



Village of Lawrence
157 N. Paw Paw St.
Lawrence, MI 49064
PH: 269-674-8161 Fax: 269-674-3004
www.lawrencemi.org



Village of Lawrence Regular Common Council Meeting
157 N. Paw Paw St., Lawrence, MI 49064
February 11, 2025

Call to Order: The Regular Common Council Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance: Led by President Gritter

Roll Call:

- **Present:** John Gritter, President; Alicia Lorenzo, Trustee; Phil Glennie, Trustee; Chuck Rowlee, Trustee
- **Absent:** Annette Crandall, Trustee; David Deloach, Trustee; David Quick, Trustee
- **Also Present:** Theresa Stroud, Village Manager; Brian Johnson, DPW Manager; Paul Bianco, Police Chief; Skylar Closson, Resident; Chuck Williams, Resident

Additions to Agenda:

- None

Conflicts of Interest:

- None

Approval of Agenda Month:

No Changes, Approval Not Needed

Approval of Prior Council Minutes Month Prior:

Motion by Glennie, 2nd by Lorenzo
All Aye. Motions Carried.

Approval of Bills & Review of Bank Balances Month Prior:

Motion by Glennie, 2nd by Rowlee
All Aye. Motions Carried.

Presentations & Guests:

Van Buren County Commissioner: Mike Chappell

- Not present

Lawrence Township: Donna Spenner

- Not present



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Lawrence Township Emergency Services: Steve Richardson

- Not present, report attached

Lawrence Public Schools Superintendent: Ryan Williamson

- Not present

Reports:

President's Report:

- Went to the Van Buren District Library meeting with Township Supervisor Spenner and were politely told that the Library is not at all interested in changing the terms of the agreement or setting precedent by amending any part of it.

Clerk's Report:

- No Report

Village Manager:

- Motion to Approve the Budget
Motion by Lorenzo, 2nd by Rowlee
Aye: Lorenzo, Glennie, Rowlee, Gritter
All Aye. Motion Carried.
- 305 has leased their property to Pure Options, LLC

Police Department:

We wrote 25 LPD incident reports during the period 1 Jan to 31 Jan 2025 which ranged from a Property Damage accident, Driving Law Violation, Alarm, Violation of controlled substance, EMS/Fire incidents, disorderly conduct, Suspicious Situation, Welfare check, Assault, Assist other Dept and general assistance.

- Ran radar and watched for violations all over town to bring speeding down and make streets safer.
- Daily vehicle patrol in the business park to keep an on eye on businesses. Stopping in to check w/employees as well.
- Still having false alarm calls at 305 Farms that LPD, MSP and the VBCS have been responding to.
- Contact with citizens/kids as opportunities present themselves in the neighborhoods and around town.
- Continue to keep an eye out for blight issues and parking Violations. Also, educate citizens on the parking ordinances via verbal warnings to correct violations.
- Traffic monitoring/safety enforcement before and after school as calls for service permit.
- Ofc Vande Voren continues to make daily walk throughs at Lawrence Schools as well as VB Tech.

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During the month of January LPD issued 9 - written traffic citations, took 4 - UD10 traffic crash report(s) and made approximately 20 traffic stops for traffic offenses of which 11 resulted in verbal warnings to citizens.

During the month of January 2025 LPD responded to 17 calls for service that originated from the Van Buren County 911 dispatch Center. 10 police calls, 5 medical and 2 fire/rescue call(s). MSP was dispatched to 5 calls (4-primary & 1-as back-up to Lawrence PD or VBCS) and the VBCS was dispatched to 7 calls (5-primary and 2-as back-up to Lawrence PD or MSP). Note: all calls that VBCS & MSP were primary are when LPD did not have an officer on duty(nights/weekends).

- Continue to search for potential part-time officer candidates.
- Working on various training points with Ofc Vande Voren...he is making steady progress.
- Both Ofc Vande Voren & I continue to work on our 24 hours of Yearly mandatory MCOLES training.
- Radio Encryption update – If you have not already replaced/upgraded radios...Wait until we get answers from the federal & state levels of government. Expecting further updates in 2025 per Tim McGee.
- Chief Bianco has been responding to medical calls both in the Village and Township when on duty to assist Township with the QR team & Fire manning.
- I attended Airway/Ventilation medical training at Hartford FD on 28 Jan 2025 while off duty.
- Attended Lawrence QR training on 22 Jan 25 & Fire truck maintenance on 30 Jan 25 both while off duty.
- Ofc Vande Voren completed NARCAN training on-line so that he can administer it on drug overdoses.
- Ofc Vande Voren is still in the MFR certification class and will be done with it on 17 Feb 2025.

Opioid Settlement funding – VB County has been utilizing this funding. What about local municipalities? The State of Michigan is going to be receiving \$800 million dollars over the next 18 years; 50% of the \$800 million is supposed to be distributed directly to county, city and township governments. \$700,000 has been used by County, not Sheriff Department, and we have yet to receive any of that money ourselves.

Community Development:

- Rene Rodriguez of the Paw Paw Chamber of Commerce was present to discuss “Spoonfuls & Spirits” in March at the Paw Paw Lions Club. They will have samples from 9 food vendors/restaurants along with samples from 3 wineries, 2 breweries, and 2 coffee shops. This event will have a \$25 admission fee, with vendors offering samples at no charge, and include a DJ, door prizes, and recognition of 5 businesses/individuals.
- Not looking to duplicate their event but offer something similar in the form of the “Taste of Lawrence”, to be possibly held at the Conference Center with a \$5 admission fee. Will get feedback from each of the food vendors. It would ideally hold around mid-February 2026.
- History Night will be held Thursday, February 13th at the Conference Center at 7 PM.

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DDA:

- 2025/2026 Budget Meeting called to order at 5:30 PM.
- Revenues: rollover from 2024 \$65,000; taxes real property \$190,000; highway signs \$2,000 for a total revenue of \$257,000.
- Expenditures: Banking fees (audit) \$1,000; Membership/dues \$500; Conferences \$500; Community Promotion \$5,000; Community Development \$7,500 (prior approval by DDA before funds are spent); Ox Roast \$15,000 (includes fireworks and police presence); Banners \$1,500; Signage \$15,000; Insurance/bonds \$500; Decorative Lighting \$5,000; Repairs/maintenance \$10,000 (Solitude, Christmas Lights install, etc); Downtown Improvements \$120,000 (Elizabeth St \$50K; Old Pavilion/bathrooms \$20K, EV public charger \$25K, S Paw Paw St. sidewalk \$25k); Façade Grants \$10,000; Building Restoration Grants \$20,000; Farmers Market \$5,000 (stipend, misc materials) for a total expenditure of \$253,000.
- Motion by Gritter, 2nd by Glennie to approve the 2025/2026 DDA budget of \$257,000 in revenues and \$253,5000 in expenditures. Carried.
- Next meeting Wednesday, February 26th at 5:30 PM.

Joint Parks & Recreation:

- No meeting in January.
- Parks & Rec did get the determination for the archaeological study for the grant and there is no effect on the park, which is good. Joelle did state that there needs to be a Public Hearing held and a Resolution for that, which may need to be a Special Meeting as Parks and Rec meets quarterly now. The Parks & Rec Board will need to pass a Resolution to apply for the project that also commits to the match requirements. The grant application is due April 1st. The deed that was sent for the SPARK grant was not sufficient. Will need a copy of the deed and if one is not available, the next step will be a title search. That would need to be completed before October 1st to move forward in the process.

LDFA:

- No Meeting

Personnel:

- Met Tuesday, February 11th. Our recommendation is a 3% CPI increase, except for Justin, Ron, and Chris. Rationale is that everyone received raises in August or is under contract; Ron and Chris fall under government minimum wage requirements and would be receiving more than the 3% CPI increase to meet requirement; Justin will receive above 3% CPI to account for wage disparity within County rates.
- Motion to approve CPI increase rates.
Motion by Glennie, 2nd by Lorenzo.
Aye: Rowlee, Lorenzo, Glennie, Gritter.
All Aye. Motion Carried.



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- As of February 21st, the new ESTA rules regarding Sick Time goes into effect. According to the new rules, all employees accrue 1 hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked, which can accumulate. Currently, the Village has Sick Time included in Vacation Time and we need to separate the two. There are advantages and disadvantages for both the Village and employees with this new rule. There would be set requirements around Vacation time, including giving two weeks' notice, approval needed, etc. With the new Sick Time guidelines, we cannot ask what they are taking the time off for, how long they will be off, or for a doctor's note if they are off more than three (3) days. Their sick time can be accrued and rolled over, and there is no cap. Sick Time can only be accrued off hours worked (ie cannot accrue through Vacation or Sick Time hours used). The Village currently allows employees to cash out their vacation time if they leave the employment of the Village on good terms, but Sick Time cannot be cashed out. The recommendation of the Personnel Committee is that the Village Manager will write new policies that split the Sick Time and Vacation, back out the Sick Time that is currently built in with Vacation so that it's strictly Vacation Time and start to accumulate the Sick Time separately.
- Motion to approve the separation of Sick Time from Vacation Time.
Motion by Lorenzo, 2nd by Rowlee.
All Aye. Motion Carried.

Planning Commission:

- No meeting

Public Services/DPW:

- Brian and Carey finished up all the 2024 reports that were under his name. Starting January 1st, everything will go under Brian's credentials for the State.
- Sample retakes for the resident in town with high lead and copper readings came back and they came back not detected.
- Tree service company has started their work that is set to be done by the end of February.
- Exchange St. drain project is on hold right now as they are having a hard time locating the water main that is supposedly there and redo one structure (move it) as it's too close to our sewer main.
- Met with Hartford Water operator, Danny, to discuss sampling labs and options. Brian will be looking into changing our lab to Trace and not the State lab.
- Replaced the water pump on the tow behind generator; Cold patching, plowing, gravel, and salting as weather permits and needed around town.
- North Paw Paw, past the river, is our biggest road complaint for potholes. The issue is not just potholes, the road itself is deteriorating. The road is scheduled as our 2026 road project.
- With 305 closed DPW staff used both salamander heaters in the HPZ water tower, so we did not have any freezing issues during that cold week we had. This does require someone to come in at night to fuel the heaters.
- We only had a hand full of residents call for water to be shut off during that cold week we had.



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- We had a few hydraulic lines break on the plow trucks. Those lines were fixed by DPW staff.
- We ran low on salt this year, but I was able to buy some from the road commission. Very nice to have them as a backup for many things that we do not have the room to store on hand.
- We bought another truck load of cold patch from the road commission.
- Big ticket equipment ages, Backhoe is 25 years old. Generator is 44 to 50 years old. Kubota tractor is 27 years old. The single axle plow truck is 27 years old. We have been very fortunate to update several pieces of equipment over the years. These are our larger priced pieces of equipment that are left to be replaced.
- Brian met with the truck dealer and the truck outfitter dealer. The way everything works out, the truck would come out of this year's budget. The items from the outfitter won't be in until spring/summer of 2026. We would be working out of two different budgets. The truck itself, a 2026 Western Star 47X, with a 5-year warranty is \$136,291. The package we opted for included the dump box bed, salter box insert, and wing blade comes to \$145,406. This brings the total for the truck to \$281,697.
- Motion to purchase 2026 Western Star 47X with dump box bed, wing blade, and salt box paying cash in two payments over two years.
Motion by Lorenzo, 2nd by Rowlee.
Aye: Glennie, Gritter, Rowlee, Lorenzo.
All Aye. Motion Carried.

Citizen Police Committee:

- Next meeting is Tuesday, February 18th at 6:30 PM.

ZBA:

- No Meeting Held.

New Business:

- Items here

Old Business:

- None

Public Comment:

- None

Council Comment:

- None



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Motion to Adjourn:

Motion by Lorenzo, 2nd by Glennie
All Aye, Motion Carried.
Meeting Adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:


Theresa Stroud, Village Manager


John Gritter, Village President