

**Village of Baldwin
Downtown Development Authority
October 16, 2025, Minutes
Regular Meeting
(approved)**

CALL TO ORDER

Roll Call: Jane Allison called the meeting to order at 3:03 PM with board members:

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

Absent: Josh Johnson, Tony Gagliardo, Seth Wenger and Joy Parrott.

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

Acknowledgment of Visitors: Meredith Gremel with Pure Markette and Jodi Nichols with LCEDA.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- A. **Approval of Agenda:** A motion to approve the agenda was made by Harold Nichols and supported by Jane Allison. Motion carried.
- B. **Approval of Minutes:** A motion to approve the **August 21, 2025** regular meeting minutes was made by Andy Gremel, supported by Harold Nichols. Motion carried. Note: the September meeting was cancelled due to a lack of quorum.
- C. **Treasurers' Report and Payment of Bills:** Debbie Smith-Olson presented the Treasurer's Report from 8/21/25 through 10/16/25, adding \$380.28 in reimbursements to Jane for mailing the 2024-2025 audit packet (\$3.56), and for downtown Halloween decorations (\$376.72). The report indicated a general fund balance of \$311,027.74 with disbursements of \$64,788.41 in August and September (all contracted amounts) and an income of \$22.76, all interest (2 months). Debbie also noted that the CD matures on 11/23/25 and that the bond payment due 10/1 (\$49,796.75) was the last payment for this fiscal year.

The following bills were presented for payment:

Consumers Energy	\$ 255.68 (street lights)
Robert Toland Consulting	\$1,200.00 (retainer and meeting fee)
Village of Baldwin	\$1,100.93 (water bills)
H2Oasis	\$ 550.00 (shut down and repairs)
Reimbursements	\$ 380.28 (postage and fall decorations)
Total bills	\$3,486.89

Debbie also requested approval to commit to an ad in the 2026 Michigan Trails Magazine, as there is a 5% discount if we commit by November 26th. The ad was ¼ page in the past and content can be updated later. The cost depends on the size of ad, but it would be \$825.00 or less. Jane Allison made a motion to commit to the ad, supported by Darci Maldonado. Motion carried.

A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report and pay the bills as presented was made by Jane

Allison, supported by Andy Gremel. Following a role call vote the motion was unanimously carried.

D. Committee reports:

a. Pure Markette Committee: A report on activities was given by Meredith Gremel: The account balance was \$20,009.92 as of 9/30/25, with a full financial report created for the Advisory Board. The poor turnout for the September farmer events resulted in a discontinuation of October events. Meredith has submitted a grant application to the Lake County Community Foundation to support the Farmacy Rx program next year, which has 39 participants and a waiting list this season. A fall recognition party for volunteers, sponsors, partners and vendors was held 9/17/25 with 63 people in attendance. The next Advisory Board meeting will be 11/13/25 with top priorities of setting the 2026 schedule, recruiting vendors and selecting a high visibility location from M37, as even with signs many still are not aware of the Markette.

b. Streetscape: Andy Gremel reported that MDOT said they were looking at starting the project next fall, rather than the spring as expected, but will be completed by the financial deadline of year-end 2026. MDOT's reasoning is that traffic would have to be re-routed on M37/Main Street during the anticipated month-long project, choosing to start after Labor Day to avoid Troutarama and Blessing of the Bikes. Harold raised concerns about the quality of work done in fall. Weather uncertainties and the project running into delays were additional concerns. Andy will talk with MDOT about starting earlier, just after Troutarama, to allow for more time to complete the project before the end of the construction season.

E. Acknowledge Communications: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

BOARD COMMENTS: None

OLD BUSINESS

A. Trees, Flowerboxes & Irrigation System: The irrigation system has been shut down for the year. Jane Allison reported that she received a communication from the Garden Club, asking that when we put out for bids for maintenance of flower boxes & the fish sculpture next year, they want us to include the 4 triangles they planted this summer in the parking lot behind the Pathfinder Library. Jane noted they typically like to plant, but not maintain and water, which is necessary for the bidders to include when we issue the RFP next spring.

B. Ideas for the next project: The new banner poles and the building improvement grants/loans have previously been determined to be the next projects to complete and are in the works.

C. Match on Main program: Jodi Nichols reported that the State has approved the award to Jones' Ice Cream and they can begin the project anytime, but they have not yet received communication from the State as to when the funds can be expected for reimbursement. Jones' is aware of the delay and have begun the project.

D. Downtown Sound System: This project has been placed on hold.

E. Samantha Mariuz, Fleis & Vandenbrink Proposal: F&V provided a five-page handout, with the final page showing recommendations, some of which the DDA is already implementing.

A discussion was held on having shovel-ready projects for grant opportunities, involving vacant properties, and hosting developers to see if investors can be found to improve the properties. Jodi suggested having three projects in mind and showing developers the sites available, concentrating on commercial ventures as Lake County already has a county-wide housing plan in the works. Jodi also noted that the MEDC will help with planning how to get us to the level above our current certification as a "Redevelopment Ready Community". It was determined to identify properties the DDA owns, possibly some private properties as well, to market for re-development, organizing a subcommittee to focus on that project. Jodi suggested that she and the LCEDA intern that will start in January be on the committee as it fits with their infrastructure and site development plans. A Site Development subcommittee of the DDA will meet on 11/20/25 at 2:00 PM for the kickoff meeting with Jodi, Debbie, Andy, Harold and Jane. Andy suggested more people not on the DDA be involved; it was determined to start with the above people and add more after the first meeting.

- F. Building Improvement Grant Program:** Bob provided handouts on both a Building Improvement Loan and a Building Improvement Grant program to be considered for local businesses by the DDA. Discussion was held on the risks and record-keeping involved with offering loans, more thought would have to be put into the parameters of how loans would be administered, perhaps involving Lake-Osceola State Bank to offer low-interest loans rather than using DDA funds. The matching grant program would be a better fit for the DDA and easier to administer. \$50,000.00 could be the total amount the DDA would want to budget for loans and grants.
- G. Dead tree removal & light pole replacement near road commission:** Harold reported that the tree is in danger of touching a wire if cut down, so the Road Commission is not willing to remove it. Jane reported that two light poles are currently needed; can get them close to the color of the existing ones, or Peacock Industries can paint the new ones as they painted previous poles. Cost should be about \$7,000.00 each, including removal of old and installation of new poles. A motion to adopt the new design for light heads for the Village of Baldwin was made by Harold Nichols, supported by Darci Maldonado. Motion carried. Funds will come from the maintenance budget. A discussion was held on the maintenance budget and it was decided that Bob would write a proposal for the scope of services needed so a written contract can be made between the Village and the DDA on what each party is responsible to fund. This would include snowplowing and lawnmowing.
- H. Purchase of a "Lift" jointly with the Village:** Andy shared specifications of the lift, and shared a video link.
- I. Lake County Economic Development:** Jodi Nichols provided two handouts from the Lake County Economic Development Alliance (LCEDA) on available programs that are in line with what the DDA is trying to accomplish. This could possibly tie-in with the newly discussed Site Development subcommittee. She is hoping to get more people involved from the community and the DDA Board.

NEW BUSINESS: Discussed events for the 12/6/25 Baldwin Christmas Extravaganza; filing for a permit with MDOT to close the street for a parade from 4:30-7:00 and a permit for a fire pit on the 902 Michigan Ave lot.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Darci Maldonado, supported by Harold Nichols. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 5:02 PM.

Meeting Schedule: The next regular DDA meeting will be held November 20, 2025, at the Village office at 3:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

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