

**Village of Baldwin
Downtown Development Authority
July 18, 2024, Minutes
Regular Meeting
(preliminary)**

CALL TO ORDER

Roll Call: Jane Allison called the Meeting to order at 3:01 PM with board members:

Present: Jane Allison, Darci Maldonado, Jim Truxton, Seth Wenger, Tony Gagliardo, Debbie Smith-Olson, Josh Johnson,

Absent: Andy Gremel, vacancy

Staff: Robert Toland, DDA Director

Acknowledgment of Visitors: Jodi Nichols

GENERAL BUSINESS

- A. **Approval of Agenda:** A motion was made by Darci Maldonado to approve the agenda, supported by Seth Wenger. Motion carried.
- B. **Approval of Minutes:** A motion to approve the **June 20, 2024, regular** meeting minutes, with corrections, was made by Seth Wenger and supported by Tony Gagliardo. Motion carried.
- C. **Treasurers' Report:** Debbie Smith-Olson presented the Treasurer's report through July 18, 2024, indicating a general fund balance of \$374,719.94, with disbursements totaling \$5,038.79, and total income of \$7,278.34, including \$15.22 interest.

The following bills were presented for payment:

Consumers Energy	\$ 359.64 (streetlights)
Robert Toland Consulting	\$ 1,200.00 (retainer & meeting fee)
Baldwin Lumber	\$ 38.98 (batteries & \$10.00 police report)
<u>Village of Baldwin</u>	<u>\$ 1,234.33 (water bills)</u>
Total bills	\$ 2,832.95

Pleasant Plains Township submitted their winter tax increment of \$7,263.12, which was delayed due to their misplacement of the original request and documentation. They have requested that next year the request be sent to both Clerk and Treasurer.

A motion to approve the treasurer's report, was made by Jim Truxton and supported by Seth Wenger. Motion carried.

A motion to pay the bills, was made by Jim Truxton and supported by Seth Wenger. Motion unanimously carried by roll call vote.

There has been a tax bill sent for the 902 Michigan property after it was acquired by the DDA.

Debbie Smith-Olson has spoken to the Assessor, and he suggests sending him a letter of explanation that the DDA is a tax-exempt governmental unit, and he will address that at their December Board of Review to void the assessment. A motion was made by Jane Allison to approve sending a letter, supported by Seth Wenger. Motion carried.

D. Committee reports: Jodi Nichols reporting for Meredith Gremel that Meredith has spent countless hours working to get the Pure Markette open and running. Jodi stated that the events have been a test market for what people like and baked goods are very popular. Many vendors are running out of product half-way through the allotted time. Reminder that Baldwin is more or less an agricultural desert and that farm products must travel a long way to the market. So far, there have been 29 vendors and 18 community partners participating, but statistics are still being gathered. A public address system has been discussed as being advantageous and could be multi-use for many functions. Deborah Smith-Olson stated that the organizational structure of the “Pure Markette” is still being discussed. If it was an LLC, who would be the owner? According to the Michigan Farmers Market Association survey, 43% of farm markets are operated by the community which provides more control over the operations. Many others are operated by non-profit organizations. Currently, donations to the market are being receipted by the Village. It was the consensus that the “Pure Markette” committee could meet with Village officials to discuss the status after the “season” is over and we would have the full season results to review. Debbie Smith-Olson, Jim Truxton, Jane Allison, and Seth Wenger, all volunteered to meet with Meredith Gremel to discuss options before speaking with the Village Attorney.

E. Acknowledge Communications: None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jodi Nichols is concerned about downtown building vacancies. She asked why the McClain property owners (Village Restaurant) are allowed to have a meat smoker on the sidewalk in front of the building when it is vacant. Jodi stated that in another building there is a potential coffee shop owner having difficulty with the cost of renovations. If/when we are approved as a Redevelopment Ready Community, there would be funding opportunities for that potential new business owner as well as others! On August 5-6, there are going to be meetings with stakeholder groups to discuss economic diversity with the consultant retained by the Lake County Economic Development Alliance.

BOARD COMMENTS

Debbie Smith-Olson was contacted by Cinda Rock about their buildings adjacent to 902 Michigan. The Rocks wish to sell their property for \$120,000. Discussion was held and the conclusion was that the DDA does not have the funding opportunity that previously existed, and that we should prioritize potential projects before making any decisions on a purchase of this property.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Trees, Flowerboxes & Irrigation System: Randi Gould is doing a good job on the planter boxes, and the benches that Jane Allison is refurbishing look great. There was discussion about the possibility of extending the streetscape enhancement south on Michigan Avenue (M-37) a block or two. It was mentioned that the street trees could use some pruning. It was also mentioned that the DDA may need to purchase additional light poles to have in reserve.

Andy Gremel has obtained a quote of \$500 from Vans Mechanical Contractors to test the irrigation system for back-flow prevention. A motion to approve the quote from Vans Mechanical Contractors for \$500, was made by Jim Truxton and supported by Darci Maldonado. Motion carried.

- B. **8th Street Upgrade:** Jim Truxton reported that construction will start after the first of September and that the Village will be extending service leads to properties as part of the project. Handicapped ramps at intersection crosswalks are also included in the project.
- C. **8th Street Fish Farm and Dam:** Jim Truxton reported that the house that used to be on the property has now been demolished and the fish cleaning building has a new metal roof to be preserved for use in the potential campground and park. There are grants available to acquire land for parks and recreation, including campgrounds. The dam project is being funded 100% by grants with assistance from the Conservation Resource Alliance.
- D. **RRC Update:** Bob reported that the outstanding items have been substantially completed by the Village. He will get with the appropriate authority to check on where we are in the process and report back next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. **Library** – The library has asked that everyone consider approving their requested millage.
- B. **Election of Officers** – There has not been an election of officers for two years. The bylaws state that elections should occur every year. This item will be discussed further at the August meeting. A motion to table this agenda item was made by Jim Truxton and supported by Deb Smith-Olson. Motion Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was offered by Jim Truxton and supported by Jane Allison. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:20 PM.

Meeting Schedule: The next regular DDA meeting will be held August 15, 2024, at the Village office at 3:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Toland, Administrator
for
Deborah Smith-Olson, Secretary/Treasurer