

**Village of Baldwin  
Downtown Development Authority  
November 20, 2025 Minutes  
Regular Meeting  
(approved)**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Roll Call:** Jane Allison called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM with Board Members:

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

**Absent:** Josh Johnson and Seth Wenger

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

**Acknowledgement of Visitors:** Jodi Nichols w/LCEDA and Steven Jones II with Corewell Health's Community Education REACH grant.

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**A. Approval of Agenda:** A motion to approve the agenda as submitted was made by Harold Nichols and supported by Jane Allison; motion carried unanimously.

**B. Approval of Minutes:** A motion to approve the **October 16, 2025** regular meeting minutes was made by Jane Allison, supported by Harold Nichols; motion carried unanimously.

**C. Treasurer's Report and Payment of Bills:** Debbie Smith-Olson presented the Treasurer's Report through 11/20/25. The report indicated a General Fund beginning balance on 10/26/25 of \$210,030.48, paying October bills totaling \$3,486.89 and adding income of \$8.87 in interest and \$27,077.80 in SOM Local Comm. Stabilization revenue, leaving a General Fund balance of \$233,630.26. The CD will mature on 11/23/25 in the amount of \$102,015.53. The funds can either be rolled over into a new 7-month CD or be returned to the General Fund account. Debbie believes there is enough cash flow to cover expected expenses through the next 7 months should the CD be renewed. Jane Allison made a motion to roll the CD over into a new 7-month CD on the maturity date of 11/23/25, supported by Darci Maldonado. Following a roll call vote of 6 ayes and 1 abstention (Debbie Smith-Olson), the motion carried.

The following bills were presented for payment:

Jane Allison submitted invoices for \$114.00 for advertisement in Hearst Publications and \$200.00 for materials only by the West Shore Community College for a Christmas banner to be made by the students. These invoices were accepted and added to the report presented.

Consumers Energy	\$ 263.06
Robert Toland Consulting	\$1,200.00 (retainer and meeting fee)
Fleis & Vandenbrink	\$ 239.40 (final invoice)
Village of Baldwin	\$ 713.83 (water bills)
Hearst Publication	\$ 114.00 (advertisement)
West Shore Comm College	\$ 200.00 (banner materials)
<b>TOTAL FOR APPROVAL</b>	<b>\$2,730.29</b>

Darci questioned the water bills as the water has been turned off, Debbie noted that the bills usually lag by a month or two. Harold Nichols made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report and approve the payment of bills as amended, supported by Jane Allison. Motion carried following a unanimous roll call vote.

**D. Committee Reports:**

**a. Pure Markette:** No report

**b. Streetscape:** Andy Gremel has been in contact with MDOT; they have accepted a \$382,000.00 contract for the sidewalks, shoulder paving and crosswalks along M37 within the Village limits. Due to a lack of right-of-way agreements and logistics, there will be a gap in the sidewalk in front of the Family Dollar store and the intersection of US10/M37N. The project includes three new crosswalks, and will likely include paying for the island crossing downtown. The project is set to be done in the fall of 2026, but MDOT is confident it can be finished before inclement weather sets in.

**E. Acknowledgement of Communications:** Bob received a letter from Kram Construction & Design indicating their desire to be involved in any upcoming housing development projects. Bob had reached out to them after receiving a timely but unsolicited contact from their marketing team. Bob would like to reach out to Gerber Construction as well when the DDA is ready to move forward with the housing development plan.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Steven Jones with Corewell Health said that the "Healthy Weight in Your Child" program will hopefully be coming to the Baldwin Public Schools. This is a 15-week course for students with their parents that will meet for two hours, once a week. He will bring more information to the next DDA meeting.

**BOARD COMMENT:** None

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. Trees, Flowerboxes & Irrigation System:** Jane Allison reported that a Christmas Tree was donated but it is much larger than the one last year and will not fit in the same space by the sculpture. She is suggesting that the tree be put up at the 902 Michigan Ave location, and once the tree is in place the new lift can be used for decorating the tree. Andy Gremel offered to allow the tree to be plugged in to his electricity to reduce any wiring trip hazards. Darci Maldonado noted that most of the flowerboxes have been cleaned up, with just a few still needing to be winterized. Jane Allison said that Eisenhart Electric has not gotten back to her on a delivery date, but the order has been placed

**B. Ideas for the next project:** The Grant Program has already been chosen and a committee formed to implement the program. It was suggested that this be moved to “Committee Reports” on future agendas.

**C. Match On Main Program:** The payout of this grant has been delayed again, reportedly due to the government shut-down.

**D. Downtown Sound System:** This item has been tabled for the last few months. Jane and Andy suggested this be removed from future agendas until ready to act upon.

**E. Samantha Mariuz, Fleis & Vandenbrink:** The final invoice for their recommendations has been received. The total invoicing came to \$4,400.00, under the estimated \$5,000.00.

**F. Building Improvement Grant Program:** The Committee determined that for the first year this will just be a grant program, with no loans. A total of \$36,000.00 has been budgeted, with \$18,000.00 earmarked for new businesses and \$18,000.00 for existing businesses. Qualifying criteria will include being locally owned, located within the DDA district and the funds to be used for business improvement, generally any need they have to promote their business other than building construction. Grants can be up to \$6,000.00 per business, with a 25% match by the business. The Committee is still looking for a name for the program. They hope to begin accepting applications soon and be ready to start by February 2026. It has been suggested that this line item be moved to “Committee Reports” on the agenda. The Committee will meet again on 12/11/25 at 2:00 PM.

**G. Dead Tree Removal:** Harold said that the Road Commission does all the tree removals within the Village limits; if they are refusing to remove the tree a private tree removal company will need to be contracted, and they will need to be licensed for work along M37. Harold will talk with the Road Commission to see what can be done as the tree is not that large and should not be a problem for them to remove.

**H. Purchase of a Lift jointly with the Village:** The lift has been purchased. The Village paid the invoice and will submit an invoice to the DDA for their share. This item can be removed from future agendas.

**I. Lake County Economic Development:** Jodi Nichols reported that she will be sending everyone an email she received on a preliminary site assessment for possible housing. The Land Bank intends to budget \$500,000.00 in housing funds; \$100,000.00 for one modular home on a recent demolition site, with rehab and reconstruction receiving approximately \$200,000.00; they also plan to include funds for low-income home purchases without a match. This is a County-wide program, but she expects most funds to be used in the Village of Baldwin as they have the most infrastructure already in place. Any remaining funds would be used for critical repairs such as roofs, heating systems, etc. Jodi also discussed the MDARD grant for County-wide tourism; she is reaching out to possible partnerships in tourism with Mecosta County and Cadillac. Jodi is excited about an applicant for the 18-month internship starting in January, who will be able to work with the LCEDA at no charge. She also noted that Rep. John Moolenaar asked the LCEDA to submit an application for the USDA

Rural Development Water Fund grant. The Webber Township lift station has been awarded \$750,000.00 for repairs/upgrades.

**NEW BUSINESS :**

**A. Budget Amendment – F&V Study:** Debbie noted that the \$4,400.00 spent with Fleis & Vandenbrink needs to be moved from the “unbudgeted” column. Bob suggested a line item be added for “Consultants”. Debbie Smith-Olson made a motion to add “Consultants” as a line item and move \$4,500.00 from unbudgeted to Consultants, supported by Harold Nichols. The motion carried unanimously. Debbie will review the budget prior to next month to see if any other budget amendments need to be made.

**B. DDA Director meeting fee increase:** There has been a request for an increase in the meeting attendance fee from \$350.00 to \$400.00 per month, adjusting the total monthly fee from \$1,200.00 to \$1,250.00. Darci Maldonado made a motion to accept this increase, seconded by Debbie Smith-Olson; motion carried unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion to adjourn was offered by Harold Nichols and supported by Andy Gremel; motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 3:59 PM.

Meeting Schedule: The next regular meeting DDA meeting will be held December 11, 2025, at the Village office at 3:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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