



**The Regular Monthly Board of Trustees Meeting of
The Village of Birchwood was held on *Monday, August 17, 2026, at 5:30 pm
at the Birchwood Village Hall, 101 N Main St, Birchwood, WI 54817.**

*Denotes change due to Election

MINUTES

1. VanGilder called meeting to order (Meeting is recorded)
2. Pledge of Allegiance-Recited
3. Roll call by Clerk: **Present:** R. VanGilder, P Parkos, T. LeBrocq, and R. Seffinga--**Absent-**B Darkow
4. Public Notice: Posted at the Birchwood Post Office, Village Hall, Pioneer Market/Deli and Village Website.
5. Current agenda
 - a. Motion by VanGilder, 2nd by Seffinga to approve current agenda. Carried 4-0.
6. Public Comments
 - a. Citizen comments on agenda items only (limit 3 minutes per person)-Linda Zillmer voiced concerns over the following items-- BFCESD is possibly changing banks; she received no email announcing tonight's meeting; #13-Zillmer is opposed-there are too many storage units, and the Village needs more housing and job opportunities. #25-Zillmer commented that the Board should act on provisional licenses, not the Clerk/Treasurer. #28- Zillmer commented that docks are non-conforming and only property owners in the Village can put up docks/lifts.
7. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - a. Motion by VanGilder 2nd by Parkos to approve Regular Board of Trustee meeting minutes-July 14th, 2026. Carried 4-0.
8. Department Reports (No Discussion – Informational Only)
 - a. BFCESD -Dewey was absent.
 - b. Law Enforcement-Adam reported that the Blue Gill Fest went good with only a few squabbles. An experienced Washburn Deputy helped and did a great job. The Girlie Ride (119 machines) went well, with no incidents leaving town. Adam worked on a child sexual assault investigation. 2 Swat calls and multiple crash incidents. Brian and Adam have been working on a lot of UTV/ATV and car violations. Following up on grass nuisance cases. House move went well; there was not too much traffic interruption. Dog licenses are pretty much caught up and done for the year.
 - c. Water/Sewer-Fee reported that most of his time is being spent putting in the new water meters. He is hoping to get most of them taken care of within the next 2 months. One of the mixers at sewer plant is tripping out circuit, he will replace bearings. Fee is signed up for continuing water credits. All known leaks are fixed, and water usage is coming down. He does feel that there may be another leak somewhere. Fee is following up with construction companies that are using our hydrants.
 - d. Street/Parks-Ron reported that the project on Orchard/Timber Lane is completed and he notified

Hailey. He also put up a barricade because someone is already going around the guard rail at the dead end. There's 1 bad spot on E Cedar that will be fixed before the 2nd mat is put down. Tennis court is paved and is drying before painting. Strand is working with Sturtevant's on Holly Hill Road repair. Solar panels may be done by Friday. Strand is patching but won't be crack filling this year. Strand is working with Steve on issues at Doolittle. The geese are coming in on the west side, so he'll contact the DNR. Rocky asked to meet with Ron and Tucker at 1 pm Thursday afternoon.

- e. Building Inspector/Zoning Administrator-Joe commented that the Village projects are moving along. Waiting on Lane decision, Steve Robertson, Cody Baker. Update on permits.
- f. Clerk/Treasurer-Presented Treasurer report for review. Budget workshops will start in September. Elections went well other than a paper jam in the machine.

9. Village Garage – Tammy Degraw

- a. Municipal realtor, Tammy Degraw, to discuss prospective lease tenants for the village garage and possibly enter into lease agreement. Tammy has a tenant that wants to use the garage for storage only. \$600/month on a month-to-month basis. She added that if we had a better offer a 30-day notice could be given for them to move. The tenant did ask that the Village not have him move in the winter months. Degraw commented that this would be a good fit because there would be no wear and tear on the building. A retail business also approached her but kind of backed off. She also has an auto repair business that would like to look at the garage next year. Degraw has had several inquiries on making it a condo. Degraw stated that the Village could start here and she would continue to market the garage. VanGilder recommended leasing to the party wanting to use it for storage. Seffinga asked about a clause in the contract stating that no junk could be piled up outside. Tammy stated that she would be the one who works with the tenants on any problems. Motion by VanGilder, 2nd by Parkos to rent to Miah Buchholtz for \$600/month for the back building. Carried 4-0.

10. Raze Order – 306 W Cedar Ave

- a. Consider Kimberly Lane's request for an extension of the raze order for the property located at 306 W. Cedar Ave. Discussion and possible action regarding granting an extension or proceeding with the raze order. Lane stated she is working with her son-in-law to complete the raze and is trying to keep the property. She knows the house needs to be torn down and is trying to secure financing to comply. Plan B is to sell the property. Beffa explained that if the house were to be sold, the new owner would need to agree to raze the home. LeBrocq asked if Lane could have a plan showing the secured financing and a tear down date available within 30 days. Motion by VanGilder, 2nd by Parkos to grant a 45-day extension to Kimberly to get the raze order plan for the property. Carried 4-0.

11. Raze Order – 300 E Chetac Ave

- a. Discuss the condition of the property located at 300 E. Chetac Ave. (owner: Cody Baker) and determine whether to initiate a raze order. VanGilder explained that the attorney said Joe could do an inspection from the road, which was done. Beffa commented that she spoke with Cody and he stated that he is hiring an attorney because the insurance company isn't paying. Beffa commented that the bank has started foreclosure on the property and Baker is also behind on the water/sewer utility bill. Joe determined that the property qualifies for a raze order. Beffa asked how to proceed if the Village does have to pay for the raze, public bid? VanGilder commented that the last estimate we got for a raze was for around \$34,000. Motion by Parkos 2nd by Seffinga to move forward with the raze order for 300 E Chetac-Cody Baker. Carried 4-0.

12. Raze Order and Nuisance Property Maintenance Plan – 214 E Cedar Ave-Deraitus

- a. Property owner is deceased, and the property is expected to remain in tax delinquency status until County acquisition in 2028. The Village is seeking Board direction on a maintenance plan for nuisance lawn mowing during this period, including whether to assign mowing to Village staff or contract with an outside vendor. Costs may be recovered through the tax roll process. Building is also on raze priority list. Beffa recommended having the Village maintain it at \$200/hour and put this on the tax roll. The raze order is on hold. Motion by VanGilder 2nd by Parkos to have the Village maintain the property at 214 E Cedar Ave. Carried 4-0.

13. Birchwood Lakes Storage LLC-Chris Drost

- a. Discussion regarding a conceptual proposal to subdivide PID 65-106-2-37-10-25-5 05-002-006000 for the construction of residential storage pole sheds. Drost provided a proposed subdivision map, lot sizes, and roadway access plan for Board review. Beffa explained that residential storage pole sheds are not a permitted use within the Residential District under the current zoning ordinance. Drost commented that he will have to put a road in off the easement and asked if the Village has any required road specs. VanGilder commented that Robotka put his own road in and maintains it -the Village doesn't have anything to do with it. Drost asked if a subdivision is constructed if the Village would require a roadway easement maintenance agreement with the property owners or is it on the sellers. VanGilder stated no. Drost discussed the possibility of 5 residential lots and the lot sizes. He would like to start out putting residential garages (24x36) with 10 ft garage doors, under the eaves-- instead of the houses. These would not be for commercial use. If approved, these lots would then be put up for sale. Beffa commented that the Village has an ordinance against building garages before the home. VanGilder added that the Village has turned down other people asking to do this and didn't think this should be approved. Drost asked about a shell home and what the minimum standard is. Can they have someone else finish off the inside if they have the concrete, water and sewer installed? Atwood stated that the home would need to be completed within 2 years of the permit. VanGilder added that the Village may be looking at putting in water and sewer to the Industrial Park in the future. The property owner would be responsible for the lines from the main to their home. Drost presented another idea-a 4-lot subdivision under the current zoning. 42 x 60 for pole sheds on a concrete slab with electricity only. VanGilder commented that Drost could start that project today. Drost voiced concern over the cost of putting in water and sewer for residential use. VanGilder will present the information to the Planning Commission at the Monday meeting.

14. Republic Services-Kathy Linville

- a. Introduction of Kathy Linville, Municipal Sales Manager, and discussion regarding fuel surcharges disclosed in the Village's contract. Kathy explained that she grew up in Rice Lake but spent a lot of time in Birchwood. Linville covers a lot of NW Wisconsin territory in her position and is committed to fighting for her small community vs corporate.

15. Refuse Rate Adjustments

- a. Discussion regarding adjustments to Village of Birchwood refuse rates to account for fuel surcharges. Linville commented that Republic is over \$100,000 over budget because of high fuel prices. She has tried to hold back on increases, but it isn't feasible. In July, the national average for diesel was 4.955/gallon and the average for August is currently \$5.31/gallon. Linville explained the formula that was used to calculate the monthly fuel surcharge for the Village. She added that the Village could renew the

contract now, but she discouraged this because of the high prices. Kathy stated that the fuel surcharge is not assessed if the price drops below \$4.25. LeBrocq commented that he doesn't want to flip flop rates each month and feels the new rate should be left until the contract renews at the end of 2027. VanGilder suggested increasing the rates \$1.00/ month across the board. Any surplus will be applied to clean up day. Motion by VanGilder, 2nd by Seffinga to adjust refuse rates by \$3.00 per quarter across the board. Carried 4-0.

16. IT

- a. Jason Morse, Municipal IT Technician-could not attend. Beffa provided an overview of current information technology needs, including identified system gaps, firewall renewal status, the IT service contract, and the Election Cybersecurity Grant opportunity (\$2000). Beffa met with Jason regarding the recommendations from the Wisconsin Election Commission for cyberattacks. Washburn County was just hacked in the last couple of weeks. Beffa would like to add coverage to the laptops. This would cost about \$20/ month. The Firewall expired in 2023 and costs roughly \$1200 to renew. Beffa suggested using the grant money for this. She also suggested using the grant for a camera for the hall lobby if there are enough funds. Jason has a camera for around \$500 that would back up to our cloud. Beffa and Warner will work on updating our election emergency manual (required for the grant). Beffa would also like to purchase a generator- if grant money is available. This would be used in case of a power outage during elections. Brunclik asked what was expired-the equipment or the license for the firewall. Brunclik will follow up with Jason on this. Motion by VanGilder, 2nd by Seffinga to upgrade firewall protection, add laptop protection and work on the grant opportunity to cover these items. Carried 4-0.

17. Solar Update

- a. Dan Hersher, Carlson Electric could not attend. Beffa read Dan's update on Wastewater Treatment Plant Solar Panel Construction Project. The rock has slowed down the project. The wire is buried in the conduit. The project is overall, 80% complete. Carlson and Xcel will do inspection.

18. Scott Mondus-135 Hinman

- a. Request to adjust sewer rate on 2nd quarter utility bill due to high usage-He watered new grass and stated it didn't go down the drain. (12100 gallons) Fee stated that Mondus didn't have a deduct meter. Parkos commented that deduct meters are available for this purpose. Motion by VanGilder, 2nd by Parkos to deny Scott Mondus request to reduce bill. Carried 4-0.

19. Howard Lamere-Attending via phone

Howard requested to attend by phone. Request to reduce water or sewer on 2nd quarter utility bill due to high usage (28000 gallons) at Rental property -200 E Cedar Ave. Fee confirmed that the new meter was installed and is working properly. Warner has been watching the usage on the new Neptune system. VanGilder added that it seems that the water is being left running. Fee will have the old meter tested to make sure it's calibrated correctly to determine if that's a problem. Fee added that only so much water can go through the meter. Fee explained that a few years ago, there was a leaking toilet at the property. VanGilder called Lamere and explained the usage on the meter since the new meter was installed. Lamere was informed that he would be responsible for the meter testing if the old meter is determined to be working properly. If the old meter is found to be a problem, the bill will be adjusted. VanGilder explained to Lamere how to check for a leaky toilet. Lamere commented that he will hire a plumber to check on this. VanGilder explained that with the new meters, we can track when the water is flowing. VanGilder commented that he doesn't think this is a Village issue.

20. Doolittle Park –

- a. Jesse Hohmann request for refund-Assigned site was double booked-\$180.00 + Credit card service fee of \$7.20. Total \$187.20-Beffa explained that the CC fee would be an expense if we refunded it. Motion by Seffinga, 2nd by Parkos to refund Jesse Hohmann for the site that he didn't get-\$180. Carried 4-0.

21. Special Event Permit-Lauren Parkos/Mary Manka

- a. Oktoberfest-September 19th from 11:00 am to 6:30 pm (setup/teardown included) PA/Audio system for band. Motion by VanGilder, 2nd by Seffinga to approve the special event permit for Lauren and Mary. Carried 4-0.

22. Block Party/Street closing-Oktoberfest-September 19, 2026- from 11:00am to 6:30 pm

- a. Main Street in front of Bluegill Bar, Drift-North-Dentist office, and a small corner of Taphouse and Food Panty. Motion by Seffinga, 2nd by Parkos to approve the Block party/Street Closing for Oktoberfest. Carried 4-0.

23. Alcohol Beverages in Public Area

- a. Motion by VanGilder, 2nd by Parkos to waive Ordinance Article VI. Offenses involving alcohol beverages Sec. 16-355 C during Oktoberfest. Carried 4-0.

24. Lift Station #5

- a. Discussion regarding recurring operational issues at Lift Station #5 caused by non-flushable items being discharged into the sanitary sewer system, including strategies to identify the source(s) of the problem and notification of affected residents. This is the lift station used for East Hills. Fee stated that underwear were wrapped around the pump. Fee explained that this has been an ongoing problem and notices have been sent out in the past. Fee commented that previously the cost was \$1500 every time we had to pull the pump. Strand recommended putting a trap in to see who is doing it and then charging them to fix it. Reminder letters are sent a couple of times a year to remind residents not to flush these items.

25. Ordinance Amendment

- a. Ordinance Amendment 14-2026 Provisional Retail Alcohol Beverage License
 - i. Approval of Ordinance Amendment 14-2026 – Provisional Retail Alcohol Beverage License, creating Section 8-67.5 of the Village Code to establish procedures for issuing Provisional Retail Alcohol Beverage Licenses pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes § 125.185, designating the Village Clerk/Treasurer as the issuing authority, establishing eligibility requirements, license term, revocation provisions, and amending Section 8-67 to add the provisional license fee classification. VanGilder explained that this Ordinance needs to be in place- to be in compliance with state statute. The license application will continue to go to the Board for final approval. The Village is already at quota for “Class B” liquor licenses, so this would not be issued. Beffa explained that we are required to issue these by law and can't wait until the next BOT meeting to approve a provisional. Motion by VanGilder, 2nd by Parkos to approve Ordinance Amendment 14-2026 Provisional Retail Alcohol Beverage License. Carried 4-0.
- b. Ordinance Amendment 15-2026 Hazardous Conditions
 - i. Verbal or written notice for removal of snow and/or ice-VanGilder and Strand suggested giving an in person written notice. Motion by VanGilder, 2nd by Parkos to change the Ordinance Amendment 15-2026 to a written verbal notice. Carried 4-0.

26. ATV – Main Street

- a. Discussion regarding the Village's ATV/UTV ordinance and designated route. The current ATV/UTV access on Main Street between Hwy. 48 and Loomis Street was reviewed. Brunclik explained that people are getting confused about Main Street being closed -because they can cross 48 and go down the 1st block of Main. Strand commented that he can put new signs up using the verbiage “No UTV/ATV beyond this point” The Snowmobile/ATV Club said they will pay for the new verbiage on the signs. Parkos commented that it is confusing the way it is signed now. Strand will order the signs.

27. Propane

- a. Beffa explained that Superior Gas LP is \$1.34/gallon but there is a delivery fee added. Lemke agreed to do a 3-year contract at \$1.34 for prebuy. \$1.30 for summer fill. Synergy is \$1.39/gallon- but issues a patronage check at the end of the year. VanGilder commented that Lemke has been good to the Village. Beffa will contact Lemke to prebuy 6000 gallons.

28. Boat Lifts

- a. Review of Doolittle Park and campground rules and regulations to determine whether boat lifts should be permitted at Village-owned facilities. The WDNR has indicated that boat lifts are not regulated by the agency and that placement of a boat lift on an existing conforming pier does not constitute the addition of a mooring space. VanGilder stated that a lift really doesn't make a big difference if they already have a pontoon and dock. Strand commented that they will need to pull them out for the winter. VanGilder added that he doesn't think anything changes need to be made to the current campground rules.

29. Municipal Services Bureau

- a. Discussion regarding a change in payment processing providers. Beffa explained that the Village currently utilizes GovPayNet, which charges a 3.99% convenience fee (minimum \$4.00) for utility payments and a 4.0% convenience fee (minimum \$4.00) for miscellaneous payments. Municipal Services Bureau offers payment processing at 2.5% (minimum \$2.00) and provides an ACH/check payment option for \$1.50. The proposed change would reduce transaction costs for customers at no cost to the Village. Motion by VanGilder, 2nd by Parkos to change credit card vendor to Municipal Services Bureau. Carried 4-0.

30. Adjournment-Motion by Seffinga, 2nd by Parkos to adjourn. Carried 4-0.

Posted By: Ashley Beffa, Village Clerk-Treasurer
Posted On: 8/17/2026

The meeting is open to the public and is handicapped accessible. Agendas are posted in three public places which are the Village Hall, Pioneer Market and Deli, and Birchwood United States Postal Service Office notice boards, and on the village website www.birchwoodvillage.wi.us to comply with Resolution 175-15.