Village of Michiana Council Meeting Minutes
Date: September 5, 2025

Call to Order
The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. (EST) by President Tim McCarthy

Attendance and Roll Call

Council Members Present:

- Nancy Thill
- Mike Mumper
- Tim McCarthy
- Mike Botelho

Tim McCarthy excused Brian Cassidy

Others Present:

- Rick Reitz, Water and Street Superintendent
- Police Chief Ryan Layman
- Fire Chief Jamie Flick
- Tracey McCay, Treasurer
- Anne Heywood, Clerk
- Bill Lambert, Building Inspector (Absent)

Attendance Summary:

- 12 Village residents present in total
- 8 via Zoom

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

- One addition under New Business: Item #3 – Review of Planning Commission By-laws.

Public Comment (on agenda items only)

- No public comments were made during the first public comment period.

Approval of Minutes

- Motion by Mike Bothelo, second by Mike Mumper, to approve the following minutes:
    - Council Meeting – August 8, 2025
    - Tree Board Meeting – August 6, 2025
- Motion carried unanimously.

Reports

Building Inspector – Bill Lambert - absent

- 11 open permits in the Village
- No issues reported.

Michiana Shores Volunteer Fire Department – Report given on behalf of Gary Bendix

- Michiana responded to 5 fire-related calls in August (ranging from alarms to power lines being down).
- Reminder to save the date for their Annual Pancake Breakfast will be Saturday, October12th at 7:00 am – Noon – Central Time! They appreciation your support.

New Buffalo Township Volunteer Fire Department – Chief Jamie Flick

- Township responded to 41 calls in August (5 in Michiana).
- Year-to-date calls are 43 above last year's average.
- Upcoming events:
    - 5K Run – September 20 (benefits Friends of New Buffalo Township Fire). Which is an organization that helps the fire department get gear or helps provide dinners for late calls or trainings.
    - Nancy's in downtown New Buffalo is doing a fundraiser with a 100% give-back on September 28. Proceeds will go to the Friends of New Buffalo Township Fire and the youth Raiders Football Team in New Buffalo and River Valley.
- Community Connect Program: 110+ residents/businesses have enrolled; The fire department has helped install 10 smoke detectors in Grand Beach, 4 in Michiana. The Fire Chief will leave information about the program with Chief Layman and the Village Office for anyone who is interested in learning more about the program.
- New Buffalo Township Board approved hiring of 2 full-time firefighters (M–F, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.), starting September 22. Fire Chief Flick said you might see the truck driving around for training so the men can learn the area and streets.

Police Department – Chief Ryan Layman

- Reported 75 calls for the month of August and 33 citations issued.
- Working on filling an open position; interview scheduled for next week.
- Reminder: residents traveling for the winter months may request property checks.

Highway 12 Traffic

- Concerns raised about safety and potential for a stoplight near Grand Beach and US 12.
- MDOT has conducted a traffic count, but no final decision yet.
- It was mentioned would it help if we coordinated with the New Buffalo Township to petition for stronger traffic control measures.

Beach Report – Brian Cassidy Absent Tim McCarthy gave report

- Current structure between Stop 41.5 & 42 on the beach, EGLE was getting ready to send out a second notice.
- Ongoing issues with items left on the beach; many confiscations have resulted in fines.
- It was noted that non-residents, particularly from Michiana Shores, are often responsible for violations.

- Stop 43 update: Following repeated vandalism of the safety rails, the Council has closed Stop 43 again. The site will remain closed until safety concerns are addressed.

Public Works – Rick Reitz

- Work on Lakeshore Drive to begin tomorrow, with grinding, paving and patching underway. Project expected to conclude by early next week.
- Stop 43 experienced damage; closure reinforced for safety and utility access.
- Speed bump removal to begin soon.
- Cross Connect inspections: Required by Michigan law to prevent water system contamination. Program has been slow due to contractor shortages. Residents will continue receiving notices. Do your best with the appointment options given. If the dates don't work, they will resend letters at another to reschedule.

Water Report – Mike Mumper

- Proposal for water improvements being finalized for submission to the State and EPA. Expectation: ~3 weeks for approval covering both Creek and Lakeshore projects. Goal is completion by year-end to minimize disruption.
- Master meter failure: Temporary measures in place with assistance from Michigan City to ensure full water metering for both Grand Beach and Michiana. Repairs are in progress.

Parks Report – Mike Mumper

- Pickleball Tournament begins today at 3:00 p.m. and runs through the weekend. Food trucks, music, and large attendance expected. Feel free to walk down and watch or just listen to the music.
- Hydroseeding underway in designated park areas. Portions roped off to protect growth.
- Deer fencing installed to address increased activity.

Tree Board – Nancy Thill

- Community Forestry FY24 Grant: Final report submitted and approved; Village to receive $3,605.82 (total $11,509.25).
- One new black gum tree planted near the Triangle across from park; deer fence and repellent applied.
- Opportunity to apply for an additional $4,000 matching grant before Sept. 15. Looking into the requirements
- AEP utility trimming: 782 trees trimmed, 82 removed; residents have seen improved electrical reliability.
- Applying for the new Tree City USA recertification.
- Residents encouraged to delay removal of certain trees to reduce spread of infection.
- Report on Marquette Greenway: Section adjacent to Grand Beach Road still incomplete; local officials recommended contacting representatives regarding traffic safety concerns.
- Berrien County initiative: Replanting milkweed along roads to support monarch butterflies.
- Garden Club project: Vegetation cleared near playground; barrier and mulch installed; new butterfly-friendly native plants to be planted mid-September.

Planning Commission – Mike Botelho

- Draft of the new Master Plan expected by the end of September. Council members will receive copies for review and comment.
- If Council should have questions or concerns on the draft Mike Botelho would them to be funneled through him.

- Target approval of the Master Plan: March 2026.
- Commission has kept the Council informed; survey responses and workshops have been successful and well-attended.
- Commission approved updated bylaws with two minor revisions made by the Village Attorney Sara Senica, Recommendation to Council for approval.

Treasurer's Report – Tracy McCay

- Pokagon Fund balance: $51,000.
- Upcoming CD rollover at Chase Bank (general fund):
    - Option 1: 5 months at 3.9%
    - Option 2: 10 months at 3.25%

- Previously Council vote to set a minimum threshold of 3.5%. Discussion followed on whether to maintain or adjust the threshold. Council discussed investment options for the Chase CD rollover.
- Tim McCarthy made a motion to review CD rates at a minimum of 3.25% or higher motion was seconded by Mike Mumper: Motion approved unanimously.
- Tim McCarthy made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report as presented.

Clerk's Report – Anne Heywood

- Tim McCarthy made motion to approve the check registry in the amount of $87,049.40; Nancy Thill seconded the motion: Motion approved unanimously.
- Oktoberfest scheduled for October 4, 6–9 p.m. (Michigan time).
    - Entertainment by the Deutsch meisters;
    - Tickets: $45 per person, including food and unlimited drinks.
    - Reservations can be made through the Village office.

Unfinished Business

- Covered previously under Beach Report and Public Works updates.

New Business – Short-Term Rentals

- Council discussed the Village's existing short-term rental ordinance and possible amendments.
- A public workshop will be held at 11:00am EST prior to the Council meeting at 1:00pm. EST on October 10 to gather resident input.
- STR some suggestions:
    - Rental caps to limit the number of rental properties.
    - Lottery style system for open rental permits when the number of rentals drops below the percentage.
    - Rental privileges do not transfer with ownership. If you sell your property opens up another space for either the lottery or the next person on list,
    - Transferability of rental rights upon sale of property.
    - Minimum rental periods (5–7 nights) from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Otherwise, 3 night minimum.
    - Eliminate the plus 2 occupants per floor as it relates to occupancy and simple make it 2 occupants per bedroom.
    - Parking.
    - Possible three-strike rule for ordinance violations, resulting in loss of rental privileges.

- Tim McCarthy stated that in our current Rental Ordinance some of these items are covered.
- Council stated that a moratorium was put on any new rental registrations at the last meeting until the end of the year. Tim made motion to keep the moratorium on any new rental's registrations until 2026; all were favor.
- Village currently has 37 registered short-term rentals.

Planning Commission Bylaws

- Tim McCarthy made a motion to accept the updated Planning Commission bylaws as approved with the 2 changes made by the Village Attorney; discussion; Mike Bothelo seconded the motion; Motion approved unanimously.

Public Comment

- **Linda Hirsch** inquired about the duration of the sign on Lakeshore Drive regarding dune destruction. Council responded that the sign will remain until the investigation is complete, as it has generated useful leads.
- **Julie Bonnelo** had concerns about short-term rentals, emphasizing their importance to the Master Plan process and recommending resident participation in any future work group.

Meeting Adjourned at 2:07

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Heywood/Clerk