



**Public Hearing and Regular Monthly Board of Trustees Meeting
of the Village of Birchwood was held on March 10, 2026 at 5:30 pm
at the Birchwood Village Hall, 101 N Main St, Birchwood, WI 54817.**

MINUTES

1. T. LeBrocq called the meeting to order in VanGilder's absence.
2. Pledge of Allegiance-Recited
3. Roll Call
 - a. Present-B. Darkow, P. Parkos, T. LeBrocq, R. Seffinga—Absent-R. VanGilder
4. Public Notice
 - a. Posted at Birchwood Post Office, Village Hall, Pioneer Market & Deli, and the Village Website. Public Hearing-Conditional Use was also published in the Rice Lake Chronotype.

Public Hearing Items:

5. LeBrocq opened the Public Hearing.
6. Public Comments - limited to public hearing matters only
 - a. Rezone application-Rezone-PID #65-106-2-37-10-25-5 15-574-740000 property. Request from Bernard and Gerri Bara to rezone property from C-1 Commercial to R-1 Single Family Residential to align with current use of home. Mrs. Bara explained that they bought the property back in October 2025. The tenant had already been living in the lower level with the previous owner. She commented that she was informed because of recent zoning changes, she would need to have the property rezoned to continue renting the lower unit.
L. Zillmer stated that the property is zoned Commercial and the rental unit is a legal non-conforming use. She added that if there wasn't over a year lapse in the rental, the Bara's should have been able to continue renting without having to go through the expense and process of a rezone. Zillmer voiced concern that the Village is not following the correct process. She stated that the Plan Commission should have held the public hearing and waited for the statutory period of time for anyone to appeal before going to the Board of Trustees for approval. No further public comments.
 - b. Conditional Use-PID #65-106-2-37-10-25-5 15-574-740000 property-Request from Bernard and Gerri Bara for conditional use permit for an accessory apartment, contingent upon the approval of rezone to R-1 Residential.
L. Zillmer referred to her previous comments on the Rezone. No further comments.
7. Motion by LeBrocq, 2nd by Parkos to Close Public Hearing. Carried 4-0.

Regular Board Meeting Items

8. Public Comments (on agenda items only – limit 3 minutes)-L. Zillmer voiced concern over the Public hearing process. She commented that the Planning Commission should have held the Public hearing. Darkow replied that the Planning Commission did discuss and approve sending the

The meeting is open to the public and is handicapped accessible.

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rezone and conditional use applications go to the Board of Trustees. Zillmer commented that she didn't feel the Bara's should have had to go through all of this.

9. Informational Item: Angeline Winton

- a. Judge Angeline Winton is seeking re-election on April 7, 2026. Judge Winton has been the Washburn County Judge for the past 7 years. She added that she has also been a Washburn County prosecutor and from 2009-2016 she was the part time Assistant DA for Washburn and Burnett Counties. She has also been in private practice with her father, Ward Winton. Judge Winton stated that she has broad exposure and experience in criminal and civil law context. She offered to attend any future Board meetings if asked. Judge Winton thanked the Board for allowing her to attend the meeting.

10. Committee Reports

- a. BFCESD-D. Reiten reported that the department is getting ready for the golf outing fundraiser that will be held on May 17th. Proceeds will go towards the new ambulance. Radio system is being looked at. The department will be going with a gas engine vs a diesel for the new ambulance which will save about \$10,000. Sam will be presenting the Community Appreciation Day event later in the meeting.
- b. Plan Commission Committee-None

11. Department Reports (receive and file)

- a. Water/Sewer-Beffa read report-Fee met with Carlson Electric for the solar panel plant. Everything is coming along as expected. Fee is working on quotes for the new water meters.
- b. Street/Parks-Strand stated he revised all his paperwork. He's been cleaning up snowplow mess. He is still waiting for the new broom and backhoe to be installed. Road bans are on due to excessive road heaving.
- c. Police-None
- d. Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator-LeBrocq read Atwood's report. Strand commented that the road bans are on which may be impeding progress. Strand added that C. Baker is still waiting to hear from insurance company on his house that burnt. Darkow, Seffinga, and Parkos asked if some type of fencing could be put around it for safety reasons.

12. Financial Report

- a. Presentation of Monthly Financial Report (for review and filing)-Beffa completed the journal entries and the accounts are all balanced.

13. Meeting Minutes

- a. Motion by LeBrocq 2nd by Darkow to approve Feb. 10, 2026, Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes. Carried 4-0.

14. BFCESD-Special Event Permit-Sam Zemaitus presented the information for the event. The Lion's Club will be providing food at no charge. Motion by LeBrocq 2nd by Seffinga to approve Emergency Services Community Appreciation Day-August 2, 2026. Carried 4-0.

15. Approve Contracts-LeBrocq explained that a. and b. are the same amounts as last year. Beffa explained that Fee recommended keeping the rates the same. Darkow suggested raising the rates, since the Village sewer rates have increased. Strand explained that this is just gray water-not sewage. Darkow suggested charging them both the same amount of \$15. Beffa will talk to Fee.

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Village of Birchwood
101 N. Main Street
PO Box 6
Birchwood, WI 54817



Ashley Beffa
ashley@birchwoodvillagewi.com
Phone: 715-354-3300
Fax: 715-354-7500

- a. Tabled until March 23, 2026, meeting -Long Lake Sanitation contract.
 - b. Tabled until March 23, 2026, meeting- Ken-Way Services contract.
 - c. Rates stayed the same as last year. Motion by Seffinga 2nd by Darkow to approve Pavlik Extinguisher Service contract. Carried 4-0.
 - d. Borofka Farms Land Lease-Motion by Seffinga, 2nd by Parkos to approve lease at the same rate as last year. 4.5 acres at \$65/acre. Carried 4-0.
16. Approve Operator's License
- a. Motion by Seffinga 2nd by LeBrocq to approve license for Lori Clark-Pioneer Market & Deli. Carried 4-0.
17. Board Action on Public Hearing Items
- a. Rezone – Action
 - i. Motion by LeBrocq 2nd by Parkos to approve the rezone of Bernard and Gerri Bara property from C-1 Commercial to R-1 Single Family Residential. Carried 4-0.
 - b. Conditional Use – Action
 - i. Motion by LeBrocq, 2nd by Seffinga to approve Bernard and Gerri Bara Conditional use permit for an accessory apartment. Carried 4-0.
18. Adjournment-Motion by Seffinga 2nd by Parkos to adjourn. Carried 4-0.

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