Village of Baldwin
Downtown Development Authority
August 20, 2026 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, Andy Gremel, Debbie Smith-Olson, Seth Wenger, and Harold Nichols.

Absent: Joy Parrott, Darci Maldonado, Doug Walls, and one vacancy.

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

Acknowledgement of Visitors: Meredith Gremel, Pure Markette; Pam Tripp-Simmons, Artist Collective; Karen & John Peterson, Sounds of the Forest; and Mike Bishop, Bishop Wood.

GENERAL BUSINESS

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

B. Approval of Minutes: A motion to approve the **July 16, 2026** regular meeting minutes as amended was made by Andy Gremel, supported by Harold Nichols; motion carried unanimously. Amendments were made to reflect that Doug Walls and one vacancy were absent, rather than two vacancies; and to strike the first two sentences under Banner Poles as inaccurate in regards to the permit.

C. Treasurer's Report and Payment of Bills: Debbie Smith-Olson presented the Treasurer's Report and presentation of bills. The report through 8/20/26 indicated a General Fund beginning balance on 7/16/26 of $325,658.76, paying July bills totaling $14,042.67 and adding income of $13.43 for July interest, leaving a General Fund balance of $311,629.52. The CD has a principal balance of $104,546.33, bringing the total fund balance to $416,175.85. The CD will mature on January 23,2027.

The following bills were presented for payment:

Consumers Energy	$ 246.45
Robert Toland Consulting	$ 1,250.00 (retainer & August meeting fee)
Boyer Agency	$ 2,719.50 (reimbursement from BIG program)
Village of Baldwin	$ 7,969.04 (6-month maintenance contract)
Village of Baldwin	$ 4,000.00 (reimbursement for DDA portion of audit)
Village of Baldwin	$ 1,285.36 (four water bills, service fee and usage)
TOTAL FOR APPROVAL	**$17,470.35**

Andy Gremel made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report and approve the payment of bills, supported by Harold Nichols. 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 account balance is $42,459.31. Approximately $2,100.00 in food assistance vouchers were paid to vendors in early August. Attendance has been affected by the extreme heat and wildfire smoke. Calculators were purchased for the school kids; the plates decorated by the school kids can't really be used at the school, so suggesting that they be donated to the Rotary Club for their kids backpacks program. Classes have been successful. The District #10 Health Department is bringing a team from the CDC due to the big impact the Markette is having, they are planning on doing a spotlight on the program.

b. Traffic Calming: Andy reported that MDOT has a start date of 9/3/26 and they asked for businesses to be reminded to have all sidewalk cafés, etc. be removed by then. They hope to finish by 11/3/26. A public meeting is to be held in Webber Township in September regarding plans to widen the shoulders and install a roundabout at the US10/M37 intersection. A meeting will be held on 9/24 with Kylie regarding a REACH grant for Community Walkability. Andy cannot attend but is hoping Jodie can be there.

c. Building Improvement Grant Program: Two are completed, one has been paid (Boyer Agency).

E. Acknowledgement of Communications: Summer tax increments were received.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mike Bishop expressed his disappointment with trying to participate in the DDA's (BIG) grant program and suggested that the DDA do more to help people understand how to complete the grant application. He was also upset that his request to borrow the lift to put up a sign on his storefront celebrating America's 250th birthday took over a week for a response and he did not get an answer in time to install the sign. He is closing his business for unrelated reasons but requested that the DDA do better in helping the businesses.

BOARD COMMENT: None

OLD BUSINESS:

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

B. Banner Poles: Andy reported that the next step is to reach out to Hydaker-Wheatlake and see if they will engineer this project. The railroad plans are still unknown but will need to plan as if the crossing will be there. A motion was made to contact Hydaker-Wheatlake by Jane Allison, supported by Seth Wenger; motion carried.

C. Sidewalk Grinding: No contact has been made yet.

D. DDA Board Member Vacancy: Harold has spoken with someone who has an interest, she lives outside the village but her husband is a consistent vendor at the Markette. She will try to come to the next meeting.

E. Tornado Warning Siren: Jake Carter, Lake County Emergency Management Director, sent an email regarding a grant application through FEMA; he only had a week to apply but he got it done and has asked for 16 sirens, one for every township plus the village.

F. Sounds of the Forest Summer Music: Karen Peterson reported that they are facing financial difficulties as this year's attendance has been very low, likely due to the heat and smoke. The Markette has not improved attendance, she wonders if it's just too long of a day for people to do both and suggested they may just perform on Saturday. They have a $10,000 deficit out of a $40,000 budget. They missed a grant due to a lack of a fiduciary advisor until after the deadline, but they have one now who may be able to help with getting it anyway. They are asking for an additional grant from the DDA to bring the $1,500 they already received up to the $5,000 grant given to the Museum and Troutarama. Jane Allison made a motion to grant an additional $3,500, supported by Seth Wenger; motion carried following a unanimous roll call vote. Andy asked who the fiduciary is; Lake County Chamber of Commerce Foundation. A question was also raised on whether there was a formal agreement in place; it may be required when partnering with a non-profit and has language regarding non-discrimination, etc. Meredith offered to share her marketing experience, she believes they need a better digital presence; the Chamber also has a social media page that can help with that. Harold would like to see them keep bringing people downtown on a week night, even if they don't want to keep Wednesday. Debbie offered to look into other grant opportunities for them.

G. Business Improvement Grant – Boyer Agency: A check for $2,719.50 was approved with the Treasurer's Report to reimburse them for their project.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Pam Simmons – Artist Proposal: Pam lead a discussion on ideas for next year, suggesting using the vacant lot at 902 to mount reprints of artwork on panels, or perhaps on the shed wall, along with possibly having artists paint benches to encourage people to walk there. Or perhaps hang art work on the other side of the bank building as they are now. Using 902 could create a draw, would be a good fit with previously discussed walking path for that location. It was determined to form a committee to make decisions regarding the project involving 902; Jane, Harold, Doug, Debbie, Andy and Pam will meet at 2:00 on 9/17/26. They will try and get the project designed and ready to begin in the spring, perhaps get grass seeded this fall.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was offered by Seth Wenger and supported by Harold Nichols; motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:07 PM.

Meeting Schedule: The next regular DDA meeting will be held September 17, 2026, at the Village office at 3:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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