Village Council Meeting

October 9, 2026

Call to Order: President Tim McCarthy, Brian Cassidy, Mike Mumper, and Nancy Thill were present. Also, present was Police Chief Ryan Layman, Superintendent Rick Reitz, Treasurer Tracey McCay, and Clerk Anne Heywood. Mike Botehlo was running late, and Bill Lambert was excused. There were 12 residents present and 3 residents participated on line.

Additions and Deletions to the Agenda – Additional Paving

Public Comment – N/A

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes – Mike Botehlo made a motion to approval of the September 11, 2026 Village Council meeting minutes; The motion was seconded by Nancy Thill: Motion passed unanimously.

Building Inspector's Report – Bill Lambert excused - Report on file

Fire Departments Report – Michiana Shores Volunteer Fire Department Chief Bendix was not present. **The New Buffalo Volunteer Fire Department** Chief Jamie Flick reported they had 12 calls involving the Michiana/Grand Beach area. He reminded everyone there is no burning leaves in the village. Approximately 200 smoke detectors have been installed during the year. Jamie again reminded residents that they may request smoke detectors through Community Connect. It's a great program where the fire department comes and installs the fire detectors for free. He will keep harping at every meeting until all residents sign up. You can go to the Village website to learn more about the program and hit the link to sign up.

Police Report - Police Chief Ryan Layman reported they responded 56 calls during the reporting period. Chief reminded residents and Council members to complete the Emergency Information Forms that was distributed by email several weeks age. Chief Layman announced that the annual Winter House Check Program information will be on the website in November. Residents planning to be away for extended periods during the winter may register to have officers periodically check the exterior of their homes, as staffing and time permits. Anyone who has not completed the online form was encouraged to locate the original email and submit the requested information. Chief Layman reported that the Police Department is now fully staffed. Officers Megan and Officer Tyler have completed their training and are working independently. Council expressed appreciation for the department's staffing progress.

Residents were also reminded that paddleboards and kayaks must be removed from the racks by October 15th 2026. Any items left will receive a citation and if not claimed after 30 days it becomes property of the Village and will be auctioned off at the Coffee with a Cop in in the Spring. During Council discussion, questions were raised regarding the previously reported domestic violence incident and related drug offenses, including possession of cocaine, and Amphetamines. Chief Layman confirmed that the incident involved an individual who owns a home in the Village. He further explained that the investigation originated from a 911 call involving one of the individuals.

Beach Report - Brian Cassidy reported that the Stop 43 improvements project is approximately 99% completed. The following improvements have been completed:

- Road Paving
- Installation of drywells, which are functioning successfully.
- Construction of the boardwalk and connecting stairs.
- Installation of the split-rail fencing to define the improved access area

- Landscape with boulders secure the sand.

Brian Cassidy noted that the new drainage system performed exceptionally well during a recent 48 hour period of rainfall, with no flooding reported. A few finishing touches remain. Additional landscaping is planned for spring 2027, and staining and painting will be considered after the new wood has weathered for a couple of years. The stairs leading down to the beach are scheduled to be removed for the winter on October 19, 2026. Brian expressed appreciation to the Ledger and Mathes families for the generous financial contributions toward the project. He also, thanked Tim McCarthy, Public Works Superintendent Rick Reitz, Nancy Thill, resident Jurate Landwehr and others who assisted in bringing the project to completion. Brian stated that the completed improvements will be a beautiful addition to the Village and provide residents with an enhanced area to enjoy the lake and sunsets.

Winter preparations are underway at the Village beach stops. The beach showers have been shut off and will be winterized. The showers were previously retrofitted with new internal components designed to better withstand winter conditions. This will be the first winter to evaluate the effectiveness of those improvements. Reminder again all remaining kayaks and other seasonal equipment must be removed by October 15. Brian confirmed that Stop 37, Stop 41.5 and Stop 42 will remain accessible throughout the winter.

Brian reported that Village has contracted with Donkersloot & Son for the removal of debris at Stop 40. The contractor explained that work must be scheduled according to weather conditions, lake conditions and equipment availability. As a result, no definite starting date has been established. The Village hopes the work can be completed before winter. If conditions prevent completion this season the project will be scheduled for spring 2027. This removal was budgeted in this year's budget 2026-2027.

As for Stop 42 additional debris removal the council discussed the possibility of expanding the debris removal project to include Stop 42, where old wooden pilings and steel I-beams from a former pumping station remain in or near the water. Brian indicated that contractor would prefer to complete both locations during the same mobilization if possible. The wooden material maybe relatively easy to remove; however, the submerged steel beams could require additional equipment and expense. A cost estimate for Stop 42 has not yet been received. Council expressed interest in proceeding with additional removal if the cost is reasonable. The matter will be reviewed further once pricing becomes available.

Beach Fire Rings and Bonfire Permits were discussed about being removed for season. It was asked if the rings are removed whether additional bonfire permits should be issued. Chief Layman reported a recent incident involving an unauthorized beach fire for which a citation was just issued. Following discussion, Council agreed that the beach bonfire season should conclude with removal of the fire rings.

Public Works Report – Superintendent Rick Reitz reported that the all drywells have been installed and functioning well and successfully managing stormwater. Road patching was completed and additional patching completed on Briarwood. Rick reviewed a color-coded Village street map identifying recently completed paving projects of about 81,081 square feet of roadway. The following streets and sections have been resurfaced:

- Dune Ridge – the loop from Hillside to Hillside.
- Greenwood – approximately half of the roadway.
- Cherokee – from Greenwood all the way to East Court.
- Avalon the remain section requiring resurfacing.
- East Court from Ponchartrain to Stop 43.

Tim McCarthy expressed appreciation for the progress made in addressing roads that has needed repairs for many years. Tim also acknowledged that serval road in the rear portion to the Village remain in poor condition.

However, those roads cannot be resurfaced until the planned water infrastructure improvements are completed, as the water project will require excavation that could damage newly paved roads. Rick will start fall leaf collection as soon as weather conditions change and leaves begin falling. Anne will send out announcement once they start.

Tim McCarthy moved new business up regarding additional paving -The following locations were identified for resurfacing: a substantial portion of Pocantico, a section of Pontiac the other side of Greenwood and over by Apache and portions of Birchmont, including the section from the stop sign towards the water plant. The proposed work includes approximately 19,000 square feet of resurfacing at a total cost of $39,500. The contractor Michiana Asphalt Solution indicated that work could begin Monday, October 12, 2026 since all his equipment is still in the Village and they could finish by mid-week. Council discussed the favorable pricing, noting that contractor's current rate was approximately $2 per square foot, compared with amore typical rate of approximately $3.50 per square foot. Tim emphasized these improvements would reduce the need for continued temporary patching and allow the Village to address additional deteriorating roads at a substantial savings. During discussion, Nancy Thill requested that the contractor also evaluate Hillside from Michiana Drive to Tahoma. Council requested a separate quote for this additional work. It was noted that Hillside was not included in the current $39,500 proposal, any additional expenditure would require further Council consideration and potentially a special meeting. Tim McCarthy asked for a motion for the additional paving. A motion was made to approve the additional road paving proposal for approximately 19,000 square feet of resurfacing at the identified locations, at a cost of $39,500. The motion was seconded by Mike Bothelo; a roll call vote was taken; 5 Ayes and 0 Nays. Motion passed. Tim McCarthy made a motion to then amend the budget for $39,500; Mike Mumper seconded; motion passed.

Water Report – Mike Mumper gave an update on the Water Infrastructure Improvement Project. Mike said that the water board meeting met with the project engineer Derek Sndyer. Derek presented a detailed plan and timeline for moving the project forward. The project will be organized into three separate components for bidding purposes, with approximately eight technical modifications needed before final submission. The proposed modifications include changes to pipe materials, fittings, and restraint systems. Some ductile iron components may be replaced with PVC alternatives where appropriate. These changes are intended to improve the overall longevity of the water system while potentially reducing construction costs.

The proposed revisions will be submitted to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) for review. Mike discussed the separate responsibilities of the two agencies involved:

- EGLE: Reviews technical and engineering requirements, including pipe materials, installation methods, trenching, boring, and construction specifications.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): Oversees federal grant requirements, including American-made materials, contractor qualifications, and proper bidding procedures.

The anticipated timeline is as follows:

1. Complete and submit the proposed engineering modifications within approximately two weeks.
2. Obtain the necessary EGLE and EPA approvals.
3. Advertise requests for proposals and begin the contractor bidding process.
4. Allow approximately three weeks for the bidding period.
5. Begin construction as soon as approvals, bidding, and weather conditions permit.

Mike emphasized the importance of beginning construction before the end of 2026 to protect the federal grant funding awarded to the Village. There was concern expressed that changes in federal leadership or funding priorities could potentially affect grants that have not yet been committed to active projects. The Water Board expressed renewed optimism about the project's progress, noting that the engineer had provided a clear plan and

realistic timeline. The Engineer had stated weather conditions will determine how much construction can be completed during the winter months. The Village's goal remains to begin the project before the end of the year.

Parks Report -Mike Mumper gave a report on the success of the summer recreation season and the music in the park hosted by the Village which were approximately six events in the park during the summer. The events featured a variety of musical entertainment and were considered successful. However, Mike expressed interest in increasing attendance at future events.

Mike said the park turf remains in excellent condition. Fertilizer was applied recently, and the grass is growing well heading into the winter season. Mike expressed satisfaction with the overall condition and maintenance of the park. Playground safety and tree maintenance on several trees near the children's playground have been identified as potential safety hazards. The Tree Board and Public Works Department are working together to address these concerns and arrange for removal of dangerous trees. The Bluebird Houses in the park was reported that three families of bluebirds successfully nested in the Village's bluebird houses during the spring and summer. Several houses require minor repairs and cleaning before the next nesting season. Maintenance will be completed in preparation for spring 2027.

Tree Board – Nancy Thill reported she has been working on the Tree City USA Application for the Village's continued recognition as a Tree City USA community. One of the program's requirements is an annual expenditure of at least $2 per capital on tree care and maintenance. The Village's ongoing tree maintenance and removal projects will contribute toward meeting that requirement. Nancy reported that she and Superintendent Rick Reitz have been working throughout the year, as well as during the previous year, to address hazardous trees located near the children's playground. The Tree Board discussed the importance of having the trees and all associated debris completely removed from the area rather than simply cutting and leaving the timber on the ground. An earlier estimate was obtained from Dudiak Tree Service, an additional estimate received from Frasier Tree Service. Nancy Thill made a motion to approve Frazier Tree Service to remove and hauled away 7 trees for $4,600 leaving the stumps because they are located in the critical dunes and not to exceed $5,000; Mike Bothelo Seconded the motion; a roll call vote was taken; 5 ayes and 0 nays; Motion passed. Nancy reported that Pizzo stewardship program is ending for 2026. Nancy reported that Pizzo is offering a 14% discount on its winter clearing program. This program includes an assessment of residential properties, along property boundaries, to identify vegetation and areas that may benefit from clearing or maintenance. Nancy requestioned information and cost. Nancy reported that she and members of the Garden Club have been working on the little playground garden. They also expressed appreciation to the Council for using the Village Hall for there annual meeting. Nancy would like to request the hall for Beach Garden Club for next year's annual meeting on September 23, 2027.

Planning Commission –Mike Bothelo just again reminded everyone the *2026 Master Plan* had been approved by both the Planning Commission and Village Council. Mike said they were busy filling a few seats that are open on the Planning Commission and should be ready to announce the new members at the December meeting.

Treasurer's Report – Tracey McCay reported that two certificates of deposit had recently been rolled over while maintaining rates above the Village's established minimum. Water-related CDs will continue to be kept relatively short-term because funds may be needed for the upcoming major water project. Tracey also provided information regarding a new State of Michigan funding program know as the Neighborhood Roads Fund. The program provides additional funding to municipalities specifically for road improvements. The funding is supported by state tax revenues, including marijuana-related tax revenue.

Check Register – Anne Heywood requested approval of the check register in the amount of $334,074.71. Tim McCarthy made a motion to approve the check register as submitted for $334,074.71. Mike Botehlo seconded the motion; Motion passed.

Old Business

New Village Entrance Signs –Tim McCarthy presented an updated proposal for a new Village entrance sign to be located at Stop 37, near the intersection of Lake Shore Drive and Michiana Drive. The estimated project cost is $23,422 with lighting and installation. The proposed sign would complement the design of the Village's existing beach stop shelters and create a consistent appearance throughout the community. The entrance side would welcome visitors to the Village of Michiana, Michigan. The reverse side would feature the message, "Leaving the Village of Michiana, Michigan. May the sunset guide you back". Underneath the sign would be directional signage identifying the Village Hall, The Park and Police Department. Brian Cassidy discussed the improvements to the triangular area where the sign would be installed. It was stated that some of funding for the sign can be used from the Act 51 for non-motorized, used for a wayfinding components, which would quality using a percent of this fund. Tim McCarthy made a motion to approve the proposed Village entrance sign for stop 37 for $23,422 which was built into the budget. Mike Mumper seconded the motion; a roll call vote was taken 4 Ayes and 1 Nay. Motion carried 4-1. Nancy Thill made another motion to approve a smaller sign first over by Village Office. The motion did not receive a second and therefore motion failed for lack of a second. Tim McCarthy said that additional matching signage for the Village will be considered in the future. Tim made a motion to amend the budget for the signage for $23,422: Mike Bothelo seconded the motion; motion passed.

New Business

1. **Resolution to Opt-Out for Public Transportation** – Tim McCarthy made a motion to approve a resolution for the Village of Michiana to opt-out of participation in the Greater Berrien Transportation Authority. Mike Mumper seconded the motion; there was some discussion, stating no one in the Villages uses the service only one family and they live on the Indiana side. The Council said that their primary concern was avoiding the introduction of regular bus routes that could bring additional traffic into the Village: a roll call vote was taken 4 ayes – 1 abstained: Motion passed.
2. **Additional Paving Proposal** – Discussed under Public Works

Correspondence – N/A

Public Comment – Pam Schutt expressed support for the Council's decision to opt-out of the Greater Berrien Transportation Authority. The resident express appreciation for six-night minimum stay requirement during the primary rental season. A resident asked a question regarding the minimum rental period during the off season. Tim McCarthy clarified that following Labor Day, shorter rental periods are permitted, including two-night stays under the off-season provisions.

Longtime Michiana resident Rick Lynn continued his presentation regarding the Village's history. Rick explained that the original Lakeshore Dr. and Ponchartrain street signs had been preserved, restored, and donated back to the Village by his family. He expressed appreciation to the Council for accepting the signs and preserving an important part of Michiana's history. President Tim McCarthy thanked Rick and his family for their generous contribution. Rick also shared information about his travel advisory business, Guided by 444, which specializes in organizing customized group travel experiences if anyone was interested.

Tim McCarthy expressed interest in organizing a Village history night during the off-season, inviting longtime residents and multigenerational families to share memories and stories about Michiana's past. Council acknowledged the importance of preserving the Village's history for future generations.

A resident participating online complimented the Council on the recently completed road improvements and the professionalism of the paving contractor. The resident then requested that Council reconsider its decision to discontinue beach bonfire permits following the seasonal removal of the fire rings. They expressed concern that restricting beach fires during the fall prevents families and friends from enjoying evening gatherings and

sunsets along the lake. She also questioned whether the fire rings improved the appearance of the beaches, noting that burned wood and debris remained after the rings were removed.

President McCarthy explained that the fire rings were introduced to contain beach fires and prevent burned wood and debris from accumulating throughout the beach areas. He acknowledged that debris remained where the rings had been located and stated that Public Works would clean those areas when staffing permitted.

Council discussed several concerns regarding extending the bonfire season, including:

- Maintaining clean beaches and preventing scattered fire debris.
- Protecting fire rings from damage or loss during fall and winter storms.
- Ensuring compliance with the Village's existing beach fire ordinance.

Beach Commissioner Brian Cassidy noted that Lake Michigan conditions can become severe during October and November, creating the risk of fire rings being washed into the lake. President McCarthy explained that the Village removes seasonal beach equipment, including stairs and fire rings, to protect it from storm damage. Council also clarified that the current ordinance requires permitted beach fires to be contained within approved fire rings. Therefore, once the rings are removed, beach fires are not permitted. Tim McCarthy acknowledged the resident's concerns but agreed to maintain the current seasonal restrictions and thanked them for participating and sharing the concerns.

During the final public comment period, Tim talked about the upcoming Village public safety millage renewal appearing on the November election ballot. The proposed renewal is for one mill and provides funding to help support the Village's public safety operations, including police, fire, and first responder services. He explained that the millage is a renewal of an existing tax rather than a new millage. The renewal period was discussed as approximately six years, allowing future renewals to coincide with regularly scheduled elections and avoiding the expense of a separate Village election. Tim along with the rest of the Council emphasized that property tax revenues alone are not sufficient to cover all public safety expenses and that the millage provides an important source of funding for these services. Residents were encouraged to become informed about the millage proposal and participate in the upcoming election.

Mike Mumper spoke as a resident regarding his involvement with the Wreaths Across America program. He explained that the program honors military veterans by placing wreaths on their graves during the holiday season. The local program was held for the first time at Pine Grove Cemetery in Ne Buffalo in 2025. Approximately 550 wreaths were placed with the assistance of about 25 volunteers, despite extremely cold weather. Mike thanked the volunteers, local supporters, cemetery staff, and members of the community who helped make the event successful. Mike also shared national participation figures from the previous years, reporting that approximately 3.1 million wreaths were placed at veterans' graves across 5,594 locations in the United States and aboard. The 2026 Wreaths Across America Event will take place Saturday, December 19, 2026 at 12:00 noon (EST) at Pine Grove Cemetery, New Buffalo. The goal for 2026 is to place approximately 630 wreaths. Mike said at the time of the meeting, 511 wreaths had been sponsored, leaving approximately 119 additional wreaths needed to reach the goal. Wreath sponsorships are $17 each, and donations are requested by the end of November. Mike expressed appreciation to Chief Jamie Flick, wife for her assistance in identifying veterans' graves, and the many volunteers and donors supporting the program. Mike said the plan is to involve local high school students through educational presentations about military service and the importance of honoring veterans. The program's mission is **Remember, Honor, and Teach**.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Heywood/Clerk