

VILLAGE OF SARANAC
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
August 10, 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 – Klutman (arrived at 7:18 p.m.),
Mulnix, Talcott, Whorley
Absent: Day, Doll
Guests: None

Motion was made by Whorley, supported by Mulnix, 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 July 2026.

Council members reviewed a report from Shelby Engel, regarding ongoing work and future projects relative to IT services.

Council members reviewed a proposal submitted by Kayla Palmer of Fleis & VandenBrink. As a result of a recent meeting with the Village Parks Committee, Palmer is proposing to incorporate two parcels into the long-term vision of the Village Parks Concept Plan, for a lump sum fee of \$4,500. The two parcels are located west of the boat launch, along the Grand River riverbank.

Mulnix explained that during the Park Committee's recent meeting with Palmer and O'Connell, committee members requested that the two parcels be added to the overall Parks Concept Plan, as there is great potential for trails and other amenities in that area.

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Talcott, to accept Fleis & VandenBrink's proposal as presented.

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

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Whorley, to accept minutes of the July 13, 2026 Regular Meeting. All yeas.

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

Various Accounts Payable items were reviewed and questions answered.

Council members discussed Koster's memo regarding a homeowner's request for reimbursement for a tree removal, and concurred with Koster's rationale.

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Talcott, to approve the Accounts Payable of July 13, 2026, in the amount of \$175,513.34.

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

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

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

Committee Reports

Budget – No report

Personnel

Darby reported that the Personnel Committee has a few open items from last month to discuss.

Koster inquired whether the Personnel Committee had received his email regarding promoting Pike to full-time. Per Darby, the committee has not had a chance to discuss it yet. Koster explained that Lake's last day is September 30 and he has PTO and vacation time that he plans to use up before then. Also, Darby has requested to use vacation time between now and September 30. Lake and Darby's absence will leave the DPW short on man hours.

Council members discussed options to remedy this situation.

Motion was made by Klutman, supported by Whorley, to authorize the Personnel Committee to make the determination of when to promote Pike to full-time and when to advertise for a new part-time employee.

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

Public Safety

Koster reported that the Fire Millage passed by a substantial percentage.

Koster reported on the Fire Department's raffle which will take place during Bridgefest on August 22.

Parks & Recreation

Mulnix expressed how nice it has been to work with Palmer and O'Connell on the Parks Concept Plan and to visualize how all the Parks will flow together.

Streets

Koster reported that only one bid was received for the overband crack, chip and fog seal project. The bid was approximately \$11,000 over engineer's estimate, mainly due to the drainage structure reconstruction on Washington Street. Additionally, the company that bid the job, Pavement Maintenance Systems, will not be able to do the project until May of 2027.

MDOT has approved the bid and will release funds prior to September 30, 2026, which is their fiscal year end.

Buildings & Grounds

Koster requested a meeting with the Building & Grounds Committee to discuss needed repairs to the exterior of the Fire Department. He received a quote from CoverUp Enclosures for approximately \$5,400. After discussing the situation further, council members concurred that it would be best to bypass a committee meeting and proceed with the repairs.

Motion was made by Klutman, supported by Mulnix, to accept CoverUp Enclosures quote for approximately \$5,400, for repairs to the Fire Department exterior.

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

Water & Sewer

Koster happily reported that the DPW finally found the elusive water leak which was causing unaccounted for water usage. Now that the leak has been fixed, the water system is pumping 90-100,000 gallons of water daily, as opposed to 220-240,000 gallons daily, prior to finding the leak.

Public Comments – None

Additional Information/Business

Darby reported that she spoke with Heidi Wenzel regarding the Dial-A-Ride program that is currently servicing the Village of Saranac. For the last year, the program has been free of charge for the village, due to a grant that the City of Ionia Public Transportation Department received. The grant ends September 30 of this year. Per Wenzel, if the village wishes to maintain the program, the annual cost will be approximately \$30,000.

Wenzel shared with Darby, that between June and July 1,000 rides were given. Council members concurred that more information was needed before making any decisions. Statistics that may be a factor in council's decision are; the percentage of rides for village residents vs nonresidents and the percentage of rides that originate at the Saranac Housing Commission, to name a few.

Pending the review of additional information/statistics, a partnership with the Saranac Housing Commission may be pursued.

Darby inquired whether Koster is aware of the cornhole tournament that Social House is hosting on Bridgefest day. They plan to close off one block of Bridge Street, between Church and Main Street for the event. Koster said he is aware and is preparing for it. He would prefer that it be on Main Street for purposes of truck traffic. Darby will discuss this with the Saranac Community Association (SCA).

Darby inquired if it would be helpful if the SCA directed the DPW on where to put picnic tables for Bridgefest, as opposed to having them dropped in one location and moving them around from there. Koster said that would be helpful.

Koster reported on the upcoming Billy Strings concert at the Ionia Fairgrounds on August 28th and 29th, and how the village will most likely see an increase in traffic, due to the Ionia exit off of I-96 being closed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.



Becky Straubel,
Village Treasurer/Deputy Clerk