

Cass Lake Village Charter Meeting

March 20, 2026

Finance Committee Present: Brik Pardo, Robert Redner, Jon Kellner, Chris LaDuke, Gerald Fisher

Residents Present: 1

The meeting was called to order by Chris LaDuke

Roll Call: 4 Commissioners were present. (Attorney present - Virtual)

Video Access:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G0tUNI6r-OdSRkoknES5hK5cDLsm01kl/view?usp=sharing>

Minutes:

- **Charter Review Preparation and Attendance:** The discussion moved to the charter, noting that some changes had been reviewed, specifically mentioning a portion that was "weasel" or unclear. It was suggested that the changes were likely related to allowing the people running the village more flexibility in setting numbers or were financial changes to allow for money transfers, such as moving funds from an Homeowners Association (HOA) to the village in the beginning stages. The participants checked on the attendance of Kathy, who was on vacation, and acknowledged the pending arrival of Jerry and Chris, though Chris was subsequently noted as present.
- **Formal Meeting Opening and Attendance Roll:** The meeting was officially called to order at 5:02 for the charter commission on March 18, 2026, and a roll call was taken. Those present included Bob Reer, John, Chris, and Rickardo, who was noted as present. The only item on the agenda was the consideration of additions to the charter, which were described as minimal, with the changes bolded in the circulated document ([00:00:38](#)).
- **Clarification on Checks and Balances for Bill Payment:** The first proposed charter change discussed was in section 5.4 A3 on page 13, concerning checks and balances between the clerk and the treasurer. The clarification ensures that both the clerk and the treasurer must essentially sign off before bills are paid ([00:03:26](#)).
- **Water Utility Clarification:** Regarding Section 10, the participants discussed clarifying "utility" to specifically name "water" because the village only manages one utility. This was to avoid confusion, as the current practice involves the

treasurer collecting property taxes and the clerk collecting the water bill. An auditor had raised questions about why the clerk was collecting this, which is typically a treasurer's role, but the current practice was retained ([00:04:57](#)).

- **Treasurer Report Frequency:** The group addressed a change to the frequency of the treasurer's report, which was originally changed from quarterly to monthly in the charter. Following a discussion with an auditor, the recommended change was to revert the requirement to quarterly, as the law states quarterly, though the council maintains the ability to request reports more frequently if needed ([00:06:02](#)).
- **Water Bill Collection Ordinance:** A new section was added to Section 10 stating that the treasurer or an appointed deputy will collect water bills "if designated by ordinance," which addresses the auditor's concern that the treasurer is legally responsible for all collections ([00:07:28](#)).
- **Expedited Budget Process for the First Year:** A significant change was introduced in Chapter 6, section 7.2, to accommodate the first year of the village's operation, which will begin without collected taxes, necessitating borrowing or gifts from the association ([00:07:28](#)). This addition provides for an expedited budget process, including a public hearing, to create a budget that will govern spending until the first full fiscal year when tax money is available ([00:08:54](#)). The new language directs the council to establish this budget within 60 days of the charter's approval, if approved after April 15 ([00:10:07](#)).
- **Fiscal Year Budget Preparation Dates:** Discussions covered the start of the current fiscal year used for budget calculations, which was changed from March 1 to April 1 because the auditor believed the additional month would allow for more accurate budget compilation with available amounts ([00:12:39](#)). The budget recommendation must still be provided by the president, with the advice of the clerk and treasurer, prior to the first regular council meeting in May of each year ([00:13:54](#)).
- **Budget Adoption Deadline Adjustment:** To allow for more flexibility in the budget adoption process, especially in relation to receiving information from the township, the deadline for adopting the budget was changed from the first meeting in June to on or before June 30th. This adjustment aligns with state law and provides extra "breathing room" in case the budget is not finalized at the beginning of the month ([00:15:09](#)).
- **Tax Roll Delivery Date:** In Section 8.8, the provision for delivering the tax roll to the treasurer was changed from June 25th to "on or before" June 25th. This allows the tax roll to be delivered sooner if completed early, such as on the 23rd ([00:16:28](#)).
- **Bond Terminology and Yield Rate:** In Section 9.1, subsection E, the term "mortgage bonds" was changed to simply "bonds" because they are not legally allowed to issue mortgage bonds. Furthermore, the fixed maximum yield of 6%

was changed to "not more than permitted by law" to avoid setting specifics that might become outdated ([00:16:28](#)).

- **Motion to Approve the Final Charter:** Despite a commissioner being absent, there was a quorum present, so a motion was made to approve the charter as modified, subject to review by the governor. The motion was made, seconded, and approved by all present ([00:18:32](#)).
- **Next Steps for Charter Submission:** Gerald Fisher committed to cleaning up the document and sending it to each commissioner, and they determined that the charter needed to be sent to the governor, potentially also to the attorney general, as the governor typically forwards it. The group agreed that Gerald Fisher would handle the submission to ensure it goes to the appropriate place, and the other participant would work to expedite the process after notification ([00:19:53](#)).
- **Upcoming Deadlines and Community Notification:** The deadline for nominating petitions or a \$100 fee is April 21st, and the deadline for filing the ballot question language with the clerk is April 28th ([00:20:42](#)). The charter commission agreed that if the governor recommends changes, they would need to reconvene to decide whether to incorporate those changes ([00:22:33](#)). The group decided that they should prepare a document explaining the process for running for the village council and mail it to every household to invite participation ([00:23:54](#)).
- **Election Procedures and Adjournment:** The process for running for village council will require candidates to obtain 20 signatures and submit the forms to the West Bloomfield clerk, similar to the process for the charter commission itself. The group quickly addressed the lack of any other pressing business, and a motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved ([00:24:57](#)).

Suggested next steps

- ✓ Gerald Fisher will clean up the final charter and send it to the group, and also send it to the governor (and potentially the attorney general) to start the review process.
- ✓ Cass Lake Village Information will follow up to expedite the governor's review process and will work on printing the charter once approved.
- ✓ The group will put together and mail a document to every household explaining the process to run for village council, including how to obtain and submit nominating petitions, and direct them to contact the West Bloomfield clerk for questions.

<https://bsaonline.com/>, which will reference all municipal information.