

**Village of Baldwin
Downtown Development Authority
August 21, 2025, Minutes
Regular Meeting
(approved)**

CALL TO ORDER

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

Present: Jane Allison, Andy Gremel, Darci Maldonado, Harold Nichols, Tony Gagliardo, Seth Wenger and Joy Parrott (arrived late).

Absent: Josh Johnson and Debbie Smith-Olson

Staff: Robert Toland, DDA Director; Joni Luce, Recording Secretary

Acknowledgment of Visitors: Meredith Gremel with Pure Markette, Samantha Mariuz with Fleis & Vandenbrink and Quran Griffin and Kylie Davis with District Health #10.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- A. **Approval of Agenda:** A motion to amend the agenda to move item 5F to 5A (F&V presentation) and adding the Lake County EDA to 6D was made by Jane Allison, seconded by Andy Gremel; motion carried. A motion was made by Harold Nichols to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Andy Gremel. Motion carried
- B. **Approval of Minutes:** A motion to approve **July 17, 2025**, regular meeting minutes was made by Seth Wenger, supported by Harold Nichols. Motion carried.
- C. **Treasurers' Report and Payment of Bills:** Debbie Smith-Olson was not present; Jane Allison read the Treasurer's report through August 21, 2025, indicating a general fund balance of \$375,793.39 (including the \$100,000.00 CD), with disbursements totaling \$27,561.80, and total income of \$12.69, all interest. The largest expenditure was \$24,865.00 to Isenhardt Electric.

The following bills were presented for payment:

Consumers Energy	\$ 252.84 (streetlights)
Robert Toland Consulting	\$1,200.00 (retainer & meeting fee)
Village of Baldwin	\$1,175.01 (water bills)
Total bills	\$2,627.85

A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report and pay the bills presented was made by Harold Nichols and supported by Andy Gremel. Following a roll call vote the motion carried (Joy Parrot arrived after this vote).

D. Committee reports:

a. Pure Markette Committee: A report on activities was given by Meredith Gremel: the Markette has done very well this year, with \$2,200 in fund raising, \$2,800 in vendor fees and additional funding from the REACH grant. Stuff the Bus fundraiser brought in \$474, which was used to purchase TI calculators for Baldwin students. Attendance was an average of 350

people/week counting just shoppers, although attendance has been falling in the last couple weeks. The website had approximately 1,000 followers for the month, with the top content being a line dancing video and the Stuff the Bus reel. The fall schedule is still on Wednesdays from 3-6 but moving the venue to 902 Michigan Ave and no community partner tents. The Lake County grant is due 9/15 for Farmacy RX program, \$500 in tokens for people to purchase produce. There will be a Thank You party held at the Trout House on 9/17 from 5-7 p.m. Andy noted that it is ironic that attendance is falling off just as the farmers are harvesting the most produce, Jane wondered if there was any benefit to starting later. Meredith agreed there is much more produce available in the fall than when they start in the spring, but a 12-week season is required for the Rx program.

b. Streetscape: Andy reported that there is nothing new, MDOT expects to break ground in the spring. Harold noted that MDOT is not sure the removable traffic island will be in the funding, so the DDA should keep funding for that project in mind.

E. Acknowledge Communications: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: Kylie Davis with District Health #10 informed the board that MDHHS has funding for technical assistance with walkability or transportation projects; the traffic island project would be a good fit for this program. This funding is for 2026 so there is time to work with them on next summer's projects. Andy Gremel volunteered to be the communications contact for details. Kylie shared that the program requires a team with at least one member from the community, one elected official, one health department official and one more (she couldn't remember off-hand, local business owner??). They will help with planning and going after available funding. There will be training in the future, she will be in touch with details.

BOARD COMMENTS: None

OLD BUSINESS

A. Fleis & Vandenbrink Proposal: Samantha Mariuz provided a handout for each board member that details F&V summary of their review of the Baldwin DDA and recommendations going forward. A slide-show presentation went through the purposes, role and responsibilities of a DDA and how the Baldwin DDA is doing. Samantha pointed out that the strong financial position of the DDA is commendable and will allow the DDA to take advantage of the recommended grants and programs. She went through many of the recommendations listed on the last page of the handout. Samantha noted the strengths of the DDA: financial reserves, Redevelopment Ready Community status and the Pure Markette; as well as the challenges: dependence on volunteers, downtown vacancies, limited grant opportunities and a need to modernize infrastructure. Bob Toland observed that she has mentioned the Pure Markette several times and it is only in its second year, strong evidence of its success and the difference it is making. Bob also mentioned the need for coordinated marketing as a key point in marketing Baldwin, whether the events are DDA sponsored or not. Harold noted that there are gaps in different organizations working together in promoting events and it would be good to bring events such as the Blessing of the Bikes, Troutarama and others together through marketing. Jane asked what the next steps should be; Samantha suggested supporting grant procurement. She is excited to work with the DDA on the recommended projects.

B. Trees, Flowerboxes & Irrigation System: Joy reported that H2Oasis disconnected the irrigation water to Jones' Ice Cream yesterday. Harold said there is an open line behind his business available as a possibility to run new irrigation lines. Jane requested the board

approve \$400 from the seasonal decoration fund for fall decorations on the main block downtown. Seth Wenger made a motion to spend \$400 on fall decorations, Darci Maldonado seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote. Harold asked why just the main block and not the other areas; Jane replied that the other areas do get Christmas decorations and banners, it's just a matter of volunteers and cost.

- C. **8th Street Upgrade:** All agreed this project is finished and should be removed from the agenda.
- D. **Ideas for the next project** Banner poles, streetscape project and the seasonal pedestrian crossing (if not covered by MDOT) were the top ideas. Seth reported that the vendor for the banner poles says it should be done this fall, not sure it will. Harold asked if this could be used as a shovel-ready project next year for the transportation grant; Quran doesn't believe it would qualify, although the crosswalk would. Andy suggested acquiring the land between 902 and the Trout sculpture be put on the list.
- E. **Match on Main program:** Jones' Ice Cream won the grant. Joy reported that she is authorized to start, and they are already getting the compressor replacement and outdoor projects done. The compressor died last week so the timing of the grant is very helpful. She asked if the DDA wanted the bench and tiles she is removing from her outdoor space; Jane will coordinate with her regarding removal and storage at the lumberyard.
- F. **Downtown Sound System:** This project is currently on hold.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Bob Toland provided a handout on a proposed Building Improvement Grant program to be administered by the Baldwin DDA. Seth asked if this would be an on-going grant program; yes, if there are funds and interest. Harold suggested it be run like the Match on Main program and asked if the DDA board decides on who receives the grants; yes, the Board chooses from applicants. Darci noted that the handout says interior and exterior projects qualify but then lists only exterior projects. Seth said the projects should benefit the community, which would be things seen on the exterior. Andy asked about a previous comment on not using the grant to correct situations caused by neglect, not wanting to reward those who put off standard maintenance. Bob suggested that the grant program could be combined with a loan program that could be used for maintenance items needed. Harold believes there needs to be a specific set of criteria laid out for applications and that it would be nice to award smaller amounts to benefit a greater number of businesses. This should be a high priority action item for the DDA. Seth questioned including roof replacements, Jane agreed this would be a maintenance item that the community doesn't see but could fit under a loan program. Harold said roof replacement was the number one need given by businesses when he spoke to them about the Match on Main program. He believes businesses could apply for Demolition, Stabilization and Renovation grants through the Land Bank for roof repairs.
- B. The dead tree was planted by the DDA, but the Road Commission is responsible for trees that fall into the M-37 roadway. Harold will have the Village Board ask if the Road Commission will remove the tree as a preventative action. Seth noted that the tree was killed by the Road Commission's pesticide spraying, so do not plant another tree there.

Jane suggested postponing the replacement of the two missing light poles. Seth asked why not replace them now, Harold noted the inability to match existing poles. Jane said they would

either need to buy 2 similar, not matching, poles and put them on the ends, or buy more available poles and begin a program to replace a few each year until they all match, the problem being that by the time they replace them all they may run into the same problem of that style being discontinued. There are 88 light poles on the main street. Harold wondered about the old cobra-head style poles in storage; they are taller than the others and have the wrong style heads on them, new heads may not fit. Andy asked if the missing lights would be considered a public safety issue for grant purposes; currently the wires are capped off with orange barrels marking them. He will check into the grant possibility. Bob will contact the streetscape engineering firm that dealt with the light poles and see what information they can provide.

- C. Andy found a used Genie lift for \$7,950.00 that fit the DDA and Village needs. He suggested budgeting \$6,000.00 for the lift and a trailer to haul it, splitting the cost with the Village. Jane asked where the lift would be stored, Harold said the second storage barn should have room as several items are set to be auctioned off. Jane Allison made a motion, seconded by Darci Maldonado to spend up to \$6,000.00 on the lift and trailer, contingent upon the Village agreeing to pay the other half. Following a roll call vote, motion passed.
- D. Two Lake County Economic Development Alliance work group opportunities were handed out. Seth Wenger made a motion to table this item to next month, seconded by Jane Allison. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was offered by Darci Maldonado and supported by Seth Wenger. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 4:23 PM.

Meeting Schedule: The next regular DDA meeting will be held September 18, 2025, at the Village office at 3:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Joni Luce, Recording Secretary
for
Deborah Smith-Olson, Secretary/Treasurer