

**Village of Baldwin
Downtown Development Authority
May 21, 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 Joy Parrott.

Absent: Seth Wenger and two vacancies.

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

Acknowledgement of Visitors: Meredith Gremel, Pure Markette and Jeremy Anderson, Webber Township Fire Chief

GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Approval of Agenda: A motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Harold Nichols and supported by Andy Gremel; motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes: A motion to approve the **April 16, 2026** regular meeting minutes as presented 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 and presentation of bills. The report through 5/21/26 indicated a General Fund beginning balance on 4/16/26 of \$264,522.23, paying April bills totaling \$17,528.61 and adding income of \$12.01 for April interest and \$62,804.05 in Lake County TIF payments, leaving a General Fund balance of \$309,809.68. The CD has a principal balance of \$103,303.84 and will mature on 6/23/26, bringing the total fund balance to \$413,113.52. The CD will need to be discussed next month as to reinvestment.

The following bills were presented for payment:

Consumers Energy	\$ 289.99
Robert Toland Consulting	\$1,250.00 (retainer & May meeting fee)
Intuit QuickBooks	\$ 810.00 (renewal fee. For Markette)
Lake County Chamber of Commerce Foundation	\$1,500.00 (sponsorship of Sounds of the Forest concert series)
Randi Gould	\$3,205.00

Village of Baldwin \$ 722.78 (water bills, service fee for meters)

TOTAL FOR APPROVAL \$7,777.77

The payment for QuickBooks is a reimbursement to Debbie as she used her credit card to pay for the renewal. Randi Gould's billing was added after the Treasurer's Report was printed. The billing included an increase of \$405.00 to cover the liability insurance the DDA is requesting her to have this year. Randi noted that this is her 26th year and will be her last. The DDA contract was referenced, but not signed; Darci will follow up for a signature. A motion to add Randi's \$3,205 invoice to the presentation of bills was made by Jane Allison, seconded by Joy Parrott. Motion carried, with Harold Nichols opposing. Harold Nichols made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report and approve the payment of bills, supported by Joy Parrott. Motion carried following a unanimous roll call vote.

D. Committee Reports:

a. Pure Markette: Meredith Gremel gave a report on the status of the Markette. The budget balance is \$35,876, not including the DDA deposit and \$1,500 in ITC funding. There will be an expense of \$336.00 for liability insurance coming up. There are 43 confirmed vendors representing a wide variety of produce and products. There will be \$1,700 in food assistance reimbursements each week for produce, which really helps those vendors. Grace with the LCED is working with the vendors to ramp up promotions, including holding weekly contests. All 12 tents have been reserved, with a waiting list and there are 90 programs scheduled. There will be live music, an America 250th celebration on July 1, promotion of free rides to the Markette and there is a second sign advertising the Markette out by Houseman Foods. It is shaping up to be a great year.

b. Traffic Calming: Andy Gremel reported receiving a \$5,000.00 REACH grant from District #10 to help finance the seasonal traffic island. The grant has a flexible use, so it can be used for painting the crosswalk or signage if MDOT pays for the island.

c. Building Improvement Grant Program: Jane Allison reported that a press release on the grant awards has gone out.

E. Acknowledgement of Communications: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: Jeremy Anderson, Webber Twp Fire Chief requested help from the DDA in funding a tornado warning siren, stating that Chad, the Pleasant Plains Fire Chief, was not able to attend but was also making the request on behalf of his residents. They have reached out to Jake, the new Homeland Security manager, in regards to a grant for funding a new siren. They have not heard back yet. The DDA has wanted the siren as well and is willing to help; Harold requested that Jeremy write up a proposal, including suggested locations for the siren, and bring it back to the DDA for their consideration.

BOARD COMMENT: None

OLD BUSINESS:

A. Trees, Flowerboxes & Irrigation System: Discussion was held during the Presentation of Bills portion of the meeting. Jane noted that the irrigation system needs to be turned back on as it was turned off during the Blessing of the Bikes.

B. Lake County Economic Development: Debbie reported on the housing tour to show available sites for possible development; there are multiple lots available throughout the Village, some private, others owned by 5CAP, Senior Housing and others. The Consultant will make suggestions as to which properties should be promoted to developers. The Consultant will also be setting up a meeting with the Baldwin Housing Commission and others to discuss what is feasible, including various funding sources, per Jodi. Jodi also reported that the three-unit corner building that the Land Bank owns have more than three tenants interested, with a 10/1/26 opening date. A \$100,000.00 grant for a tourism marketing campaign has been secured and RFPs are to be sent out. An MDOT grant for the airport runway improvement has been submitted. Jodi is ready to help anyone looking to start a business; looking into options for small businesses to share space in unique ways. Also requested a recap on any concerns or suggestions for improvements for next year's Blessing of the Bikes festival.

C. DDA/Village Maintenance Agreement: The Village attorney wants to change some language in the agreement, so the Village has not voted on it yet.

D. Banner Poles: Andy and Harold are working with MDOT; they couldn't find the DDA application, but the original style is no longer allowed and wooden poles may be the way to go; they will reach out to Hydaker-Wheatlake for pricing. Harold measured for likely pole placement, suggesting they be closer to downtown, by the donor bricks, staying as far from business signs as possible. Permits from MDOT will need to be obtained, as well as finding out what is underground. The DDA may need to consider using vertical banners rather than crossing M37; this would also make it easier to install and remove the banners seasonally.

E. Sidewalk Grinding: Jane has had no response from PCC and their voice mail is full. They originally seemed very interested and have done the work previously. Jane will continue to try and schedule with them, while also reaching out to other contractors.

NEW BUSINESS :

A. RRC – Julia Turnbull: Jodi Nichols and Julia Turnbull presented through a conference call. The Village of Baldwin is considering pursuing full Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) Certified designation through the MEDC; the Village is already at the Essentials status and is currently aligned with 39% of Certified expectations. One of the biggest benefits in becoming Certified is being able to work with the redevelopment team who will come to Baldwin and help with conception ideas for revitalization and help with end-stage development, including pre-development environmental studies. While there is still money in their budget this year, the end of July is the cut-off for funding new projects and it would be very difficult to have everything completed by then. They will begin looking at projects for next year by mid-October or November, so she suggested getting everything ready to go without signing any contracts. The Village can request funding up to \$40,000.00 with Essentials status, \$50,000.00 if become Certified, for technical assistance, but funding is on

a first come, first served basis, with the Village matching 25% of the cost. They will assist private business owners as well as the Village. It was noted that pursuing Certification will take more staff time and there will be annual maintenance items to handle, but it can be pursued quickly or over several years without changing current status as Essential. Discussion continued after the phone call, noting that the Planning Commission will need to do much of the work to become Certified. It was suggested that State funding will likely eventually be tied to having these things in place and therefore it should be pursued. It was determined to take advantage of the technical assistance available and be ready for the 10/1/26 grant cycle. Dan Leonard, Director of Team 3, Redevelopment, will help put everything together for a project.

B. DDA Board Member vacancies: Two vacancies remain. Harold has approached multiple business owners and has not been able to get a commitment. He was not aware that they did not need to be business owners, or residents of the Village (already have these members); all will continue to reach out to others.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was offered by Andy Gremel and supported by Joy Parrott; motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:40 PM.

Meeting Schedule: The next regular DDA meeting will be held June 18, 2026, at the Village office at 3:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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