



Village of Lawrence  
157 N. Paw Paw St.  
Lawrence, MI 49064  
PH: 269-674-8161 Fax: 269-674-3004  
[www.lawrencemi.org](http://www.lawrencemi.org)



**Village of Lawrence Regular Common Council Meeting**  
**157 N. Paw Paw St., Lawrence, MI 49064**  
**August 13, 2024**

**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; Annette Crandall, Trustee; Chuck Rowlee, Trustee; David Deloach, Trustee; Phil Glennie, Trustee; Alicia Lorenzo, Trustee
- **Absent:** None
- **Also Present:** Theresa Stroud, Village Manager; Brian Johnson, DPW Manager; Paul Bianco, Police Chief; Justin Vande Voren, Police Officer; Mike Chappell, County Commissioner; Donna Spenner, Township Supervisor; Ryan Williamson, Superintendent; Phoebe Becht; Skylar Closson

**Additions to Agenda:**

- None

**Conflicts of Interest:**

- None

**Approval of Agenda Month:**

- None; approval not needed

**Approval of Prior Council Minutes, Public Hearing Minutes, Special Council Minutes Month Prior:**

Motion by Lorenzo, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Crandall  
All Aye. Motions Carried.

**Approval of Bills & Review of Bank Balances Month Prior:**

Motion by Crandall, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Glennie  
All Aye. Motions Carried.

**Presentations & Guests:**

- Introduction of new Police Officer, Justin Vande Voren; Introduction of Ryan Williamson, new Superintendent for Lawrence Public Schools

**Van Buren County Commissioner: Mike Chappell**

- Commission approved Community Service Department request to apply for and administer Van Buren County Housing Assistance Program with an initial pledge of approximately \$650,000.

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Monies to be used towards critical home repairs, structural improvements, energy efficiency upgrades targeted towards low and very low-income homeowners in Van Buren County. Will be on a First Come First Serve basis. Look through Tax Roll to see if anyone is exempt from taxes due to low income and may qualify.

- September 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting moved to September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024, due to conference.
- Approved CPM Construction for the expansion of the Van Buren County Public Transit Facility, approximately \$560,000 with \$468,000 from grant and remainder from General Fund.
- Van Buren County Veterans Social August 29, 2024, from 6-8 p.m. at 222 E. Michigan Ave. in Paw Paw.
- MSU Extension is offering some free classes and programs.

#### **Lawrence Township: Donna Spenner**

- Dump Passes will start again September 1, 2024; will be available at the Township Hall starting the last week of August; same as before with 1 pass per property; will allow more if they are still available at the end of the month.
- Audit is in process, and they will be there most of the week.
- Gained a new firefighter and Medical QR, Chief Bianco, who was approved Thursday night at the Board Meeting; still looking for firefighters.
- In the process of hiring a new Fire Chief; August 15<sup>th</sup> is the last day to submit applications and then they will start interviewing.
- 

#### **Lawrence Township Emergency Services: Mike Carpp**

- For the month of July responded to 20 QR calls and 11 Fire calls, of which 16 in the township, 2 assisting neighboring departments (Hartford and Paw Paw), 9 calls in the Village and 4 calls in Arlington Township.
- Chief Bianco approved for Fire and EMS; James Fine has taken over all of QR and is now the Chief; new person as of last month, Eric Alden, and working out well.
- Looking at getting a new security system for the fire station; too many false alarms.
- Hartford Assistant Fire Chief, Kevin McGrew, is helping to get fire reports entered. Monday, August 5<sup>th</sup> they started entering in the full reports and have finished the first six months in and starting next six months.
- Started cleaning the Chief's office; expected it to take 3 days but will likely be closer to 5-6 days.
- As of 8/12 the Pancake Breakfast may not be on Labor Day due to staffing issues.
- Chuck Carpp has retired from the Fire Department effective August 1, 2024, after having started in 1983. The retirement ceremony will be held September 2<sup>nd</sup> at 5:30 at the Township Hall with cake and coffee.
- Thermal cameras and pocket monitors were ordered today.
- Hired Arch Angels to keep Lawrence Township (Township Office, Fire Department, Sexton) in compliance with MIOSHA with 300 Log.



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### **Reports:**

#### **President's Report:**

- Appoint Skylar Closson to the Planning Commission.

#### **Clerk's Report:**

- No Report

#### **Village Manager:**

- No Report

#### **Police Department:**

- Wrote 20 incident reports, issued 2 written traffic citations, took 1 UD10 traffic crash report, and made approximately 17 traffic stops for traffic offenses that resulted in verbal warnings to citizens.
- Continue to advertise for a part-time position. Completed background investigation on Justin Vande Voren and hired him as of August 12, 2024 as a full-time officer.
- Radio Encryption update-Expecting update in October 2024 per Tim McGee.
- Responding to medical calls in both Village and Township; State of Michigan Medical First Responder License good until July 31, 2025 and continue to take online classes to stay current. Appointed by Lawrence Township as firefighter to assist with their manning shortage.
- Next Citizens Police Committee Meeting is August 20, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

#### **Community Development:**

- Report Attached

#### **DDA:**

- Brian received information to install 5 catch basins on Exchange Street adjacent to the park. Cost estimate is \$49,000. The DDA has set aside \$30,000 to help Village with the project. Village does not have the funding available to put towards the project. Motion by John supported by Kim to approve the transfer of \$50,000 to the Village to install 5 catch basins.
- Phil talked to Badger about a new Christmas tree in the park. They will provide; DPW will need to remove the current tree and coordinate with Badger to plant the new tree.
- New flags have been ordered directly through the American Legion Vendor. Gary offered new poles for the flags if DPW needs them. Park benches ordered but have not arrived yet.
- Kim received a quote from Solitude for a solar fountain for the retention pond at Brausch Park for \$10,996 plus \$232 per hour to install at an estimated 4 hours of labor. Discussion on that resulted in the idea to purchase the fountain only. Motion by Kim, supported by Joh, to purchase a solar fountain from Solitude and installation not to exceed \$12,000.
- Next meeting Wednesday, August 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM.



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**Joint Parks & Recreation:**

- Rich LeStatt is going to present to the Township Board in September about funds to hire Joelle from Abonmarche for the grant application process.
- Fundraising for the Park needs ideas for how to raise the \$400,000 for the matching grant.
- Next meeting Sunday, August 18<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.

**LDFA:**

- No Report

**Personnel:**

- No Report

**Planning Commission:**

- Reviewed Special Land Use Permit application for the daycare in town. Public Hearing scheduled for Monday, August 26<sup>th</sup> prior to regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting.
- Motion by Deloach, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Glennie.  
Motion to waive Special Use Fee for daycare. All Aye. Motion Carried.
- Looking back at Ordinances to see what needs to be changed in regard to Zoning. Remove Zoning from company website/change company.

**Public Services/DPW:**

- Hired someone to take care of the beaver issue on E. St. Joseph;/ \$400 set up fee and \$100/beaver.
- 123 South Street ongoing water leak issue.
- Construction on S Paw Paw set for week of August 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Gas main project has started, and sewer mains have been jetted out.
- Well 2 control panel has been replaced.
- GIS equipment has been ordered and bids are out for the service line grant.
- High lead result from 609 Bangor Rd has had a new service line; waiting on new test results.
- DDA approved new flags and purchased directly from American Legion distributor.

**Citizen Police Committee:**

- Next meeting is Tuesday, August 20th at 6:30 PM.

**ZBA:**

- No Meeting Held.

**New Business:**

- None



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**Old Business:**

- Sell salt truck as is for \$4-6k.  
Motion by Glennie, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Deloach.  
All Aye. Motion Carried.
- Officer Mike Dorr's Amtrak Employment Status:
  - We have not heard back from Amtrak with a start date for Officer Mike Dorr, but it seems that it remains only a matter of time.
  - The council was informed at the June 11, 2024 Council meeting that Officer Mike Dorr had applied to Amtrak for a position and had stated to both Chief Bianco and Manager Stroud that if/when Amtrak called he would be leaving the employ of the Village. At that time, it was the consensus of the Village Council that Chief Bianco should begin the process of looking for a replacement officer, in an effort to maintain continuity of service especially with Ox Roast in August/September and School starting soon after. It was also Council's opinion that we could not afford to hire a second full time officer long term as the budget would not support that kind of expense. It was agreed that if/when the new Officer was onboarded a decision would need to be made as to the length of time that the Village could support having an additional full-time officer.
  - Chief Bianco continued to monitor the situation with Amtrak and placed several calls for updates, receiving the same response each time, that the process was moving forward but Amtrak was not ready to extend an official offer at this point.
  - In June 2024, Chief Bianco received a resume from a viable candidate and proceeded to do his due diligence with background checks and checking references including interviewing past employers, County and State Officials who had worked with the applicant.
  - At the July 9, 2024 Council meeting, the situation was again presented to Council, and they were told that Chief Bianco was finishing up the background checks into the new candidate and things were looking good. Council recommended that if all checks came back positive that Chief should make an offer to the candidate and further discussion would be held at the August 13, 2024 Council meeting to determine how much notice would be given to Officer Dorr if Amtrak still had not made an offer. The decision made at the August 13, 2024 meeting was that Officer Dorr would be given six (6) week notice of separation and that on October 1, 2024 he would be relieved or could stay on at the Village as a part time officer.
  - The Village Council instructed Chief Bianco and Manager Stroud to inform Officer Dorr of their decision and to thank him for his service to the community.

**Public Comment:**

- None

**Council Comment:**

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- **None**

**Motion to Adjourn:**

Motion by Deloach, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Crandall  
All Aye, Motion Carried.  
Meeting Adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted:**

  
Theresa Stroud, Village Manager

  
John Gritter, Village President

# 07/10/24 - Lawrence Community Development - July 2024

6:10 pm -- Lawrence Village Hall

**Attendance:** Phil Glennie, Mary & Andrew Muday, Arnie Redsicker, Fern Conklin  
Review May minutes, no June meeting – motion Mary/2<sup>nd</sup> Fern, approved

**Community Development Budget: no discussion**

**Halloween:** Trunk or Treat - Saturday - 10/26/24 (times yet to be set)  
- Phil to check with Conference Center and Methodist Church to participate  
Trick or Treat -Thurs - 10/31/24 (times yet to be set by Village Council)

**Christmas in The Village - Dec 14<sup>th</sup> 2024** (Paw Paw is 12/7, Hartford is 12/14)

8-11 am Breakfast at Legion **\*\*not confirmed yet\*\***  
2-4 pm Santa at Library  
7:00 Parade - recommended change from 6 to 7 by Chief Anchor, also is recommending changing parade route depending on traffic and possibility of semi parade  
7:30 Light up Christmas tree in Park with Santa  
7:30 to 8:00 Hot Choc and cookies at Legion

- Discussion on whether Christmas Cards will be in park for 2024, also status of our Christmas tree in park if it is pruned to appear like a Christmas tree or replaced

**House Decoration Contests (Halloween, Xmas)** - Christmas & Halloween.  
- check with DDA if gift cards OK - No Discussion

**Music in Park** — booked for summer 2024

**Miss Lawrence** – Banquet in St Joseph 5/14 to award Key to the Village to Kennedi Klock

**History Night – no discussion**

**New Business:** Arnie states Master Plan needs to be more visionary, less boiler plate. Community needs to be less insular, more progressive, looking in the rearview mirror rather than ahead. Social media posts recently are a symptom of “lack of community” thus creating perceptions rather than building common experiences.

**OLD (tabled) BUSINESS:**

- “Taste of Lawrence”: No discussion
- **Local restaurant gift certificates** - no discussion
- **Artist Market** – Jeff Heaton in early August possibly, Jeff looking at various weekends for best fit
- **Recognition Day** – No discussion
- **Welcome Wagon** – Welcome mat ceremonies completed (2/17-Fruit Street, 3/16-Soule Farm Sweets). Will check DDA for same for new hair salon and combined event for existing business (Freedom, Acapulco, SW Mich Feed Lawsons, Marathon) - no discussion

Adjourned 6:57 pm

Respectively submitted - **PJG**