

VILLAGE OF SARANAC
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
December 8, 2025

The Saranac Village Council Regular Meeting was called to order by President Darby at 7:00 p.m. at the Saranac Village Office, 27 N Bridge Street.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: President Darby, Straubel; Trustees – Day, Doll, Klutman, Mulnix, Talcott, Whorley
Absent: DPW Koster
Guests: Kayla Palmer & Todd Richter – Fleis & VandenBrink Engineering,
Rachel Gross – Candidate for Michigan State House of Representatives

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Doll, to approve the Regular Agenda. All yeas.

Public Comments

Rachel Gross from Portland, was in attendance to introduce herself as a 2026 candidate for the Michigan State House of Representatives, 78th District. Gina Johnsen currently holds this position, but has announced that she is running for the Michigan State Senate, District 33 in 2026.

Gross provided council members with some background information on herself. She was born and raised in Portland, Michigan, and still resides there now. She has been a nurse for nearly 30 years, a career where she developed a deep-rooted compassion for others. She believes that this trait, along with her passion and commitment to community activism, makes her the right choice to represent the people of the 78th District.

Law Enforcement Report

Council members reviewed Ionia County Sheriff Office stats for Village of Saranac patrol for the month of November 2025.

Kayla Palmer & Todd Richter of Fleis & VandenBrink Engineering (F & V), were in attendance to review with council, their proposal to develop the second phase of our Parks Concept Plan. The first phase proposal, which included Scheid Park only, was approved at last month's council meeting. The second phase will include the Nature Park, Riverwalk Park, Depot Park and the Boat Launch/Trailhead Park.

Mulnix reported that the Parks Committee met with Palmer and her associate Marlina O'Connell to brainstorm ideas for the Scheid Park (phase one) portion of the Parks Concept Plan. The meeting was very productive, with several visions for Scheid Park's future emerging. Palmer and O'Connell will incorporate these visions into "bubble diagrams", which they anticipate completing prior to the January 12, 2026 council meeting.

Darby inquired of Richter, his thoughts on a Parks Concept Plan approach. Will it reduce the amount of design engineering and grant application costs in the future? Richter indicated that having a Parks Concept Plan will make it much easier when it comes time for a park project and related grant application, as the design work will already be completed.

Mulnix spoke about the benefits of having an overall visual of our parks system. A Parks Concept Plan will allow council and community members the ability to visualize how best to create connectivity from one park to the next. Mulnix believes that a Parks Concept Plan approach will prove to be invaluable.

Darby inquired about the timeframe for completing the Parks Concept Plan. Palmer approximates four months.

Conversation was had regarding potential grant opportunities. Palmer will keep Straubel apprised of any applicable grant notifications she receives.

Darby mentioned the potential for a Waterway grant. She has heard of this opportunity through members of the Lower Grand River Water Trail. Palmer stated that she is familiar with the grant and is currently assisting a customer with an application. Council members concurred that this particular grant opportunity would fit well with improvements to the Boat Launch Park.

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Talcott, to accept F & V's proposal to develop phase two of a Parks Concept Plan as presented, for a lump sum fee of \$18,300.

Roll call vote: yeas – Day, Doll, Klutman, Mulnix, Talcott, Whorley, Darby; nays – none; absent – none.

Motion was made by Day, supported by Klutman, to accept minutes of the November 10, 2025 Regular Meeting. All yeas.

Motion was made by Whorley, supported by Doll, to accept the Treasurer's Report of November 30, 2025. All yeas.

Various Accounts Payable items were reviewed and questions answered.

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Klutman, to approve the Accounts Payable of November 10, 2025, in the amount of \$102,696.51.

Roll call vote: yeas – Day, Doll, Klutman, Mulnix, Talcott, Whorley, Darby; nays – none; absent – none.

The Zoning Administrator's Report of Services for November 2025 was reviewed.

The Planning Commission did not meet in December.

Committee Reports

Budget – No report

Personnel

Darby reported that the Personnel Committee met regarding 2026/2027 employee related budget items. The committee is recommending a 3.5% wage increase for all employees, with other items including cell stipend, insurance opt out, retirement plan contributions and bonus pay to remain the same as the 2025/2026 budget year.

Motion was made by Day, supported by Klutman, to approve the Personnel Committee's recommendations as noted above.

Roll call vote: yeas – Day, Doll, Klutman, Mulnix, Talcott, Whorley, Darby; nays – none; absent – none.

Darby mentioned that the committee has been discussing the potential of making the current part-time position into a full-time position sometime in 2026.

Public Safety – No report

Parks & Recreation – No additional report other than what was discussed earlier.

Streets – No report

Buildings & Grounds – No report

Water & Sewer

Council members discussed the upcoming increase in water and sewer rates established by resolution and effective January 1, 2026. Council requested that Straubel review the most recent Water and Sewer Rate Studies to determine if our reserves are where they should be.

Public Comments – None

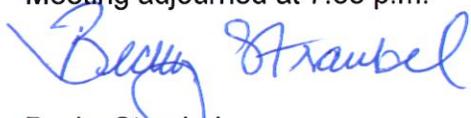
Additional Business

Day reported that he has been pleasantly surprised to see the Dial-A-Ride service being utilized by school children and their parents.

Council suggested that Straubel re-post the Dial-A-Ride flyer on the Village Facebook page, to remind the community of this beneficial service.

Mulnix inquired about the status of the MSHDA Homeowner Rehabilitation Grant. Per Straubel, grant documents have been signed and she is awaiting news of the next step.

Meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.



Becky Straubel,
Village Treasurer/Deputy Clerk