

VILLAGE OF SARANAC
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
February 16, 2026

The Saranac Village Council Regular Meeting was called to order by President Darby at 7:07 p.m. at the Saranac Village Office, 27 N Bridge Street.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: President Darby, Straubel, DPW Koster; Trustees – Day, Klutman (arrived at 7:35 p.m.), Mulnix, Whorley
Absent: Doll, Talcott,
Guests: Deputy Alec Stewart, ICSSO and Kayla Palmer, Fleis & VandenBrink Engineering

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

Public Comments – None

Law Enforcement Report

Council members reviewed Ionia County Sheriff Office stats for Village of Saranac patrol for the month of January 2026.

Deputy Alec Stewart was in attendance to provide council members with an update on village law enforcement items of interest, and to answer any questions they might have. Stewart informed council members that Deputy Chyanne Overbeck is the new night shift officer for the Village of Saranac and Boston Township.

Kayla Palmer was in attendance to review with council members, the Scheid Park Master Concept that she and O'Connell developed with feedback from the Village Parks Committee. The goal for tonight is to narrow down items to include in a Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund grant application, which is due by April 1, 2026. The Village will seek additional input from the public at a Public Hearing on March 9th, during the council's regular meeting. Palmer and O'Connell are currently working on estimates for all elements of the Scheid Park Master Concept.

Council members discussed priorities to potentially include in the grant application, such as; pickleball courts, new trails and trail extenders/connectors to the Fred Meijer Grand River Valley Rail Trail. After cost estimates are obtained, Palmer will put together options of items to include in the grant application.

Palmer inquired whether the Village would be able to provide a 50% match with a project scope of \$600,000 (\$400,000 grant proceeds, which is the maximum allowed, and \$200,000 in Village funds). Straubel stated that the General Fund would be able to support the project, given the fact that General Fund will not be funding any major capital purchases in the next 2+ years.

Palmer informed council members of another potential funding opportunity that was recently brought to her attention. A memo entitled "FY27 State Enhancement Grant Request" was recently released. The potential for grant money, with no match required, focuses on public safety, infrastructure, capital improvement, environmental conservation, economic development and accessibility and/or servicing diverse communities. Projects that would otherwise not be able to be funded by the local municipal budget, where the allocation of state dollars would be the only way for the project to come to fruition, will be the most competitive.

Palmer suggested that council consider the new funding opportunity as a means to relocate the Department of Public Works (DPW), which is currently in the center of Scheid Park. The Scheid Park Master Concept layout depicts the DPW relocated to the southwest corner of the park.

Council members discussed the idea, at length. Day inquired whether there are any other locations within the Village, that might be better suited for the DPW than Scheid Park. Various locations were mentioned, but none that are Village owned.

Day voiced concern over using state money to relocate the Department of Public Works. Darby stated that without an opportunity such as this, the DPW would most likely never be relocated, as the Village would not be able to afford to do so. The DPW is a crucial part of Village operations. The current DPW utilizes 4 buildings and is located in the center of Scheid Park. The location and layout are not conducive to a stream-lined operation, or optimal for a park setting. The Scheid Park Master Concept depicts a new DPW in the southwest corner of Scheid Park, where it would have its own entry off of Main Street and would be shielded on three sides by trees and/or shrubs, from the view of park users.

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Whorley, to approve the submittal of an application to the state for a "FY27 State Enhancement Grant" for approximately \$1,000,000 to relocate the DPW as depicted on the Scheid Park Master Concept, and to accept the cost of Fleis & VandenBrink preparing said grant application.

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

Palmer will be in touch with Straubel once she has cost estimates on all items identified in the Scheid Park Master Concept. In the meantime, Straubel will work on gathering information needed for submittal of the MDNR Trust Fund grant application, including letters of support.

Motion was made by Mulnix at 8:05 p.m., supported by Klutman, to open the Public Hearing to set the 2026 property tax millage and approve the 2026/2027 budget. All yeas.

No public comments were offered on the proposed budget and/or the millage rate to support it.

Motion was made by Mulnix at 8:06 p.m., supported by Day, to close the Public Hearing. All yeas.

Council members received budget reports prepared by Straubel, as follows: Summary Budget and Detail Budget with notes, for fiscal years 2025/2026 and 2026/2027, Cash Balances by Year and Fund, Net Income/Loss Estimates by Year and Fund for fiscal years 2025/2026 and 2026/2027, Projected Vehicle/Equipment Replacement through 2/29/2040 and Capital Outlay & Other Non-Typical Expenditures proposed for 2026/2027.

Straubel referenced the two "Net Income/Loss Estimates by Year and Fund" reports which provide a snapshot of total revenues, expenditures, grant proceeds, capital outlay items, bond principal and net income/loss (to/from reserves), by fund and collectively, for years 2025/2026 and 2026/2027. For fiscal year ending 2/28/26, all funds (General, Major Street, Local Street, Water and Sewer) are expected to have a combined net income (increase in reserve funds) of approximately \$329,000. For fiscal year ending 2/28/27, all funds are expected to have a combined net income (increase in reserve funds) of approximately \$107,000. General, Major Street and Water are expected to have a net income (increase in reserve funds), while Local Street and Sewer are expected to have a net loss (decrease in reserve funds).

The projected net loss (decrease in reserve funds) for Local Street is attributable to a chip/seal project on various local streets. The projected net loss (decrease in reserve funds) for Sewer is attributable to the replacement of 4 aerators at the sewer lagoons.

Darby referenced the Detail Budget with notes, and pointed out particular 2025/2026 revenue items expected to be under budget and expenditure items expected to be over budget, as well as proposed 2026/2027 budget items showing a decrease in revenue or an increase in expenditure, over the 2025/2026 budget. The "Notes to Detail Budget for fiscal Y/E 2/28/26 & 2/28/27" provides this information in writing and is part of the budget, as submitted by Straubel.

The Budget Committee met last week and recommend the approval of the budget as presented.

Motion was made by Whorley, supported by Mulnix, to approve property tax mills for 2026 of 13.5141 as well as a 1% administrative fee, and to approve the budget for fiscal year March 1, 2026 through February 28, 2027 in the amount of \$2,253,352.

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

Motion was made by Day, supported by Klutman, to accept minutes of the January 12, 2026 Regular Meeting. All yeas.

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Whorley, to accept minutes of the February 2, 2026 ZBA Public Hearing. All yeas.

Darby pointed out that page 5 of the Treasurer's Report shows that capital outlay items for 2025/2026 will be under budget by approximately \$140,000. Council members were pleased.

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Klutman, to accept the Treasurer's Report of January 31, 2026. All yeas.

Various Accounts Payable items were reviewed and questions answered.

Motion was made by Whorley, supported by Klutman, to approve the Accounts Payable of February 16, 2026, in the amount of \$202,920.13.

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

The Zoning Administrator's Report of Services for January 2026 was reviewed.

Council members reviewed a proposed 2-year contract submitted by Jeanne Vandersloot, for Zoning Administrator Services.

Motion was made by Klutman, supported by Mulnix, to accept Vandersloot's Independent Contractor Agreement for the period of March 1, 2026 through February 29, 2028, as presented. Roll call vote: yeas – Day, Klutman, Mulnix, Whorley, Darby; nays – none; absent – Doll, Talcott.

The Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on Wednesday, February 11, to accept comments on a Special Use Permit application submitted by Mark Schaafsma (MSDB LLC) to convert the former school at 234 Vosper Street, into apartments.

Darby and Day reported on the Public Hearing.

Committee Reports

Budget – No additional report, other than what was discussed earlier.

Personnel – No report

Public Safety

Chief Koster reported that the Fire Department is at 108 calls to date for 2026.

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

Streets – No report

Buildings & Grounds – No report

Water & Sewer

DPW Koster reported that he has contacted the Michigan Rural Water Association (MRWA) to request that they bring their equipment out to locate a potential water leak in the system. This service is free of charge if you are a member of the MRWA, and the Village is.

Public Comments – None

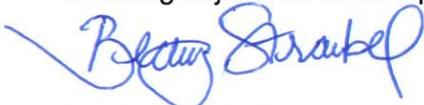
Additional Business

Darby shared with council members, a picture of a sign that is being made, for placement at the Village boat launch. The sign identifies the amenities offered at the Village boat launch, as well as the distance to the next public access (7.9 miles), which is in Lowell. The sign also states that the distance to Lake Michigan as 77.1 miles. The sign was made possible through grant funds secured by the Lower Grand River Water Trail (LGROW). DPW Koster mentioned that the north side of the overlook/fishing pier might be a good location for the sign. Council members concurred.

Straubel shared with council members, a hand-written apology letter from an individual who damaged Village property in July of 2025. The letter was sent to the Village, via the Ionia County 8th Judicial Circuit Court.

DPW Koster mentioned that he would like to discontinue mowing the open area at the Nature Park and is looking into a DNR tree planting program. The DPW currently spends 5+ hours per week mowing it, and the wear and tear on the mower is showing. Council members had mixed opinions on the topic. Concerns such as decreased visibility in a park that is already remote, were voiced. Council members ultimately concluded that they are ok with Koster not mowing the area, but would rather see wildflowers planted instead of trees.

Meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.



Becky Straubel,
Village Treasurer/Deputy Clerk