VILLAGE OF NORTHPORT
Leelanau County, Michigan

DRAFT REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
June 18, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

President McCann called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call: President McCann and Trustees Cavendish, Cook, Ruble, Harper, Dean and Ager were present. Absent: None

Staff present: Village Manager/Zoning Administrator Jered Ottenwess, Clerk Joni Scott, Chris Holton, DPW Superintendent.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

President McCann added 10. Public Comment at the end of the meeting and moved the remaining items to 11. Council Comment and 12. Adjournment.

Trustee Harper Moved, Supported by Trustee Ruble to remove item 9 a. Office Chairs Purchase from the agenda. Discussion: Trustee Ager expressed a desire to discuss the purchase, while other Council members suggested the matter could be addressed at a future work session if necessary.

Motion to remove Item 9 – Office Chair Purchase from the agenda. Motion Carried.

The agenda was then approved as amended.

3. PUBLIC HEARING FY26-27 MILLAGE RATE AND BUDGET ADOPTION

President McCann opened the public hearing on the proposed FY 2026-27 Budget and Millage Rate. He invited public comment specific to the budget and millage. No public comments were received, and the public hearing was closed.

Trustee Ager moved, supported by Trustee Cook, to adopt Resolution 2026-13 approving the FY 2026-27 Budget and Millage Rate as presented. President McCann noted that the proposed budget had been reviewed and discussed at multiple prior meetings. Council members thanked staff and the Budget Committee for their work in preparing the budget.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas (7) Nays (0) Motion Carried.

Resolution 2026-13 adopted.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

Trustee Ager moved, supported by Trustee Cavendish, to approve the Consent Agenda.

During discussion, Trustee Cavendish asked about tires that were not collected during the Village clean-up event and whether residents should expect to make alternate disposal arrangements in the future. Village Manager Ottenwess explained that the waste hauler had notified the Village that tires would not be collected during this year's event and noted that clearer communication regarding accepted materials and collection requirements would be provided in the future. Trustee Ager also inquired about the final cost of the clean-up event, and Ottenwess reported that the final invoice had not yet been received.

Roll Call Vote: Yeas (7) Nays (0) Motion Carried.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Campbell McLeod, High Street, commented on the proposed Mill Pond dam millage and expressed support for restoration of a free-flowing stream. He encouraged the Village to provide factual public information regarding the condition of the dam, estimated project costs, millage impacts, and potential alternatives available if a millage proposal is not approved.

Elizabeth (Betsy) Mallek, Northport Township, requested additional information regarding the estimated costs associated with dam repair and potential dam removal alternatives. Mallek encouraged Council to provide the public with information regarding the source and basis of the cost estimates being considered as part of the Mill Pond dam discussion.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was received and acknowledged by Council:

- Vickie Slot – regarding the Mill Pond
- Elizabeth (Betsy) Mallek – regarding the Mill Pond

7. PLANNING COMMISSION LIAISON REPORT

A. Planning Commission Report –
Trustee Cavendish reported that the Planning Commission continues its work on the Village Master Plan and ongoing zoning ordinance amendments. Village Manager Ottenwess provided an update on the Planning Commission's review of the R-2S Shoreline Residential District, noting that the Commission has been working on the district for several months and anticipates holding a public hearing later this summer. Ottenwess also reported that the Planning Commission has begun reviewing regulations related to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), including ordinance consistency and size requirements, with recommendations expected in the coming months.

Cavendish further explained that the R-2S district was created as part of the 2024 zoning ordinance update but was not reflected on the adopted zoning map. The Planning Commission is evaluating options to align the zoning map and ordinance language while maintaining the original intent of the shoreline residential district and minimizing impacts on affected property owners.

8. ACTION ITEMS

A. Resolution 2026-8 Mill Pond Millage

Trustee Ager moved, supported by Trustee Harper, to adopt Resolution 2026-8 authorizing placement of a Mill Pond Dam millage proposal on the November 2026 ballot.

Trustee Cavendish stated that while she supports the concept of a millage, she remained concerned about the timing of placing the proposal before voters. Cavendish indicated that additional public discussion regarding project costs, grant opportunities, environmental considerations, alternatives to replacement, and potential historical preservation measures would be beneficial prior to seeking voter approval. She also noted that the Capital Improvement Plan currently identifies the project as a longer-term need and suggested a series of informational meetings to review available options and associated costs.

Trustee Harper expressed support for placing the millage proposal on the ballot at this time, stating that the issue has been discussed for several years and that project costs will continue to increase over time. Harper stated that determining whether voters are willing to fund dam replacement should be the first step, noting that additional planning would have limited value if funding is not supported by the electorate. Harper also encouraged robust public discussion and education during the election process.

Trustee Ager agreed that the issue has been under discussion for an extended period and stated that Council should move forward with the millage proposal. Ager referenced previous engineering reports indicating that the Village must ultimately decide whether to remove or

replace the dam and stated that, should the millage fail, she supports pursuing dam removal while preserving the history of the Mill Pond area through other means.

Village Manager Ottenwess reviewed the basis for the proposed $1.5 million project estimate, explaining that the estimate was developed using prior engineering studies, inflation adjustments, projected design and permitting costs, bond issuance expenses, and other anticipated project-related expenditures. Ottenwess also discussed ballot timing, noting that the November election would likely provide the highest voter participation, and reviewed anticipated millage impacts to taxpayers.

President McCann stated that Council must ultimately determine the future of the Mill Pond dam and emphasized that maintaining the status quo is not a long-term solution. He discussed the condition of the dam, increasing rainfall events, and the need to continue moving toward a permanent decision. McCann also emphasized that the Village's role is to provide factual, neutral information regarding the ballot proposal, while advocacy for or against the proposal should remain with private citizens and community organizations.

Trustee Cook reminded Council that he had previously supported placing the issue before the voters several years earlier and believed it was appropriate to do so now. He also raised questions regarding sediment management and the long-term implications of dam removal, noting that sediment would remain an important consideration regardless of the option selected.

Trustee Dean stated that he shared many of Trustee Cavendish's concerns regarding the need for additional public understanding of the project, noting that many residents he has spoken with remain uncertain about the costs and implications of the available options. Dean questioned whether the timing of the proposed ballot was being driven by grant opportunities and sought clarification regarding the relationship between grant funding and the November election timeline. He also raised concerns regarding non-resident property owners who contribute significantly to the Village tax base but would not be eligible to vote on the millage proposal.

Trustee Cavendish requested that Council continue discussing the issue publicly regardless of the outcome of the millage proposal.

A roll call vote was taken:

Harper – Yes
Rubel – Yes
Cavendish – Yes
Cook – Yes
Ager – Yes
Dean – Yes
McCann – Yes

Motion carried; Resolution 2026-8 adopted.

B. Resolution 2026-14 Amendment to Attainable Housing Facilities Exemption Ordinance

Trustee Ager moved, supported by Trustee Cook, to adopt Resolution 2026-14 amending Ordinance No. 141, the Attainable Housing Facilities Exemption Ordinance. Village Manager Ottenwess explained that the amendment clarifies eligibility requirements by allowing eligible attainable housing properties to include owner-occupied dwellings, provided that any dwelling unit receiving the exemption is leased to an income-qualified household in accordance with the ordinance. The amendment also revises the definition of "Attainable Housing Property" to clarify the types of residential rental properties eligible for the exemption under the Michigan Attainable Housing Facilities Act.

A roll call vote was taken:

- Dean – Yes
- Ager – Yes
- Cook – Yes
- Cavendish – Yes
- Rubel – Yes

- Harper – Yes
- McCann – Yes

Motion carried; Resolution 2026-14 adopted.

C. Resolution 2026-15 Addendum to Village Manager Letter of Agreement

President McCann moved, supported by Trustee Ager, to approve Resolution 2026-15 approving an Addendum to the Village Manager's Letter of Agreement.

President McCann noted that the substantive discussion regarding the addendum had occurred during the Closed Session held immediately prior to returning to Open Session. No additional discussion was offered.

A roll call vote was taken:

- Harper – Yes
- Rubel – Yes
- Cavendish – Yes
- Cook – Yes
- Ager – Yes
- Dean – Yes
- McCann – Yes

Motion carried; Resolution 2026-15 adopted.

D. Rose Street Culvert Replacement Project Bid Award

Trustee Cavendish moved, supported by Trustee Dean, to award the Rose Street Culvert Replacement Project to **Walton Contracting** for **Schedule A (Culvert Replacement)** and **Schedule B (ADA Sidewalk Improvements)**.

Village Manager Ottenwess and Village Engineer Patrick Machin reviewed the bid results, noting that the engineer's estimate for the project was **$336,759**. The original low bid submitted by Elmer's exceeded **$677,000**, while a revised bid submitted by Walton Contracting totaled approximately **$377,000**. Engineer Machin explained that the significant cost difference was primarily attributable to Walton's ability to source the precast culvert from a qualified MDOT-approved manufacturer at a substantially lower cost, as well as differences in contractor methods and pricing.

Council discussed the revised bid, including questions regarding the timing of Walton's revised proposal, the substantial difference between the bids received, and confidence in Walton Contracting's qualifications. Ottenwess advised that acceptance of the revised bid would allow the Village to complete the long-planned project at a cost much closer to the engineer's estimate. Engineer Machin expressed confidence in Walton Contracting's experience and ability to successfully complete the project.

Ottenwess also explained that **Schedule B** would provide ADA-compliant sidewalk and ramp improvements in conjunction with the culvert replacement while the contractor was already mobilized at the site. Although those improvements are not eligible for grant reimbursement, staff recommended completing the work as part of the project to improve pedestrian accessibility.

Trustee Cavendish amended her motion to specifically include both **Schedule A and Schedule B**, which was accepted by Trustee Dean as seconder.

A roll call vote was taken:

- Dean – Yes
- Ager – Yes
- Cook – Yes
- Cavendish – Yes
- Rubel – Yes

- Harper – Yes
- McCann – Yes

Motion carried; Walton Contracting was awarded the Rose Street Culvert Replacement Project, including Schedule A and Schedule B.

E. Wind Turbine Monopole Proposal for Removal

Trustee Ager moved, supported by Trustee Cavendish, to approve the proposal from **Eisler Demolition** for removal of the wind turbine monopole and to authorize the Village Manager to execute the agreement, contingent upon receipt of sufficient funding from **Leelanau Community Energy** to cover the cost of the proposal.

Village Manager Ottenwess reported that the Village had received **$23,300** from Leelanau Community Energy to fund the removal project. He explained that although the contractor's original June 25 schedule had changed, the work is expected to be completed within the proposal's timeframe. Ottenwess also advised that Village staff will coordinate with Eisler Demolition and Leelanau Community Energy to oversee the project, including the proper decommissioning of electrical connections associated with the former wind turbine.

During discussion, Trustee Dean inquired about a previously returned escrow deposit associated with the wind turbine project. Ottenwess explained that the prior escrow funds had been returned in accordance with the existing agreement and were separate from the current funding provided specifically for removal of the monopole.

A roll call vote was taken:

- Harper – Yes
- Rubel – Yes
- Cavendish – Yes
- Cook – Yes
- Ager – Yes
- Dean – Yes
- McCann – Yes

Motion carried; the proposal from Eisler Demolition was approved, and the Village Manager was authorized to execute the agreement contingent upon funding from Leelanau Community Energy.

F. Team Dakoske Proposal for Real Estate Services

Trustee Cavendish moved, supported by Trustee Harper, to approve the proposal from **Team Dakoske** to list and market the Village-owned West Street property (Parcel Nos. **042-200-040-00** and **042-200-040-02**) and to authorize the Village Manager to execute the listing agreement and related documents as necessary.

Navneet Dhami with Team Dakoske presented the proposal and explained that the property would be marketed as two potential lots without requiring the Village to incur the upfront cost of a survey or lot split. Should a purchaser elect to purchase only one of the parcels, the purchaser would be responsible for the cost of completing the lot split. Discussion also included the current real estate market, estimated property value, and the benefits of listing the property during the peak summer selling season.

Trustee Dean asked about the purpose of selling the property. President McCann explained that the parcels are underutilized Village assets with no current municipal use and that proceeds from the sale would provide additional capital funding for future Village capital improvement projects, including infrastructure and other long-term needs.

Motion carried; the proposal from Team Dakoske was approved, and the Village Manager was authorized to execute the listing agreement.

G. Water System Video Camera Purchase

Trustee Ager moved, supported by Trustee Dean, to approve the estimate from **Anavon Technologies** to install video cameras and associated equipment at the Village water tank and well houses at a cost **not to exceed $15,000**, with funding from the Water Fund.

During discussion, Council reviewed the proposed surveillance system and questioned the potential use of **Starlink** for remote connectivity. Trustee Harper expressed concern regarding the necessity and ongoing cost of satellite service, noting that cellular connectivity may be sufficient at several locations. Village Manager Ottenwess clarified that the **$15,000 proposal includes only the camera equipment and installation**, and does **not** include Starlink hardware or monthly service. He explained that staff would continue evaluating the most cost-effective connectivity solution, including cellular service where practical, and that any live remote monitoring would likely be limited to the remote water tank site. Clerk Scott also shared information regarding Starlink service options and associated monthly costs researched by staff.

Ottenwess further noted that staff recommended Anavon Technologies based on the successful installation and performance of the Village's marina camera system and the quality of the proposed equipment. While less expensive alternatives had been considered, staff concluded they would not provide the same level of reliability or functionality.

A roll call vote was taken:

- Dean – Yes
- Ager – Yes
- Cook – Yes
- Cavendish – Yes
- Rubel – Yes
- Harper – Yes
- McCann – Yes

Motion carried; the estimate from Anavon Technologies was approved at a cost not to exceed $15,000.

9. Second Public Comment

Elizabeth (Betsy) Mallek encouraged Council to provide additional information regarding the estimated costs of both dam replacement and dam removal and requested that voters receive clear information regarding the basis for the proposed project estimate and potential project costs.

Campbell McLeod encouraged the Village to provide factual information explaining the proposed millage, project costs, and taxpayer impacts. He also suggested that the Rose Street culvert project consider the possibility of a future free-flowing stream should the dam ultimately be removed.

10. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council discussed the importance of providing factual, neutral information to the public regarding the proposed Mill Pond dam millage while avoiding advocacy for or against the ballot proposal. Trustee Ager commented on the long-term maintenance considerations associated with retaining the dam compared to eventual restoration following dam removal. Trustee Rubel expressed concern that discussion of the issue would likely continue through social media and suggested the Village provide a factual source of information for residents. Trustee Cook asked questions regarding sediment management if the dam were removed.

President McCann emphasized that the Village's responsibility is to provide factual information regarding the ballot proposal, while advocacy should remain with private citizens and community organizations. Village Manager Ottenwess stated that staff would develop a dedicated page on the Village website containing background documents, engineering reports, millage information, and other factual resources to assist the public.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Harper Moved, Supported by President McCann, to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joni L. Scott, Village Clerk