

VILLAGE OF SARANAC
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
September 14, 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 (arrived at 7:30),
Mulnix, Whorley
Absent: Doll, Talcott
Guests: Dinorah Caro Livingston, 438 Mill Street, Saranac
Todd Richter, Fleis & VandenBrink

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 August 2026.

Dinorah Livingston, Saranac Village resident, was in attendance to present to council, her idea of establishing an owner-occupied furnished housing space at her residence, with minimum stays of 30 days, up to a maximum of 26 weeks. Livingston provided council members with a memo of explanation as well as two hand-outs outlining what she is proposing and why her idea deserves consideration. She believes and demonstrated by example, that there is a potential need in the Village for this type of housing option for temporary, contract and traveling professionals.

At Straubel's suggestion, Livingston contacted Jeanne Vandersloot, Zoning Administrator, to inquire whether the Village Zoning Ordinance allowed for this type of use. She learned that this type of use does not fit clearly within the current residential zoning provisions. Vandersloot provided potential approaches, including an ordinance amendment to the bed-and-breakfast provisions, a home-occupation special use or possibly a use variance.

Livingston stated that she is seeking council's advisement and direction, and will do any legwork that council deems necessary.

Council members requested that Livingston contact other communities who allow this type of housing option, and ask if they will share their regulations (zoning or otherwise) as well as pros and cons they may have experienced.

Livingston stated that she will research the topic thoroughly, and present her findings to the Planning Commission for review and consideration.

Todd Richter of Fleis & VandenBrink Engineering was in attendance to inform council of the proposed schedule for the Summit Street project. The project is scheduled to begin September 14th, with a completion date of September 28th. Richter noted that the construction portion of the project is 100% paid for with MDOT STF and TED funds through the Rural Task Force. Engineering costs are to be paid by the village.

Council members reviewed a proposal submitted by Richter for Summit Street construction engineering, for an amount not to exceed \$37,800.

Motion made by Mulnix, supported by Whorley, to accept Fleis & VandenBrink's proposal for construction engineering services, for an amount not to exceed \$37,800.

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

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

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Whorley, to accept minutes of the August 10, 2026 Regular Meeting. All yeas.

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

Straubel reported that she recently moved \$600,000 from Water Fund reserves and \$400,000 from Sewer Fund reserves into a MiClass Term Series II pooled investment, with a maturity date of June 11, 2027 and an interest rate of 4.36%

Various Accounts Payable items were reviewed and questions answered.

Motion was made by Whorley, supported by Day, to approve the Accounts Payable of August 31, 2026, in the amount of \$103,258.54.

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

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Whorley, to reappoint Planning Commission members Dave Shaw and Janet Tlapek. Both will serve a 3-year term to expire the 2nd Monday of June 2029. All yeas.

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

Council reviewed the September 2, 2026 Planning Commission Regular Meeting minutes.

Day reported that Planning Commission members reviewed a Special Use Permit application and an application to operate an Adult-Use Recreational Marihuana Establishment at 9 Main Street, submitted by Mark Culmer (CHO Provisioning). Commission members asked various questions which were answered by Culmer and his staff. Dr. John Thorp, who owns and operates a chiropractic practice at 11 Main Street, raised concerns regarding odor control. Culmer addressed Thorp's concerns. The Planning Commission set a date of September 16 to further review Culmer's applications, specifically in regard to odor control as this information was not provided at the September 2nd meeting. Day researched requirements for odor control, finding that the State of Michigan does not get involved in this aspect of marihuana establishments. The local municipality establishes by ordinance, the level of odor control required.

Committee Reports

Budget – No report

Personnel

Darby reported that Seth Pike started working for the Village full-time, effective August 23rd.

Darby inquired whether the part-time position had been posted on Facebook or advertised in the Ionia Sentinel yet. Straubel stated that it had not, but that she will do so by the end of this month.

Darby recapped the Personnel Committee's discussions regarding DPW and Fire employees, as follows:

1. The Employee Handbook doesn't say water/sewer tests are mandatory. The committee suggests no change at this time, as the Village currently has two certified operators and Michigan Rural Water as a back-up.
2. Class training time to be covered by normal wages for MFR, FF1, FF2 and certifications. CEU's to be covered with Fire Fighter training allowance.
3. Fire Department calls at the beginning and/or end of a shift would be considered regular wages and paid at overtime rate if this puts an employee over 40 hours for the week.
4. Fire Department calls after hours are voluntary, not mandatory and are paid by the Firefighter call allowance.
5. No on-call pay proposed at this time, but would consider a minimum 2 hours of pay for a DPW on-site service call after hours
6. Would like to add counseling (out of pocket deductible/co-pay) as reimbursable
7. No paid parental leave at this time.
8. 90-day review to be completed for Seth by Tony.
9. Schedule quarterly touch-base meetings with DPW employees.
10. DPW boot allowance to remain the same, but can be paid by the Village as opposed to reimbursing the employee after the fact. The boot allowance to be \$100 per year or \$200 every two years.

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

Public Safety

DPW Koster informed council that there have been three incidents of vandalism at village parks. It is suspected, based on camera footage, that the same individual is involved in all three incidents. Koster has had conversations with Deputy Stewart regarding recourse/restitution.

Per Chief Koster, he was contacted by Dennis Bowen, Boston Township Supervisor and Sandy Smiley, Keene Township Supervisor, regarding a Fire Department grant opportunity. Both Bowen and Smiley were willing to complete the application on the Fire Department's behalf, but found out while researching the process, that the Village President is the only person who can apply. Koster will provide Darby with the necessary information to complete the application, which is due by September 30, 2026.

Chief Koster reported that the Fire Department may have sold Engine 6. He should find out later this week.

Parks & Recreation

Mulnix reported that the committee did not meet, but received Parks Concept bubble diagrams for the Nature Park, Riverwalk Park, Boat Launch Park and village property west of the boat launch, from Kayla Palmer, Project Manager with Fleis & VandenBrink. At Darby's request, Straubel will email the bubble diagrams to all council members.

Straubel reported that earlier today, she received the Village's preliminary score for the Scheid Park Improvements Phase II project, for which the Village submitted a MDNR Trust Fund grant application in March of this year. The Village scored 265 points out of a possible 500. Palmer will review the MDNR's scoring to determine where the Village may be able to gain additional points. Supplemental material must be submitted by September 30th.

Streets

DPW Koster reported that due to the fact that the crack/chip/fog sealing project for which the Village received a \$50,000 grant for, is not scheduled until 2027, he requested a quote from Snyder Asphalt to crack-fill 14 storm drains on Main Street, and chip-seal Orchard Street and a section of Pleasant Street this year. Snyder's quote is for \$29,200, and we typically budget \$50,000/year for street improvements. Koster is requesting council's approval to move forward with these street improvements.

Motion was made by Mulnix, supported by Klutman, to accept Snyder's quote in the amount of \$29,200 and proceed with the work as described above.

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

Buildings & Grounds – No report

Water & Sewer

DPW Koster reported that the aerator replacement project which was budgeted for the 2026/2027 fiscal year is on hold until the 2027/2028 budget year due to lead times.

Koster also reported that the Scada System is 97% ready for operation.

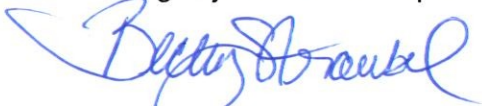
Public Comments – None

Additional Information/Business

Darby provided council members with additional data relative to the City of Ionia's Dial-A-Ride service over the past year, and inquired whether council members had given any more thought to entering into a one-year contract with the City of Ionia, to continue Dial-A-Ride services in the Village.

Council members concurred that more information is needed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.



Becky Straubel,
Village Treasurer/Deputy Clerk