None

Motion to Adjourn:

Motion by Deloach, 2nd by Crandall
All Aye, Motion Carried.
Meeting Adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:


Theresa Stroud, Village Manager


John Gritzer, Village President