

-Final-
Minutes
Public Hearing and Regular Meeting of the Elberta Village Council

401 First Street | ELBERTA, MI 49628

March 13, 2025 @ 7pm

Call to Order and Pledge: 7:00 pm

Roll Call: Jennifer Wilkins – PRESENT | Emily Votruba – PRESENT | Ken Holmes – PRESENT | Ryan Fiebing – PRESENT | Brett McGregor- PRESENT

Audience: Gary Sauer (County Commissioner), Steve Radionoff (Betsie Valley Trail Management Council Rep) Justin Towle (DPW), Jan Erlewein (Treasurer), Rachel Perkins (Clerk), Jon Ottinger (UB Clerk), Elberta Residents - Cathy Anderson, Rob & Christy Scott, Maureen Hicky, and Patricia Early

Minutes and Agenda Approval

- **Motion** by Fiebing **to approve** February 20, 2025, **Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes** Seconded by Votruba. **ALL AYES. Motion passed.**
- **Motion** by Votruba **to approve agenda w/ additions by Wilkins to regular meeting agenda only** of Correspondence #4 Farmers Market Email, Payroll Totals, NB#8 PC Resignation Letter – Mary Link, NB#9 Bauckham, Thall, Seeber, Kaufman & Koches- Legal Representation Transfer from Young, Graham, and Wendling, and NB#10 DWSRF Water System Improvement Projects, Change Order No. 4; Seconded by McGregor **ALL AYES. Motion passed.**

-- -- Public Hearing Opened by President Wilkins at 7:04 pm -- --

Open Public Hearing for Intent to Apply for Michigan Natural Resources Land Acquisition Grants

- **Council Discussion:** Wilkins read **Resolution #2025-005 Submission Authorization of TF25-0007MNRTF Land Acquisition Grant Application with Donated Funds Match** and **Resolution #2025-006 Submission Authorization of LW25-0016 Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Application with Donated Funds Match**. Council discussed receiving one or both Grants as being very beneficial as it aligns with the Village Master and Recreation Plans. This application does not take into account anything like development or sustainment or maintenance. That'll be the next item to work on, future endowment will help with that once that is set.
Votruba - Q. *What happens if we don't get the grants?* **McGregor - A.** *Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy owns the property, this step is just approving the submission of the grant application. Where we as a community are saying we would like to apply to acquire this property from GTRLC. If we don't receive the grant, we try again, redo the timeline, and try the next round. Applications received with a grant match receive greater odds of being awarded. GTRLC is providing the match. There is no cost to the village.* **Wilkins -** *When the property is acquired by the village, endowment funding will be secured. We've received several letters of support.*
McGregor - *The communication from people we've talked to has been very good for this acquisition. Letters of support, from the other cross section of the community, both citizens and business owners.*
- **Public Comment:**
Cathy Anderson - Q. *Is there a 5-10 yr. road map for what the Recreation Plan calls, West Park? Like a vision of what the plan is, not just acquisition, but how improvements, maintenance, traffic controls will be set up?*
McGregor - A. *The Master and Recreation Plans are the current road map. We don't have fine details at this point (regarding future park improvements) ... Acquisition of the property is the first step.... The Village will not create a plan that we cannot sustain... When the property is acquired, having a road map laid out that project's improvements and the details therein will be very helpful, currently it's a work in progress.... Thankfully we are partnered with GTRLC and the State Land Bank Authority during this process.*
Wilkins - A. *I am currently working on a 5-year financial plan for all the parks in the village.*
Cathy Anderson - Q. *When the D.O.T turned over the property to Elberta Land Holding Company there was a provision in the purchase and sales about development of a trail (BVT) across the property, did any of that move forward with the purchase and sale of the property?*
McGregor - A. *Yes. The easement (for the extension of the Betsie Valley Trail) was binding and transferrable.*
Cathy Anderson - Q. *How will this acquisition affect the acreage between the Marina and Waterfront Park?*

Wilkins - A. *Creation of an endowment to maintain the property that we are proposing to apply to acquire tonight. Very similar to the Elberta Dunes South Natural Area process.*

Beyond this point, the Council, along with residents Cathy Anderson and Rob Scott, engaged in discussions that extended beyond the public hearing topic concerning the authorization to apply for land acquisition grants through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

- **Recap with Council Trustees:** No need to recap, there was no public opposition to submittal of the grant applications to MDNR.

--- Public Hearing Adjourned and Regular Meeting Reopened by President Wilkins at 7:22 pm ---

Correspondence

1. **Benzie Bus** – Annual presentation by Rob Scott highlighting 2024 activities and projections for 2025.
2. **Housing North** – Donation request for services, moved to Planning Commission for review.
3. **Frankfort Fire & Rescue Report** - Cederholm had a meeting conflict but provided his entire report for review.
4. **Elberta Farmers Market Correspondence** – Proposed contract to be reviewed at PPC and BGFAC.

Inquiry of Conflict on Agenda Items: Wilkins recused from payroll

Brief Public Comment on Agenda Items: None

Approval of Bills:

FY2024-25 Check Register in the amount of \$41,312.96, Motion by Holmes, seconded by McGregor; Votruba-Aye, Fiebing-Aye, McGregor-Aye, Holmes-Aye, Wilkins-Aye. **Motion passed.**

FY2025-26 Check Register in the amount of \$28,741.46, Motion by Holmes, seconded by Votruba; Holmes-Aye, Votruba-Aye, Wilkins-Aye, Fiebing-Aye, McGregor-Aye. **Motion passed.**

FY2024-25 Payroll in the amount of \$10,434.46, Motion by Fiebing, seconded by McGregor; Holmes-Aye, Fiebing-Aye, McGregor-Aye, Votruba-Aye, Wilkins-RECUSED. **Motion passed.**

FY25-26 Payroll in the amount of \$10,885.46, motion by Votruba, seconded by McGregor, Fiebing-Aye, McGregor-Aye, Holmes-Aye, Votruba-Aye, Wilkins-RECUSED. **Motion passed.**

Financial reports and February MI Class statement were reviewed.

Unfinished Business- None

New Business

1. **Resolution #2025-005 Submission Authorization of TF25-0007 MNRTF Land Acquisition Grant Application with Donated Funds Match.** As read and commented on during the public hearing portion of the meeting, authorizing submission of this application provides a 51% monetary match from GTRLC of \$5,500,000 and a grant request for \$5,173,800. Motion by Votruba, seconded by Wilkins, to Adopt Resolution #2025-005 Submission Authorization of TF25-0007 MNRTF Land Acquisition Grant Application with Donated Funds Match. **ROLL CALL – Holmes AYE | Wilkins AYE | Votruba AYE | Fiebing AYE | McGregor AYE | All AYES. Motion passed.**
2. **Resolution #2025-006 Submission Authorization of LW25-0016 Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Application with Donated Funds Match.** As read and commented on during the public hearing portion of the meeting, authorizing submission of this application provides a 50% monetary match from GTRLC of \$5,500,000 and a grant request for \$5,347,600. Motion by McGregor, seconded by Wilkins, to Adopt Resolution #2025-006 Submission Authorization of LW25-0016 Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Application with Donated Funds Match. **ROLL CALL – McGregor AYE | Votruba AYE | Holmes AYE | Fiebing AYE | Wilkins AYE | All AYES. Motion passed.**
3. **Fiscal YR 2024-2025 Budget Amendments.**
 - A. General Fund.** Motion by Holmes, seconded by, Votruba to approve Fiscal YR 2024-25 General Fund Budget Amendments as presented. **ROLL CALL – Fiebing AYE | McGregor AYE | Wilkins AYE | Votruba AYE | Holmes AYE | All AYES. Motion passed.**
 - B. Major, Local, and Municipal Streets.** Motion by Wilkins, seconded by Votruba, to approve Fiscal YR 2024-25 Major, Local, and Municipal Streets Budget Amendment as presented. **ROLL CALL – McGregor AYE | Wilkins AYE | Fiebing AYE | Holmes AYE | Votruba AYE | All AYES. Motion passed.**

- C. Parks, Sewer, and Water Funds.** Motion by McGregor, seconded by Wilkins to approve Fiscal YR 24-2025 Parks, Sewer, and Water Funds Budget Amendments as presented. **ROLL CALL – Votruba AYE | Holmes AYE | McGregor AYE | Wilkins AYE | Fiebing AYE | All AYES. Motion passed.**
4. **Gabridge & Company Audit Proposal.** Motion by Wilkins, seconded by Holmes, to approve the Audit Proposal from Gabridge & Company for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 auditing services. **ROLL CALL – Votruba AYE Holmes AYE | Fiebing AYE | McGregor AYE | Wilkins AYE | All AYES. Motion passed.**
5. **Water Services Fee Schedule.** Outlines fees for turn on/off, meter tampering, RPZ metering, etc. Motion to approve the Water Services Fee Schedule by Wilkins, seconded by Votruba. **ROLL CALL – McGregor AYE | Votruba AYE | Holmes AYE | Wilkins AYE | Fiebing AYE | All AYES. Motion passed.**
6. **Eclipse Estimates – Waterfront Park & LSS.** This completes the triangulation of Eclipse services within the Village for homeland & public safety security. Motion by Wilkins, seconded by Votruba to approve, Eclipse Estimate for Waterfront Park & Life Saving Station for \$7406.50. **ROLL CALL – Fiebing AYE | Votruba AYE | Wilkins AYE | Holmes AYE | McGregor AYE | All AYES. Motion passed.**
7. **Frankfort-Elberta Athletic Association Contract.** Motion by Holmes, seconded by McGregor, to approve the President signing the FEAA contract for Ballfield Maintenance for \$500 a year. **ROLL CALL | Holmes AYE | McGregor AYE | Votruba AYE | Fiebing AYE | Wilkins AYE | All AYES. Motion passed.**
8. **Planning Commission Resignation Letter- Mary Link.** Due to hearing loss, Mary is finding it difficult to fulfill her duties as a Planning Commission Member. Motion by Holmes, seconded by Wilkins, to accept the resignation of Mary Link, we thank her for her service on Planning Commission and declare a seat vacant. **All AYES. Nays - None, motion passed.**
9. **Bauckham, Thall, Seeber, Kaufman & Koches, PC-Legal Services Transfer from Young, Graham, & Wendling, PC Agreement.** President Wilkins met with Bryan Graham and Micheal Bila to discuss the legal services transition between the two firms. BTK&K, PC. have been municipal Law attorneys since 1920, each attorney has a municipal specialty; one is a certified planner. Motion by Holmes, seconded by Votruba to approve the agreement with Bauckham, Thall, Seeber, Kaufman & Koches, PC as new Legal Representation for Elberta. **ROLL CALL – Holmes AYE | Votruba AYE | Wilkins AYE | McGregor AYE | Fiebing AYE | All AYES. Motion passed.**
10. **DWSRF Water System Improvement Projects Change Order No. 4.** Motion by Wilkins, seconded by Holmes to approve DWSRF Water System Improvement Projects, Change No. 4. **ROLL CALL – Votruba AYE | Fiebing AYE | McGregor AYE | Wilkins AYE | Holmes AYE | All AYES. Motion passed.**

REPORTS TO COUNCIL

County Commissioner Gary Sauer/Verbal Report. Parks & Recreation completed a Recreation Plan update; Board of Commissioners hired a new HR person (Joyfield Township). Authorized purchase of new ambulance. Discussed the Sick Leave Act. Votruba let Gary know she hasn't heard from the Administrator in regard to the Sherriff's lawsuit. Thompsonville is working on their water ordinances. DNR – Joy to Ride needs space to store their equipment and they wanted to use the structure at the boat launch but may not be approved to do so by DNR.

LSS – K. Mills/Written Report. Almost fully booked for 2025, 3 contracts for 2026.

Zoning Administrator – J. Mills/Written Report. Reviewed the "Draft" Zoning Ordinance

Betsie Valley Trailway Management Council – S. Radionoff/Verbal Report. No meeting last month, spoke to Chris Sullivan with Wilkins regarding the BVT extension to Elberta Beach, waiting on Sullivan re DNR representative discussion.

Planning Commission – Fiebing/Verbal Report. EPC & Beckett & Raeder finished Article 3 review; ZO Draft review will move more quickly now. Housing North has participated in review meetings, providing valuable input. Next meeting, special guest, Jim Tischler from SLBA.

Parks & Recreation Commission – Special meeting held approved Eclipse estimate for Elberta Dunes South security cameras and supported Eclipse estimates for Waterfront Park and Life Saving Station.

Employee Team Meetings – Wilkins plans to provide additional administrative training for DPW in the coming months.

DPW – Towle/Verbal Report. Snow removal complete, the pile on Bye Rd has been moved for access at one's own risk. DPW is noting potholes that need to be repaired. Meter replacement plan in place. Seeking the source of a water leak of approx. 35,000 gallons a day, Rural Water is aiding in the search.

Clerk – Perkins/Verbal Report. Very busy, cleaning up files, and several other clerical duties, have nearly 14 Short term rentals signed for the season.

Treasurer – Erlewein/Verbal Report. All the February bank reconciliations are complete. Working on cleaning up other accounts next.

UB Clerk – J. Ottinger/Verbal Report. Residents are continuing to sign up for paperless billing. Ottinger, Wilkins, and Towle have training with Badger Meter end of March.

BGFAC – Wilkins & McGregor/See Minutes. Supported Eclipse Estimates, Gabridge proposal, Water Services Fee Schedule, FEAA Contract, and presented Budget Amendments.

Personnel & Policy Committee – Votruba & Wilkins/No meeting held, preparing for 90-day reviews for new employees, meetings will soon be moving to the first Friday of the month.

BLUA – Wilkins & Holmes/Verbal Report. BLUA is procuring materials to begin their project. With recent staffing changes, Towle will be helping Chad after hours and weekends.

Elberta/GTRLC/SLBA Working Group – Wilkins & Fiebing/Verbal Report. Meeting monthly, breaking into subgroups to tackle next phases of the development process.

Extended General Public Comment: None

Announcements: Regular Council Meeting set for *April 17, 2025*, at 7pm. Charlie Hendershott, long-time resident and seasonal Village DPW passed away on March 12th, 2025, the Village offers our condolences to the family. Elberta Methodist Church Chili Dinner March 22, 2025, from 4-6pm.

Adjournment: 8:42 pm by Holmes

*Minutes prepared and posted by
Rachel Perkins, Clerk*