

Regular Meeting Minutes
November 4th, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Village President Marc Baures. Roll call was taken, and the following were present: Trustees Cory Komperud, Kaylee Waldvogel, Pete Filla, Dan Molstad, Harold Olson, Dana Stoner, President Baures, Village Clerk Jane Jensen, Public Works Director Courtney Kotlarz. Librarian Karla Dunnum, Library Board President Nicole Cooksey and Andrew Dannehy of the Trempealeau Co. Times.

The Board said the Pledge of Allegiance.

Jane Jensen verified that the posting and notification requirements were met.

(10) Minute Open Forum No one was present to speak in open forum.

Report from the Public Works Department

Courtney presented the proposal from Crane Engineering of \$39,872.00 to replace the grinder at the WWTP. Courtney said Crane Engineering can begin the work right away. A motion was made by Dan Molstad, seconded by Dana Stoner to approve the purchase of a grinder for the Wastewater Treatment Plant at a cost of \$39,873.00. The motion carried 7 to 0. A motion was made by Dana Stoner, seconded by Pete Filla to use the \$50,000.00 line of credit to fund the repairs. The motion carried 7 to 0. Courtney said that new Public Works employee, Robert Kotte is a good addition to the department and is working out well. No Building Permit applications were submitted for approval. Courtney left the meeting at 6:10.

New Business

Marc Baures asked to have discussion on the library budget moved up on the agenda. Librarian Karla Dunnum reported that there has been great success with the “After School Program”. She said there are 20-plus participants. She said that she has started a new trial of patrons printing from their own devices. The trial costs \$240.00 per year. Dana Stoner inquired if there is a charge for the service. Karla said they ask for a donation, but do not charge a set fee for the service because they would then be required to pay sales tax. Harold Olson informed Ms. Dunnum that the Finance and Claims Committee was concerned about the large wage increase, which is a big part of the library budget. He said that the committee is not singling out the library budget but rather reviewing and possibly cutting some services and looking for ways to generate more revenue to try to balance the budget. Dan Molstad noted that the Village Board has the final approval of wage increases recommended by the Library Board. Kaylee Waldvogel asked if there is a plan in place for programming purchases. Karla said that the After School Program does require costs for supplies to conduct the program. Kaylee asked if a “Supply Fund” could be created for supplies for the After School Program from donations given to the library. Harold Olson asked if GET School District Supplements the program. Karla said they do not. Dan Molstad said that the Finance and Claims Committee was considering approving a smaller wage increase, but if the budget to purchase books is left the same, and not increased, the wages could be increased as recommended by the Library Board. Karla said that the library received a \$200,000.00 donation that has been put in a Certificate of Deposit until a definitive plan for the money is made. Harold Olson asked what is done with the interest income from the \$200,000.00 CD? Karla said there will be discussions about interest income when the library budget is adopted next week. Dan Molstad suggested that the interest income be used for supply purchases. He again noted that if the budget for books and supplies is not increased, the village could possibly approve the budget with the pay increases. Nicole Cooksey said the library board would like to use the endowment to redesign the existing space, or make the entrance more handicapped accessible, but the library does not own the building. She said they haven’t made any plans because of the uncertain future of Ettrick Elementary. Harold Olson said that the library is doing an excellent job and is a great asset to the community, but the village board just wants the library board to understand how tight the village budget is. Kaylee also stated that the library is a huge asset to the village and the village board wants to support it in every way possible. Karla Dunnum asked the board if she could sit in on the discussion concerning the future of Ettrick Elementary.

Marc Baures reported on the consideration of GET School District to include the closure of Ettrick Elementary School as one of the potential referendum options. Baures stated that a Task Force Committee formed to explore options for the language to be used in possible referendum questions has some recommending an option to keep Ettrick Elementary School open and removing that option from the question, and others urging closure of the school and keeping it in the referendum question. Marc said several of the people on the committee are more in favor of closing Ettrick Elementary than not, and that was also the opinion of the people who took the survey put out by the committee. Kaylee Waldvogel said that the survey conducted by the committee was a very weighted survey of only 400 cold calls that she didn't feel properly reflected the opinion of most Village of Ettrick residents. Marc Baures stated that personally, he feels it is very much in the best interest of the Village to keep the school open, and it is the responsibility of the village board to convince the GET School Board and Task Force Committee that it would also be in the best interest of the school district to keep the school open. Harold Olson said that the school board president and administration have had no communication with him regarding the language for referendum questions or the closure of Ettrick Elementary, and he is also a member of the GET School District Board, Marc Baures said he attended an initial meeting as a teacher in the GET School District. He said what was supposed to be a committee meeting was actually a referendum meeting. Harold Olson said that the task force stated that Ettrick Elementary should not be closed, and that question should be eliminated, but somehow the topic was back on the agenda at a subsequent meeting. Marc Baures asked the board if everyone has an argument to keep the school open, and if so, how should it be expressed to the GET School Board? Harold Olson stated that there is a lot of things going on in private that is not being communicated to the public at open meetings. He said that there had been previous discussions six years ago when Aaron Engel was Superintendent that included closing Ettrick Elementary but it was found to be too expensive of an option, so it was not considered. He also asked if GET goes to referendum, how will they get it to pass with this option on the ballot? Ettrick Township and the Village of Ettrick have a lot of residents who will presumably vote against such a referendum question. Marc also stated that the Task Force Committee is using Ettrick Elementary School as an emotional bargaining tool. Harold Olson said that the people who are supporting closure of Ettrick Elementary are desperately trying to get the referendum with this language on the April 2026 ballot and they are sharing no information with the public or some members of the school board. He said the test scores of the Ettrick Elementary students are high and that gives the school high ratings. Marc Baures stated that there are some who argue that it is because the teacher to student ratio is smaller. Baures asked the trustees to prepare talking points that can be reviewed and put into one cohesive letter to send to the GET School Board. Jane Jensen asked for and was given permission to speak. She said that it seems there are many people who do not know that the Village of Ettrick has an agreement that states if the school ever closes, the property will be sold to the Village of Ettrick for \$1.00. Harold Olson said that point should be part of the referendum question. He also said that more and more important information, such as wages, is being discussed at committee meetings and not at regular school board meetings when the press is present. He said that the school board went into closed session recently to discuss wages. Twelve people got wage increases, and nothing was in the paper about it. He said several employees, including the administrator, got as much as a 10% wage increase. He said what is going on at GET right now is dirty pool. The school board is not running the school. The administration is, and he feels that the public should be made aware of it. Harold noted that there will be GET School Board meetings held on November 20th and December 18th. Marc Baures again asked trustees to get their points together to put in a letter to GET School District. Karla Dunnum left the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

The board held discussion on passing the Public Fire Protection/Hydrant Rental fees on to the customer through the utility bills or on tax bills. Dan Molstad said that the biggest issue with the village budget is creating more revenue. He said the \$65,593.00 Hydrant Fee is a charge that was assessed to the village to cover major fires. He said the village must cover the amount assessed, but it can be financed by a fee passed along to residents. He suggested placing the charge on the monthly water/sewer bills. He said the board will have to pass a resolution and file a request to the Public Service Commission. Dan said that because of the tight budget, the village doesn't have a choice. He proposed that the village enlist Ehlers to complete the application process. Marc Baures said he will contact Ehlers.

Jane Jensen gave Dan Molstad and Harold Olson a reminder of their meeting with Brian Christ of Spectrum Insurance to be held at the village office on 11/5/25 to discuss his quote for insurance coverage for the village.

Old Business

Marc Baures presented examples of area municipalities' compensation for Village President and Village Trustees.

Village of Eleva: Village President: \$120.00/meeting. Village Trustees: \$60.00/meeting.

Village of Pigeon Falls: Village President-\$200.00/month. Village Trustees: \$30.00/meeting plus \$1,000.00/year.

Village of Strum: Village President: \$1,000.00 every 6 months. Village Trustees: \$500.00 every 6 months.

City of Blair: Mayor: \$3,300.00/year plus \$30.00/meeting. Alderpersons: \$1,875.00/year plus \$30.00/ meeting.

City of Independence: Mayor and Alderpersons: \$100.00 per month.

Pete Filla said he thinks it is important to compensate officials for their time and attract candidates to run for office. Dan Molstad proposed raising the pay structure to: Compensate the Village President \$100.00 per month plus \$80.00 for every Regular Meeting and Special Meeting and \$25.00 for each Committee Meeting. Compensate Village Trustees \$80.00 for every Regular Meeting and Special Meeting and \$25.00 for each Committee Meeting. A motion was made by Dan Molstad, seconded by Dana Stoner to approve the pay structure to compensate the Village President \$100.00 per month plus \$80.00 for every Regular Meeting and Special Meeting and \$25.00 for each Committee Meeting, and Compensate Village Trustees \$80.00 for every Regular Meeting and Special Meeting and \$25.00 for each Committee Meeting. A roll call vote was taken: Cory Komperud-yes; Kaylee Waldvogel-yes; Pete Filla-yes; Dan Molstad-yes; Harold Olson-yes; Dana Stoner-yes; Marc Baures-yes. Dan Molstad asked to make an amendment to his motion. A motion was made by Dan Molstad, seconded by Dana Stoner to amend his motion to say: A motion to send his recommendation for the pay structure to compensate Village President \$100.00 per month plus \$80.00 for every Regular Meeting and Special Meeting and \$25.00 for each Committee Meeting, and Compensate Village Trustees \$80.00 for every Regular Meeting and Special Meeting and \$25.00 for each Committee Meeting to the Finance and Claims Committee for their recommendation to the Village Board. A roll call vote was taken: Cory Komperud-yes; Kaylee Waldvogel-yes; Pete Filla-yes; Dan Molstad-yes; Harold Olson-yes; Dana Stoner-yes; Marc Baures-yes. The motion carried 7 to 0.

Harold Olson reported that John Feyen of Arcade Pumping and Courtney have decided the village should keep the landfill property and use it for sludge disposal.

A motion was made by Pete Filla, seconded by Dana Stoner to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of the Village Board of Trustees held on October 7th, 2025. The motion carried 6 to 0, with Marc Baures abstaining because he had not been at the meeting.

A motion was made by Dan Molstad, seconded by Pete Filla to approve for payment voucher #s 40373-40411 plus 3 EFT's and 1 auto pay in the amount of \$47,897.42 from the General Checking Account and voucher #s 11486-11520 plus 1 auto pay in the amount of \$19,240.89 from the Water/Sewer Checking Account. The motion carried 7 to 0.

A motion was made by Dan Molstad, seconded by Pete Filla to approve the Treasurer's Report for the month of October. The motion carried 7 to 0.

Dan Molstad and Kaylee Waldvogel reported on the meeting of the Public Safety/Public Relations Committee held with village employees on October 29th, 2025. After researching area wages, the committee realized that the village pay schedule is way below other municipalities. Kaylee said that the village values the employees and needs to compensate them more. They will refer the matter to the Finance Committee to make a recommendation to the village board to increase the wages of Public Works Director Courtney Kotlarz to \$33.00 per hour, the wages of Village Clerk Jane Jensen to \$26.00 per hour, the wages of Deputy Clerk Beth Osborn to \$25.20 per hour and set wages for Public Works employee Robert Kotte at \$23.50 per hour.

Dan Molstad said his wife Cindy is interested in planting flowers at Game Time Park that attract butterflies. She said she is working with students from GET School District to help her with the planting.

A motion was made by Pete Filla, seconded by Dana Stoner to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

Jane Jensen
Village Clerk-Village of Ettrick