Village of Lawrence
157 N. Paw Paw St.
Lawrence, MI 49064
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Village of Lawrence Regular Common Council Meeting
157 N. Paw Paw St., Lawrence, MI 49064
October 13, 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; Phil Glennie, Trustee; David Deloach, Trustee; Alicia Lorenzo, Trustee; Annette Crandall, Trustee
- **Absent:** Chuck Rowlee, Trustee
- **Also Present:** Amy Cordes, Village Manager; Brian Johnson, DPW Supervisor; Kim Thompson, Finance Manager; Donna Spenner, Township Supervisor; Rich Glista, Cannabis Administrator; Ryan Williamson, LPS Superintendent; Mike Chappell, Van Buren County Commissioner; Sam Halfmann, Market One; Taylor Hoffman, Market One

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 by Crandall, 2nd by Glennie
All Ayes. Motions carried.

Finance Manager Report-Kim Thompson:

- Financial Report and Bank Reconciliation:
  - Bank reconciliations are being finalized; files to be sent to auditor by Thursday, October 15, 2026 (target internal completion by Wednesday, October 14).
  - Audit submission will be an F-65 (not a full audit) per State recommendation; State to receive within ~one week after auditor receives files.
- Budget Amendments:
  - General Fund – Equipment Rental/Operations & Maintenance: budget increase of $3,500 (from $3,000 to projected $6,500) to cover added DPW assistance.

- Major Streets – Contract Engineering (North Paw Paw St. Project): increase from $20,000 to $40,000.
  Motion to approved budget amendments as presented by Crandall, 2nd by Deloach.
  Roll-call:
  Aye: Gritter, Glennie, Crandall, Lorenzo, Deloach
  Nay: None
  Absent: Rowlee
  All ayes. Motions carried.
- Motion to set Budget Workshop for Saturday, January 9, 2027, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM as a Special Meeting by Deloach, 2nd by Lorenzo. All ayes. Motions carried.

- Property Tax Collection and Investment Update:
  - 79% of property taxes collected as of September 14; payments accepted through February 2027 with interest after September 14.
  - Historical collection by end of February ~85%; ~6% additional expected.
  - Kim will be able to include the accrued CD interest to be in monthly reports. Sturgis doesn't disperse interest until the CD matures, but on a monthly basis, Kim can show what is coming.
  - Funds dispersed into the General Fund, Streets, Police, LDFA, and DDA; $371,000 moved out of the tax fund and $600,000 out of Water Fund checking into a CD that is earning 4.8% interest instead of 4.2%.

Approval of Bills & Review of Bank Balances Month Prior:

Motion by Glennie, 2nd by Crandall to approve bills.
Roll-call:
Ayes: Lorenzo, Glennie, Deloach, Crandall, Gritter
Nays: None
Absent: Rowlee
All ayes. Motions carried.

Presentations & Guests:

Van Buren County Commissioner: Mike Chappell

- County Board Report:
  - The Board approved Friend of the Court's joint $5,250 grant application with Berrien and Cass Counties for supervised parenting time and neutral parent exchanges; with no county general fund impact.
  - The Board approved the purchase, installation, and 60-month support of the Motorola Vesta Next system through INDIGITAL in an amount of $523,991.99, subject to annual appropriation for future recurring costs.
  - The Board awarded Civil Construction Solutions LLC the $423,748 construction contract. Funding includes a $283,700 Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant; $58,300

from Hartford Township; $5,000 from Van Buren Conservation District; and $76,748 from the Parks & Rec Millage).
  - The Board awarded VanderGalien LLC the snow removal contract for 14 County-owned locations at $65,600, a 2.7% increase over the previous season.
  - Parks department grant application confirmed received.

Lawrence Township: Donna Spenner

- The next joint meeting scheduled for Tuesday, November 17, 2026, at Township Hall; agenda items requested one week in advance (by Tuesday, November 10, 2026).
- Suggested that the Village Planning Commission coordinate with Township Planning Commission regarding Data Centers.
- LTES Pizza Hut fundraiser is scheduled for October 19th at the Paw Paw Pizza Hut from 4-8 PM.

Lawrence Public Schools Superintendent: Ryan Williamson

- School Break-In Incident and Security Review:
  - Break-in occurred early Sunday, October 11, 2026; non-resident entered via second-story window using a ladder and lead pipe.
  - Intruder took minor items and a small amount cash from students' Jostens orders; all items were recovered; no classroom access (doors locked); captured after vestibule doors contained them.
  - Security positives: zero blind spots in surveillance; vestibule containment; secured classrooms.
  - Exterior glass was cleaned up by noon the next day and replaced; interior windows were replaced today.
- School Bond Planning:
  - Considering a two-series bond with no mill increase for May 2027 vote.
  - Buildings (1952, 1963) need plumbing, electrical updates; renovation of home ec to applied skills/life skills space; HS locker room upgrades; grades 1–3 classroom upgrades (countertops, sinks, faucets, storage).
  - Qualified bond offers better rate/state rating and flexibility but requires prevailing wage; non-qualified avoids prevailing wage but may need future mill increase. Current leaning: qualified bond.
- School Strategic Plan and Other Updates:
  - Strategic plan approved: five goals consolidated into two.
  - Crossing guard coverage discontinued due to recruitment challenges.
  - Schools for Tools Mobile Field Trip (Trades): 7th–12th graders received a hands-on preview of The Trades when the Schools to Tools mobile training center visited campus! Through virtual reality job-site tours and practical workshops in drilling, hammering, and building, students got a firsthand look at the skills that power essential industries.
  - Seniors attended Detroit Tigers college/career fair; included recruiters and a Tigers game.

- Count Day (October 2026): 97% attendance; enrollment ~415, expected to settle around 402–404, consistent with prior year; average loss ~26 students/year; efforts to halt decline.

- School Athletics:
  - Vipers program is doing well with a goal to increase participation and re-establish a full JV team; seeing positive interschool interactions and socialization.
  - Cheerleading has strong numbers (46 cheerleaders between the schools).
  - Expanding opportunities for incoming eighth graders and high school students for youth soccer; youth soccer record 3-5-2.

Cannabis Administrator: Rich Glista

- Cannabis Chapter rewrite consolidated three ordinances into a single code chapter with standardized formatting.
- Requested change for license renewals to align with fiscal year from current July 14th date.

Market One: Sam Halfmann and Taylor Hoffman

- CDBG Program Update:
  - Five of six village applications have been verified as income-eligible; initial inspections to be completed by end of week (TrueSpec inspector Greg).
  - One late July application is under additional document review.
  - Construction (roofing, windows, repairs) is expected to start late 2026 or early spring 2027.
  - Second round planned around December 2026 targeting 6–8 additional applicants.

Reports:

President's Report:

- No Report

Clerk's Report:

- No Report

Village Manager:

- Zoning Update:
  - Meeting is set with the ISD engineer and Chris on October 14, 2026, for Corwin Meadows Phase 2 plat requirements.
  - Draft short-term rental ordinance drafted and reviewed by attorney. Will work with Zoning Administrator prior to submitting final for Council approval.
- The Village will support an Open Letter HB 5140 Draft to prioritize Villages regarding accommodations taxes that could be levied.
- Shared Fuel Agreement:

- Agreement passed by the Township Board and Township attorney review; supporting documents were drafted by Fire Chief Featherstone.
- Motion to enter into a shared fuel agreement with the Township by Glennie, 2nd by Deloach.
  Roll-call:
  Aye: Crandall, Glennie, Deloach, Gritter, Lorenzo
  Nay: None
  Absent: Rowlee
  All ayes. Motions carried.

- Received an extensive 9-point FOIA request on SAFEbuilt permits and records from 2020 to current. Village requested requestor narrow scope, however, no reply received. FOIA response letter is due by October 14, 2026.
- Sale of Landlocked Village Parcel:
  - Two of three adjacent property owners responded to the September 23, 2026, letter that was mailed requesting they reply by October 5, 2026, if interested.
  - Motion to authorize Amy to notify interested parties that they have 14 days to submit a letter of intent with proof of funds and accept the highest bid by Crandall, 2nd by Lorenzo.
    Roll-call:
    Aye: Gritter, Glennie, Crandall, Deloach, Lorenzo
    Nay: None
    Absent: Rowlee
    All ayes. Motions carried.

Police Department:

- Report correction: "CR 358/Crandall Parkway" should be "CR 365/Crandall Parkway"; Amy will address with Chief
- Chief Torres will officially begin on Monday, October 19, 2026.

Community Development:

- Halloween: October 31 (Saturday referenced), library costume contest and parade before trick-or-treating; trick-or-treating and Trunk or Treat both 5:00–7:30 PM.
- Christmas in the Village: December 5 (moved from December 12); tentative schedule includes breakfast, parade, tree lighting, post-parade meet Santa at the Legion; considering carriage rides; traffic control likely from school to park; chili event under consideration with health regulation constraints.
- Music in the Park is moving to Saturdays at noon for 2027 to align with Farmer's Market attendance.

DDA:

- DDA Update: Finances, Projects, Maintenance:

- Revenues ahead of plan (budgeted 200, received 210; pending winter township tax distribution); higher-than-expected revenue from highway signs and farmer's market; slightly higher spend on community promotions.
- Asphalt paving bill received and paid.
- Considering increased grant/facade permit amounts with verified applicant expenditures.
- Cost recovery underway for damaged light pole by a vendor at the farmer's market.
- Highway exit flower beds to shift to low-maintenance perennials/ground cover and bulbs.
- Mural projects are being considered.

- Park Updates:
  - Location of former fountain discussed (currently a bush); options: install permanent Christmas tree or build tiered fountain. Looking to fountain options and secondary location for permanent Christmas tree if fountain re-installed.
  - Bathroom lighting, wiring, roof, fascia, soffit repairs, and exterior signage scheduled before winter.
  - New basketball court targeted to wrap this month; reconfiguration plan: one full-size court and one half-court for younger children.
  - DDA is arranging for an arborist to address dead trees before new playground installation.
- Infrastructure Contributions and Projects:
  - DDA and LDFA may assist with Village match for James Street Lift Station.
  - Old Carpp canning site hazards and cleanup considerations noted.
  - Baker St. drainage and EV charger topics to be detailed in combined Nov–Dec DDA meeting during budget process.
- Marketing, Social Media, and Old Town Hall Electrical Upgrade:
  - Approved a 3-month marketing/social media pilot (website, social media, storytelling, business spotlights, branding).
  - Old Town Hall electrical upgrade approved: consolidate to one 400A service, reduce monthly utilities, prep for HVAC upgrades; quote below prior estimates; structural engineer evaluation planned for the Orr building.
- Park Pavilion Rental Policy:
  - DDA is proposing a $50 pavilion reservation fee for non-residents of Lawrence. Proof of residence would be required to waive the $50 fee. A policy will be drafted for approval.

Joint Parks & Recreation:

- Park Playground Project Update:
  - Total funding at $199,044 with a $5,000.00 donation from ITC in the works.
  - Crowdfunding via Patronicity planned for the spring, closer to the build phase of the project.

- Lorenzo will be presenting at 100 Women Who Care at La Cantina on October 14 and hoping to be selected.
- Van Buren County Recreation Grant application award is for $25,000.00. Awards are expected to be announced in December.
- Need more volunteers and working on a plan for school engagement with Joelle from AbonMarche.

LDFA:

- No Report

Personnel:

- Finalized contract for Chief Torres and noted the changes in the contract for full-time Chief position versus previous part-time Chief positions. Official start date set for Monday, October 19, 2026.
    - Motion to accept Police Chief Torres's contract by Crandall, 2nd by Lorenzo.
      Roll-call:
      Aye: Crandall, Gritter, Deloach, Lorenzo, Glennie
      Nay: None
      Absent: Rowlee
      All ayes. Motions carried.

Planning Commission:

- September Planning Commission meeting was held at Township Hall. During the meeting there was a presentation that outlined Village limitations on preventing Data Centers and what the Village could do proactively. The State limits outright denials for Data Centers, but strict zoning/local ordinances are possible. Potential sites were identified but no property owners have been approached by any data center developers at this time. The plan moving forward is to collaborate with the Township for aligned restrictive ordinances.
- Upcoming trainings: MSU session (solar, data centers, wind, battery storage) on October 27, 2026; Michigan Park Plan seminar November 18, 2026 (Kalamazoo, 8:45 AM–3:30 PM).
- Amy, Donna, and Annette scheduled to meet with Jill Bland with Southwest Michigan First to address "hard to work with" rural stigmas and strategies. The desired direction is to revisit ordinances that are outdated and misaligned with the direction Lawrence wishes to head.

Public Services/DPW:

- New plow truck arrived; Brian will be attending the Kalamazoo County Road Commission event on October 20, 2026 (about ten trucks expected) to review functionality; demo only, not general driving.
- DPW to assess pothole repairs before the asphalt plant closes for the winter.
- Ox Roast shed is going to be dismantled in the next few days.

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Citizen Police Committee:

- Meetings scheduled upon request.

ZBA:

- No Meeting Held.

New Business:

- None

Old Business:

- None

Public Comment:

- None

Council Comment:

- Phil Glennie would like to recognize the contributions to the Village made by Mark Keyser including work on the lift stations.

Motion to Adjourn:

Motion by Deloach, 2nd by Crandall
All Ayes, Motions carried.
Meeting Adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Amy Cordes 11/10/2026
Amy Cordes, Village Manager

NOV 10 2026
John Gritter, Village President