

VILLAGE OF SARANAC
REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
March 9, 2026

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, DPW Koster; Trustees – Day, Klutman, Mulnix, Talcott, Whorley

Absent: Doll

Guests: Roman Wilson, Vice President of Fishbeck – Grand Rapids

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Talcott, 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 February 2026.

Motion was made by Talcott at 7:01 p.m., supported by Day, to open the Public Hearing to gather public input for submittal of a Trust Fund grant application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, for the “Scheid Park Improvements – Phase 2” project. All yeas.

Council members reviewed and discussed a proposed Resolution authorizing the submission of a MDNR Trust Fund Grant Application, as well as a site layout and probable construction cost estimates prepared by Fleis & VandenBrink Engineering. The purpose of the grant application is to apply for funding to assist with the cost of a project entitled “Scheid Park Improvements – Phase 2.” The key features of the project include the addition of 2 pickleball courts, a paved parking lot section, universal access improvements, shade sails, pickleball court lighting, and landscape improvements to Scheid Park.

There was no public present to provide input on the project.

Motion was made by Mulnix at 7:17 p.m., supported by Whorley, to close the Public Hearing. All yeas.

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Talcott, to approve Resolution #030926A, a Resolution to Authorize the Submission of a MDNR Trust Fund Grant Application for the “Scheid Park Improvements – Phase 2” project and to designate the Treasurer as the person authorized to sign and execute any grant related documents, as presented.

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

Roman Wilson, Vice President of Fishbeck – Grand Rapids, was in attendance on behalf of MSDB LLC (Mark Schaafsma Design Build) regarding a proposed Brownfield Plan Amendment – Amendment #1.

Wilson introduced himself and provided council members with a history of the Brownfield Plan Amendment that the Village Council approved for MSDB in 2019. At that time, MSDB planned to convert the old school at 234 S Vosper Street, Saranac, into a senior housing/memory care facility. Shortly thereafter, COVID hit, construction costs and interest rates increased, and a senior housing/memory care facility was no longer a feasible project.

Wilson went on to explain that in 2023, TIF (Tax Increment Finance) legislation was passed, incentivizing housing. Housing property became eligible for Brownfield consideration, making MSDB's proposed conversion of the property at 234 S Vosper Street into apartments, a feasible project.

Wilson further provided an overview of the proposed Brownfield Plan Amendment – Amendment #1. The eligible activity cost of MSDB's project is \$1,273,702. Capture would start in 2027 and continue until 2045. This would equate to approximately \$380,000 in Village property tax abated.

Various questions were asked by council members and answered by Wilson, as follows:

- ❖ Q: What is the Michigan State Housing Development Authority's (MSHDA) role in this process?
A: MSHDA will review and approve the school tax capture portion of the project.
- ❖ Q: Does the eligible cost and related tax abatement cover Phase 1 (12 units) only?
A: The eligible costs and related tax incentives pertain to Phase 1. It is conceivable that a future incentives request would be proposed for future phases of the project.
- ❖ Q: Who manages the abated tax funds?
A: The Ionia County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (ICBRA) collects the abated tax funds and reimburses the developer upon approval by the Ionia County Board of Commissioners.
- ❖ Q: What happens if there are excess abated tax funds upon completion of the project?
A: Excess abated tax funds would be distributed to the taxing jurisdictions.
- ❖ Q: Will there be additional requests for Phase 2 and 3?
A: This is not known, but it is possible. The Village would have the ability to support or object to any future request. Without Village support, a future request would not go to the Ionia County Board of Commissioners.
- ❖ Q: How are items such as roofing, heating/cooling, electrical, etc. addressed? Will these items be completed in Phase 1 for the entire project (up to 29 units), or just for the 12 units in Phase 1?
A: All rehabilitation activities discussed in the Brownfield Plan Amendment #1 focuses on Phase I of the project. Future phases of the project will include improvements necessary to rehabilitate the remainder of the former school.
- ❖ Q: Can you please explain the 5-year, \$5,000 up-front capture and what that means to the Village?
A: Under statute, the County BRA can capture tax increment revenue generated from the investment for deposit into a local brownfield revolving fund. The fund can be used to support future projects throughout the County, including the Village. This plan incorporates a capped capture of \$25,000 (\$5,000 annually captured for 5 years in the beginning of the plan). The Village could bring requests to the County for eligible activities/costs related to eligible projects once funds are available in the fund.
- ❖ Q: What if the abated tax funds are less than expected due to property values not increasing as forecasted?
A: The Developer would not receive full reimbursement for approved costs.

❖ Q: Are there other Ionia County projects that have been, or are currently under this program?

A: In 2023, the County approved a housing project in Lake Odessa. In 2025, the County approved a housing project in Belding. Another project, besides this Amendment, is proposed in 2026.

Wilson brought MSDB's project and proposed Brownfield Plan Amendment – Amendment #1 to the ICBRA and they in turn recommended its approval by the Ionia County Board of Commissioners, contingent upon approval by the Saranac Village Council. If the Saranac Village Council approves Amendment #1, the Ionia County Board of Commissioners will hold a Public Hearing on the matter, a notice of which will be sent to all taxing authorities involved.

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Klutman, to approve Resolution #030926B, a Resolution of Concurrence for a Brownfield Plan Amendment – Amendment #1 for 234 S Vosper Street, Saranac, Michigan, as presented.

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

Council members reviewed proposed Resolution #030926C, a Resolution to Authorize the Submission of a Grant Application to the Michigan Department of Transportation Local Bridge Program, for preventative maintenance work on three (3) of the Village of Saranac's bridges (Summit Street #4106, South Bridge Street #4107 and South Bridge Street #4108).

DPW Koster provided an overview of the proposed work to be performed on the bridges, as identified by Ryan Worden of Scott Civil Engineering, during our bi-annual bridge inspections. Worden will prepare the grant applications, which are due April 1st. Koster has not yet received cost data from Worden, however, the Village will be responsible for 5% of the as-bid construction cost and 100% of the cost of design and construction engineering. If awarded the grant, the bridge work will take place in 2029.

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Talcott, to approve Resolution #030926C, a Resolution to Authorize the Submission of an Application to the Michigan Department of Transportation Local Bridge Program, as presented.

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

Council members discussed a letter received from the Ionia County Economic Alliance (ICEA), requesting that the Village renew their annual investment of \$1,000.

Motion was made by Whorley, supported by Day, to contribute \$1,000 to the ICEA in support of the services they provide to the Village of Saranac and all of Ionia County.

Roll call vote: yeas – Day, Mulnix, Talcott, Whorley, Darby; nays – Klutman; absent – Doll.

Motion was made by Day, supported by Klutman, to accept minutes of the February 16, 2026 Regular Meeting. All yeas.

Motion was made by Day, supported by Talcott, to accept minutes of the March 3, 2026 Special Meeting. All yeas.

Motion was made by Whorley, supported by Mulnix, to accept the Treasurer's Report of February 28, 2026. All yeas.

Various Accounts Payable items were reviewed and questions answered.

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Talcott, to approve the Accounts Payable of March 9, 2026, in the amount of \$77,251.12.

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

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

The Planning Commission's regular meeting for the month of March was cancelled due to lack of business.

Committee Reports

Budget

Straubel informed council members that she will submit Budget vs Actual reports and budget amendments for fiscal year 3/1/25 – 2/28/26, for review at April's regular council meeting.

Personnel – No report

Public Safety

Darby reported on the 3/2/26 Special Fire Board meeting. After lengthy discussion and careful consideration, Fire Board members voted not to entertain Keene Township's proposed modifications to their 9/1/12 Amended and Restated Emergency Medical Services and Fire Protection Agreement with the Saranac Community Fire Department. Various points were made in support of their decision, which are documented in the minutes of the meeting.

Parks & Recreation

Day reported that the Parks & Recreation Committee met with Kayla Palmer and Marlana O'Connell of Fleis & VandenBrink, regarding a proposed Parks Concept for Village parks, other than Scheid Park as it has its own Concept Plan.

Day shared information regarding a potential tree and/or landscape project for the Nature Park open field area. Saranac Community Schools worked with a contractor on a tree planting project, utilizing high school students as volunteers. Day is looking into a similar collaboration for the Village. Day and Koster plan to meet with a forestry expert to discuss ideas for the Nature Park. More information will be forthcoming.

Streets

DPW Koster reported that SaniSweep is scheduled to sweep Village streets at the end of this month.

The annual Dirty 30 bike race is scheduled for Saturday, April 11th this year.

Buildings & Grounds – No report

Water & Sewer

DPW Koster reported that staff from the Michigan Rural Water Association brought their equipment to the Village, in hopes of locating a leak in the Village water system. They looked at three areas in the Village, which took nearly an entire day, and were unsuccessful in locating the leak.

DPW Koster is requesting that council approve the purchase of an acoustic leak detector for approximately \$7,300, so he can continue the investigation. The leak detector would also assist in narrowing down the location of a watermain break, resulting in less excavation and restoration.

Motion was made by Klutman, supported by Mulnix, to purchase an acoustic leak detector for approximately \$7,300.

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

Public Comments – None

Additional Business – None

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.



Becky Straubel,
Village Treasurer/Deputy Clerk