VILLAGE OF SOUTH RANGE
REGULAR MEETING
November 5, 2026
6:00 pm

The Regular Meeting of the Village of South Range Council was held on Thursday, November 5, 2026 at the Village of South Range Community Hall; 45 Trimountain Avenue; South Range, MI 49963.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM. The following council members were present: President Eakin, Trustee Marier, Trustee Hill, Trustee Parolini, Trustee Harkonen, Trustee Balma, and Trustee Korby. There were 4 guests in attendance. Others present: Clerk Schwandt

AGENDA ADDITIONS:

Trustee Marier motioned to add drainage fence and tax resolution to the agenda. The motion was seconded by Trustee Korby. Roll call: Ayes: President Eakin, Trustee Hill, Trustee Parolini, Trustee Balma, and Trustee Harkonen, Nays: None. Abstain: None. MOTION CARRIED.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

M. Harma questioned whether the Council had followed up on previously issued junk ordinance violations and expressed concern about the frequency and potential cost of consulting the Village attorney.

M. LaPointe expressed his appreciation to the Council and Public Works employees for their efforts in hanging the veteran banners throughout the Village, noting how meaningful the banners are to veterans' families.

MEETING MINUTES:

MOTION made by Trustee Korby, with support from Trustee Marier to approve the October 01, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes.

Roll call: Ayes: President Eakin, Trustee Hill, Trustee Parolini, Trustee Balma and Trustee Harkonen.
Nays: None. Abstain:None. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION made by Trustee Marier, with support from Trustee Korby to approve the October 06, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes.
Roll call: Ayes: President Eakin, Trustee Hill, Trustee Parolini, Trustee Balma and Trustee Harkonen.
Nays: None. Abstain:None. MOTION CARRIED.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT:
Trustee Marier reported that he and the Assistant Director of Public Works met with a Public Works employee to deliver President Eakin's letter of apology, as required by the censure resolution, along with a letter of reprimand to the employee. He stated that the matter is considered resolved and copies of both letters have been placed in the respective employees' personnel files.

FIRE CHIEF'S REPORT:
Chief Balma reported no calls in October. Students in grades K–3 visited the station for fire prevention activities, including fire extinguisher demonstrations with participation from teachers. The department is awaiting results of a state grant application, expected in the first quarter of 2027. Christmas in South Range is scheduled for December 12th from 1–3 p.m., with donation request letters sent to local businesses. A recent meat raffle at the VFW appeared successful, and similar fundraisers may be held in the future. Planning has begun for the 2027 Firemen's Tournament, which South Range will host. Two members are currently attending fire school, with completion anticipated in January, and several members are considering retirement following the tournament.

STREET COMMISSIONERS REPORT:
Assistant Director Fountaine reported that all fire hydrants and three lagoons have been flushed or discharged and winterized. Seasonal equipment, picnic tables, speed bumps, and trash cans have been serviced or stored for winter. Two Public Works employees recently completed their water and sewer certification exams, with results expected in 1–2 months. The garbage truck is currently out of service, with dump trucks being used temporarily. A blocked drain caused a sewer backup near Whealkate Avenue, resulting in an early school dismissal. The issue was resolved that afternoon with assistance from Adams Township. Fountaine suggested considering a replacement vac truck due to issues with the Village's current truck. New Public Works Director Chris Lemke is expected to arrive over the weekend and officially begin work Monday, following an introductory tour of the Village with Fountaine.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT
President Eakin reported volunteering to assist with garbage collection on October 26th while two Public Works employees attended training. He met with Chris Holmes of UPEA to discuss the drainage ditch and lagoon project. He also noted his regular assistance with bank and post office errands for the Clerk, as well as cleaning the Council chambers and restroom prior to the meeting. He plans to volunteer his time and floor scrubber to clean the ballroom floor in preparation for Christmas in South Range. Eakin reported another successful Backcountry Village firewood giveaway for South Range residents and thanked Marc Franchi and his team for their efforts. Lastly, he noted that Council committee assignments will need to be reorganized following the departure of two trustees, with the matter to be addressed next month.

CLERK'S REPORT:

Clerk Schwandt reported that Village bank accounts have been switched following recent check fraud attempts, and electronic payments will be used whenever possible. She assisted the Fire Department with Christmas donation mailings and reported that winter parking and snowmobile crossing signs will be ordered. She continues working with the accountant to improve the Village's financial records, with a possible change in accounting methods to be discussed later. GPS tracking has been installed in both Village trucks, with access to be provided to the new Public Works Director. Schwandt and Assistant Director Fountaine will meet Saturday to complete Chris Lemke's employment paperwork before his Monday start date.

BUSINESS-UNFINISHED/NEW:

Chris Holmes of UP Engineering attended the meeting to discuss the EGLE drainage ditch/trout stream project and proposed lagoon expansion. He reminded the Council of the September 2027 deadline for the EGLE project and recommended advertising for bids through the January budget meeting to obtain accurate figures for the upcoming budget.

Regarding the lagoon project, Holmes explained that the existing lagoons are nearing capacity and additional development will further strain the system. Due to changes in grant funding availability and concerns over rising construction costs, he recommended pursuing a loan rather than waiting for grant funding. Project estimates range from $2.1 million for the additional lagoon alone to $2.8 million for a more comprehensive project including generators, asset management, lift station improvements, and televising. Holmes recommended the larger project for its long-term benefits. He noted that sewer rate increases would be necessary under either funding option. Council was advised to determine the total rate increase needed to begin the loan application process, with the implementation schedule to be decided at a later meeting.

DECISIONS:

Trustee Balma made a motion to approve the $2.8 Million proposal from UPEA regarding the Village lagoons. Motion was seconded by Trustee Harkonen. Roll call: Ayes: President Eakin, Trustee Korby, Trustee Hill, Trustee Parolini, and Trustee Marier. Nays: None. Abstain: None. MOTION CARRIED.

Trustee Marier moved to hire Kody Maki as the temporary seasonal public works employee. Motion was seconded by Trustee Balma. Roll call: Ayes: President Eakin, Trustee Korby, Trustee Hill, Trustee Parolini, and Trustee Harkonen. Nays: None. Abstain: None. MOTION CARRIED.

Trustee Korby motioned to change the current Village pushback policy from 2 free pushbacks per household to 1 per household per season. The motion was seconded by Trustee Hill. Roll call: Ayes: President Eakin, Trustee Marier, Trustee Balma, Trustee Parolini, and Trustee Harkonen. Nays: None. Abstain: None. MOTION CARRIED.

Trustee Balma motioned to accept the resignation of Trustee Korby. The motion was seconded by Trustee Hill. Roll call: Ayes: President Eakin, Trustee Marier, Trustee Parolini, and Trustee Harkonen. Nays: None. Abstain: Trustee Korby. MOTION CARRIED.

Trustee Harkonen motioned to donate $900 to the Christmas in South Range celebration. The motion was seconded by Trustee Parolini. Roll call: Ayes: President Eakin, Trustee Marier, Trustee Parolini, and Trustee Hill. Nays: None. Abstain: Trustee Balma. MOTION CARRIED.

Trustee Marier made a motion to post 2 vacancies on the Village Council with letters of interest due by the December meeting. The motion was seconded by Trustee Balma. Roll Call: Ayes: President Eakin, Trustee Hill, Trustee Parolini, Trustee Korby, and Trustee Harkonen. Nays: None. Abstain: None. MOTION CARRIED.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Trustee Korby motioned to approve payment of the bills, totaling: $99,732.43. The motion was seconded by Trustee Balma. Roll call: Ayes: President Eakin, Trustee Parolini, Trustee Marier, Trustee Harkonen, and Trustee Hill. Nays: None. MOTION CARRIED.

With no further business brought before the Council, Trustee Balma motioned to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:24 PM. with support from Trustee Marier.
Roll call: Ayes: President Eakin, Trustee Parolini, Trustee Korby, Trustee Harkonen and Trustee Hill
MOTION CARRIED - Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by: Sydni Schwandt, Village of South Range Clerk

Sydni Schwandt

Village of South Range
2026 Treasurer's Report

The treasurer's report said that the 2026 property tax millage rate was 14.4737 mills. (General, 11.6686; Local Street, 2.8051). The taxable value is $17,441,677.00, which is up from last year's value of $16,530,486.00.

Of the $262,666.50 in total taxes (Gen: $203,405.20, Loc: $48,896.40, 1% fee: $2,521.06, SP Assess: $7,843.84), $230,618.49 was collected and $32,048.01 were delinquent (last year: $219,366.58 collected and $24,423.63 delinquent).

The pro rated distribution of the $230,618.49 of the collected taxed is: General Fund: $180,479.41, Local Street Fund: $43,384.90, 1% Administration fee: $2,261.26 and SP Assessments: $4,492.92.

A motion was made by Trustee Marier and seconded by Trustee Korby to accept the treasurer's report.

VOTE:

Aye:President Eakin, Trustees Balma, Parolini, Hill, and Harkonen.

Nay:

A motion was made by Trustee Marier and seconded by Trustee Korby to authorize the transfer of $230,618.49 in taxes collected to be made from the Agency Fund as Follows:

General Fund: $180,479.41

Local Street Fund: $43,384.90

1% Admin Fee: $2,261.26

VOTE:

Aye: President Eakin, Trustees Balma, Parolini, Hill, and Harkonen.

Nay:

All of the delinquent taxes collected by the county after 9/14/26 will be deposited into the General Fund when the county makes the payment to the village from its revolving fund.

Resolution 2026-0005
PROPERTY TAX COLLECTION RESOLUTION, 2026:

A motion was made by Trustee Marier and was seconded by Trustee Balma to adopt the following resolution: “Property Taxes will be collected by the Village and must be paid to the Village Treasurer until the 14th of September. Thereafter all unpaid taxes must be paid to the Houghton County Treasurer. Taxes may be paid to the Village Treasurer without penalty through September 14, 2027. Payments made to the Village Treasurer after that date will be delinquent and subject to an interest charge of 1.5% per month or partial month of delinquency and a one-time late payment fee of 4% ($1.00 minimum).”

VOTE:

Aye::President Eakin, Trustees Korby, Parolini, Hill, and Harkonen.

Nay: None