Village of Fife Lake

Council Meeting Minutes

September 15,2025

616 Bates Street, Fife Lake, Mi.49633

Meeting called to order at 6:31pm

**Roll Call:** Present: Deike, Tornow, Magee, Deeren, Mannor, Barbeaux

Absent: Perpich(excused) and Tornow

Others: Eby- Recording Secretary/ Treasurer

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

**Approval of Agenda:** The Chamber and DDA are being pulled from Consent Agenda items and will be addressed separately. Under old business letter “d” will be Legal Representation. Motion made by Deike to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Magee. **Motion carried** with all yeas.

**Conflict of Interest:** None

**Minutes:** Motion made by Deike to approve the minutes of 8/18/25 as presented, seconded by Mannor. **Motion carried** with all yeas. Motion made by Deike to approve the special meeting minutes from 9/9/25 as amended. Motion seconded by Magee.  **Motion carried** with all yeas. The 9/9/25 minutes were approved in content but needed some grammar corrections.

**Bills, transfers and Amendments:** Deike question the Bieganowski bill that went up $100.00 since it was discussed last month. Deeren clarified that she used him to get the verbiage on a millage increase. Mannor said that the bill needs to be paid and that Deeren can use it under her monthly budget. Deeren made a motion to pay the bills as presented, seconded by Mannor. **Roll Call:**  Mannor-Y, Magee-Y, Deike-Y, Barbeaux-Y, and Deeren-Y. **Motion carried.** Mannor said he reached out to the auditor and had not heard back from him about a budget. He also questioned the hours work of our clerk. He questioned why our clerk is limited to 20 hours a week. Is it a budget thing? Mannor felt that Deeren could take it out of her budget to possibly increase her hours weekly by about 5 hours since her workload has increased due to H&R Block doing less work.

**Treasurers Report:** Taxes are mostly over and will be turned over to the county this week.

**Consent Agenda Items:** Deike made by motion to approve the remaining Consent Agenda Items as presented, seconded by Magee.  **Motion carried** with all yeas. Both the Chamber and the DDA have been removed from the Consent Agenda Items.

**DDA:** Deike said she felt a discussion was needed among council about the unfreezing of the DDA account at the Forest Area Credit Union. Mannor felt that the bills still need to be reviewed by the council. Mannor said that a motion was made to have their bills approved by Council a few months ago. Mannor said they are not following their budget to his understanding. He said if you don’t follow your budget and you don’t communicate with the village, that is our way of staying on task as far as the budget goes. Deike said we aren’t approving the bills necessarily, is it a point of transparency. Dieke asked Benke (DDA) if she had the bills. Deike said she will attend the DDA meeting tomorrow night, which is a reason why we need a joint meeting. Mannor said yes to joint meeting but does not feel we need mediation. Mannor said if we want to have a mediator we should have a public hearing. Mannor said the Village entrance signs is not on Village property. The signs have not had permits pilled and permits were not pulled for the facades on the businesses. Mannor said that the motion still stands from several months ago that their bills need to come through us. There was some talk about the playground swing and slide being removed. Deike said the DDA obtained the swing and slide from Kingsley and it here. They have an engineer to looking into it as it needs some parts. Barbeaux said that they have an executive board to make decisions which Mannor said is a violation of the open meeting act. There was discussion about the bench wavers and who’s responsible is it for the insurance with the benches that are placed on private property. Deike said that two contracts were drawn up one from the insurance agent and one from a legal standpoint. The legal one said that the owner was going to assume all the liability of the bench on their private property. Barbeaux said why are we assuming the liability the DDA should have a policy in place Mannor said you cannot do your own thing and then conform to rules when it is coinvent. We either have rules, or we don’t. The council said the DDA needs to get a signed permission for the benches on private property until we can figure out the insurance. Benke (DDA) said that the bills that she knows of are the UHY bill for $1800.00 and the yearly P.O. box for $60.00.

**Chamber:** April LaMar is on the Chamber Board she oversees the Scarecrow Festival. She is asking for a donation. Deeren said that we do not have it in the budget. Mannor suggested relocating money to cover the cost. Magee made a motion to pay $250.00 to the Scarecrow Festival from the parks budget. Motion seconded by Barbeaux **Roll call:** Deike-Y, Magee-Y, Mannor-Y, and Deeren-Y. **Motion carried.**

**DPW Report:** Report in a packet.

**Zoning:** Report in packet

**Police Public Safety:** Report in packet.

**Guest:**  Joe Underhill – Grand Traverse Road Commission, said that they are getting ready for winter. He discussed county road work that is being done. Barney road project was started today; Walton Road and Summit City intersection project has been slowed down and will be finished next spring. Work is being done on 633 in Interlochen. They are looking into the 5-year project looking into next year’s projects. The road commission is looking into the budget last year they received 2 million and this year they are expected to get 3 million from the state.

**Public Comment:** Paul McCool from the Fife Lake Area Planning Commission said that they will be holding a public hearing on the Master Plan on September 23, 2025, at 6:30pm.

Mary Ellen Dilley- commented on the streetlamps saying that the DDA should help pay for the high electric cost on the streetlights in town. She also wanders who or what prompted the credit union to seek legal counsel before they unsealed the DDA funds that the village has temporally frozen. The DDA was warned that contacting an attorney must stop. Was this a shift to ask the Credit Unions to seek an attorney to the benefit to the DDA without the DDA contacting and attorney themselves. Who was asking the questions? The DDA still needs to provide proper detailed minutes for all their meetings. The board is under scrutiny for attempting to curb speech and resist inquiries and or explanations into their actions. They should not be able to hide behind a synopsis only version of minutes. Mediation at a cost of $1500.00 that’s a lot of money and will anything really change in the life of the DDA. Mediation only works if both sides are willing to take a new path and we have been here before. The new Fife Lake sign is beautiful, but the artwork needs to be viewed up close to be appreciated. The roof also detracts from the sign and the DDA spent over $20,000.00 on this. There is talk of adding more benches purchased and placed and tagging them with ID or name.

**New Business**

**Salt:** Deeren said that the salt is $10.00 dollars a ton cheaper that it was last year. Which is $87.00 a ton. LaMar said in his report that he does not want a lot of sand as it clogs up the drains. He wants more salt than sand. He is projecting at least 150 tons of salt. Deike said if you do the math it comes to $13,000.00 which she feels is higher than last year. Are we paying more because we are not putting the sand in? Motion made by Deike to table this till next month. Barbeaux agreed to table until next month. This motion never went to a vote. Deike would like to see past cost and usage.

**H&R Rate Change:** H&R block is only doing about 4 hours of work a month now. Most of cost from H&R Block’s bill is in the license fees. Deike made a motion to adjust the service provided by H&R Block with the understanding that the clerk is picking up those responsibilities and we will receive feedback from her as time continues. Motion seconded by Magee.  **Motion carried** with all yeas.

**UHY CAP to SOM:** for information purposes only

**UHY Budget Training:** This will be for the last week of the month. This is for the finance committee only. A time will be set up and who ever can make it can come.

**DDA lights Electric Bill:** Last year the light bill in the DDA district was $ 1645.00 (2024-2025), So far this year the cost is $727.93. Deike said there are more than 36 lights. Magee asked if there was a motion when the lights went in that said that the village would cover the cost. Communication came in last month from Marilyn Hayes on having the DDA pay for their lights in the DDA district, there was discussion on the maintenance and insurance cost of DDA projects.

**Old Business**

**Joint DDA mediation Date:** Deeren said that some of the village residents would like to hear information in a Public Hearing. She would like to put off mediation for later. Deeren said a public input session with the public would be more appropriate instead of a public hearing with both the council and the DDA. Deeren made a motion to table the mediator and to attempt to do a joint public study session. Motion seconded by Mannor. **Motion carried** with all yeas

**Earned Sick Time Act Policy:** the policy is doing the accrual not the hourly and not the front load. The title will be left as sick time. Mannor made a motion to do it as presented going with the accrual method and leaving it as sick time. Motion seconded by Barbeaux **Motion carried** with all yeas.

**Roads/ Asphalt Repair.** Nothing new. Deike said she thought Spicer was going to rate the roads. There was discussion on this. Joe Underwood that the MML governmental director was e= mailed by him to help with these services. He left an e mail with us.

**Legal Representation:** There was no discussion on this. It was missed.

**Communication:** none

**Public Comment:** none

**Board Comments:** Magee said that she was not aware of the date until she was informed of the meeting with the mediator. She said she was going to be out of town that week and was glad it was cancelled. She said she would like advance notice of meetings as she would like to attend. Magee would like to have more information on the DDA issue.

Mannor would like more communication from the clerk. and president.

Deike said that all conflict is a communication problem along with a listening problem.

Motion made by Barbeaux and seconded by Mannor to adjourn at 8:12pm

Respectfully Submitted

Marcia Eby