

**Village of Baldwin
Downtown Development Authority
January 15, 2026 Minutes
Regular Meeting
(approved)**

CALL TO ORDER

Roll Call: Jane Allison called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM with Board Members:

Present: Jane Allison, Debbie Smith-Olson, Andy Gremel, Darci Maldonado, Harold Nichols, and Tony Gagliardo

Absent: Josh Johnson, Joy Parrott, and Seth Wenger

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

Acknowledgement of Visitors: Jodi Nichols, Grace Knickerbocker, Meredith Gremel

GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Approval of Agenda: Harold would like to add “DDA/Village Maintenance” to New Business, item B. A motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Tony Gagliardo and supported by Darci Maldonado; motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes: A motion to approve the **December 11, 2025**, regular meeting minutes was made by Harold Nichols, supported by Jane Allison; motion carried unanimously.

C. Treasurer’s Report and Payment of Bills: Debbie Smith-Olson presented the Treasurer’s Report through 1/15/26. The report indicated a General Fund beginning balance on 12/31/25 of \$230,908.95, paying December bills totaling \$2,636.33 and adding income of \$71,001.72 in TIF revenue for 2025, leaving a General Fund balance of \$299,274.34. The CD has a principal balance of \$102,362.11 and will mature on 6/23/26, bringing the total fund balance to \$401,636.45. Debbie noted that she is using up an old supply of checks, making the check number sequence jump back from #1804 to #1301.

The following bills were presented for payment:

Consumers Energy	\$ 364.12
Robert Toland Consulting	\$ 1,250.00 (retainer & January meeting fee)
Isenhardt Electric	\$ 640.25 (replaced outlets)
Village of Baldwin	\$ 8,845.00 (1/2 of the JLG articulating boom lift)
Village of Baldwin	\$ 688.35 (water bills, service fee for meters)

TOTAL FOR APPROVAL \$11,787.72

Jane Allison made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report and approve the payment of bills, supported by Andy Gremel. Motion carried following a unanimous roll call vote.

D. Committee Reports:

a. Pure Markette: Meredith Gremel gave an off-season update; the committee met on 1/8/26 and discussed the budget. They will meet again on 2/12/26 to finalize budget projections and bring them to the DDA Committee on 2/19/26. The Markette will open on 6/10/26 and go through at least the end of August, although with Labor Day falling late this year, they may go through 9/2/26. Hours will remain from 3:00-6:00 p.m. Without the hope for M-37 location they will need to draw attention to the Markette; they are planning on a banner across M-37 and looking to hire students to stand out by M37 and hold signs alerting drivers to the Markette. They are looking for vendors and have the first meeting set up on 1/28/26. Grace (the intern from LCEDA) will be helping with outreach, specifically looking for more fruit and vegetable vendors. The Markette has secured a \$10,000 grant to expand the Pharmacy Rx program, which will help in attracting more fruit/vegetable vendors. They are working on getting two additional grants and submitted a renewal grant application to District Health #10 for the \$5,000 THRIVE Program. Meredith noted that the Markette is currently dependent on her involvement as the lead volunteer; she is working on getting others more informed in case something should happen to her, possibly looking at a paid position at some point.

b. Traffic Calming: Andy Gremel reported that MDOT wants all sidewalk permits to expire by 9/1/26 to allow for construction to begin. Project is to be complete by 12/31.

c. Building Improvement Grant Program: The Committee presented the application. Darci would like to have "roofs" included as an allowable use to avoid confusion, as the last grant offered to the businesses specifically excluded roof repairs. It was determined that language needed to be added to let applicants know who to contact for questions and where to submit the application. Andy Gremel made a motion to approve the application form with these changes, seconded by Harold Nichols. Motion passed unanimously. It was suggested that a Press Release be issued and a notice be put on the Village Website. Jodi will send out a notice to her contact list, and possibly the Chamber of Commerce would list it on their website as well.

E. Acknowledgement of Communications: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

BOARD COMMENT:

Darci had heard about an Elevate Small Business grant and successfully applied for it. This enabled her to make upgrades, such as new carpet and paint, that she would not otherwise have been able to do. This is an annual grant for the Michigan/Indiana region, and she would like to let others know about it.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Trees, Flowerboxes & Irrigation System: Nothing to report.

B. Match On Main Program: Still waiting for the funds to be paid; Jodi will contact the State as they are requesting a signed contract but have not sent it yet. Jodi said the 2026 program

should open on 3/1/26, with applications due on 4/20/26. This is a Statewide program, and Baldwin should be able to submit two applications.

C. Dead Tree Removal: Harold asked the Road Commission to remove the tree.

D. Lake County Economic Development: Jodi introduced Grace Knickerbocker as the intern working with her through next March on many different areas of outreach. ITC, an electric infrastructure company, is expanding in this area and holding meetings about local needs; this is good timing on the hoped-for infrastructure expansion in Baldwin, and she will forward the meeting date when she gets it. The Land Bank has a marketing firm lined up for the spring and is hosting a meeting next month regarding housing. Township and Village Supervisors and Blight Administrators are invited to discuss their housing and blight remediation needs. The Land Bank applied to MSHDA's "My Neighborhood Dollars" \$600,000 grant to address housing needs and was approved for specific sites on the application.

E. Light Pole Replacement near Road Commission: Jane is still waiting for a quote.

NEW BUSINESS :

A. 2026/2027 Budget: A proposed budget for the DDA was presented and discussed. Harold and Tony both think \$50,000 is too low for the banner poles, should bring it up to \$75-100,000. However, it is also probably not going to happen this year as the permitting process for M-37 takes too long. Gerber Construction has engineered the project, but they are at least two years out on scheduling; Jane suggested that it be put out for rebid, she and Bob will contact two companies. The project includes moving/repairing the sprinkler system lines and sidewalk. Debbie noted that the Business Improvement Grant needs to be added. Andy said that the \$50,000 budgeted for the Traffic Calming Project could be cut back to \$25,000 and may even be fully paid by MDOT. The 8th Street sidewalk budget could be cut back to \$10,000 for this year. Harold reported that the Village is looking into purchasing the Fish Hatchery, with the DNR keeping the fish weir, using DNR grant money. If the Village did acquire the land, to use as a park, they would be interested in putting in a sidewalk to the river. He suggested keeping the line item in the budget to show the DNR that the DDA desires to promote the park with river access. The three "maintenance" line items caused some confusion, it was proposed to list them closer together and rename to clarify what is being maintained, and to reduce the \$85,000 budget to \$40-50,000 on Maintenance & Repairs (except irrigation) and raising the Irrigation – Maintenance line item from \$7,000 to \$20,000. It was also suggested to budget \$5,000 to the Lake County Artist Collective to encourage more interest from them. Debbie noted that the DDA never received an invoice from the Village for their share of the Auditor last year, Harold will investigate that and get it invoiced. A revised budget will be brought to the board next month for approval.

B. DDA/Village Maintenance: Debbie, Darci, Jane and Harold met to discuss maintenance cost sharing for lawn mowing and snow removal along the M37 corridor and parking lots. FY 2025/2026 has not ended, but the cost for this year is about \$30,000. They proposed that the DDA pay \$10,000 this year, and going forward the DDA would pay monthly for the actual cost incurred. Bob suggested that a separate line item be added to the budget for the "Village of Baldwin Maintenance Agreement". A motion to approve the DDA's \$10,000 portion per

verbal agreement for 2025, to be paid from the Maintenance and Repair line item, was made by Andy Gremel and supported by Jane Allison. Going forward, Bob will draft a written agreement to be brought before the Village and DDA boards.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was offered by Harold Nichols and supported by Jane Allison; motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:49 PM.

Meeting Schedule: The next regular DDA meeting will be held February 19, 2026, at the Village office at 3:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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