

The regular meeting of the Clare City Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the City Commission Chambers of Clare City Hall, 202 West Fifth Street, Clare, Michigan by Mayor Pro Tem Bob Bonham who led with the Pledge of Allegiance. Present were: Commissioners Bob Bonham, Kim Bussell, Maegan Jenkins, and Gus Murphy. Absent: Pat Humphrey. Also, present: Vicki Corlew, City Treasurer; Diane Lyon, City Clerk; Jeremy Howard, City Manager; and Dave Saad, Police Chief.

2. CONSENT AGENDA:

Moved by Commissioner Bussell second by Commissioner Murphy to approve the items listed with an asterisk (*), Agenda, Minutes, Communications, Professional Development, Board & Committee Appointments, and Bills) that are considered routine by the City Commission. Roll call vote: Yeas: Commissioners Bob Bonham, Kim Bussell, Maegan Jenkins, and Carolyn (Gus) Murphy. Nays: None. Absent: Pat Humphrey. *Motion Carried.*

3. *APPROVAL OF MINUTES;

Approved by Consent Agenda.

4. *APPROVAL OF AGENDA;

Approved by Consent Agenda.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT: Tom Pirnstill of Lake Station announced the upcoming Paula Pirnstill Memorial Health & Safety Fair event will take place on April 18, 2026, at Farwell High School, and a spring fundraiser will be held on April 25, 2026, at the Harrison Moose Lodge to benefit Big R & Smokin' Joe's Comfort Care House (hospice house).

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

A. *RENEW BOARD & COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT-MARY ANN SHURLOW, DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Approved by Consent Agenda: Resolution 2026-009.

B. HOMETOWN DECORATIONS CONTRACT EXTENSION

The City's current contract with Hometown Decorations for holiday decoration services expires this year.

The DDA reimburses the City for a major portion of the costs for holiday decoration services as the preponderance of the decorations are installed within the DDA District. The proposed contract was reviewed and approved by the DDA at their February 12th meeting.

Parks and Recreation Director Joy Simmer is recommending a 2-year contract extension with Hometown Decorations and Display, LLC for the continuance of their services.

The City Commission is asked to approve the contract extension and designate Hometown Decoration & Display, LLC as the vendor to complete the work and authorize the City Treasurer to make any and all necessary budget amendments.

Motion by Commissioner Murphy second by Commissioner Bussell to approve the contract extension by adoption of Resolutions 2026-010. Roll call vote: Yeas: Commissioners Bob Bonham, Kim Bussell, Maegan Jenkins, and Carolyn (Gus) Murphy. Nays: None. Absent: Pat Humphrey. *Motion Carried.*

C. CLARE LITTLE LEAGUE AGREEMENT FOR USE & MAINTENANCE OF STAMINA STADIUM BALL FIELDS

On February 17, 2026, city staff (Jeremy, Luke, and Joy) met with Clare Little League representatives to review and update the formal agreement between the two entities for the use and maintenance of the Stamina Stadium ball fields.

The proposed agreement is a two-year agreement covering the 2026-2027 seasons with automatic extensions provided both parties are in agreement. The agreement will be evaluated and updated again, if necessary, at the end of the agreed term.

The City Commission is now asked to consider approving the proposed agreement and authorize its City Manager and/or Parks & Recreation Director to sign said agreement.

Motion by Commissioner Jenkins second by Commissioner Murphy to approve the agreement by adoption of Resolutions 2026-011. Roll call vote: Yeas: Commissioners Bob Bonham, Kim Bussell, Maegan Jenkins, and Carolyn (Gus) Murphy. Nays: None. Absent: Pat Humphrey. *Motion Carried.*

D. TRAFFIC CONTROL ORDER 001-2026 (NO PARKING HEMLOCK FROM WHEATON AVENUE TO STATE STREET AND NO PARKING ON WHEATON AVENUE FROM HEMLOCK STREET TO CEDAR STREET)

At the request of Clare Public Schools Superintendent Matt Forsberg, the Traffic Safety Committee met on February 18, 2026, to review traffic congestion and safety concerns on Hemlock Street and Wheaton Avenue near the school. There are ongoing issues with vehicles parking, stopping, and standing along Hemlock and Wheaton which has resulted in restricting the effective width of travel lanes causing navigation and safety issues for school buses, parents, and other motorists in this area. This congestion has resulted in safety concerns for students walking to and from school, as well as for students being dropped off and picked up in this area. The current conditions are not conducive to orderly traffic movement or safe pedestrian travel in the school zone.

The City's Traffic & Safety Committee has reviewed and considered the request and has recommended approval of the request. The Committee's findings and supporting rationale were provided in a detailed justification narrative. The City Commission is asked to approve the request by issuance of a Traffic Control Order 001-2026.

Motion by Commissioner Murphy second by Commissioner Bussell to approve the Traffic Control Order by adoption of Resolutions 2026-012. Roll call vote: Yeas: Commissioners Bob Bonham, Kim Bussell, Maegan Jenkins, and Carolyn (Gus) Murphy. Nays: None. Absent: Pat Humphrey. *Motion Carried.*

E. PARKS & RECREATION MILLAGE RENEWAL BALLOT LANGUAGE APPROVAL

The voter approved 0.75 mill parks and recreation levy, which has been reduced to 0.7363 mills through required millage rollbacks, is scheduled to expire at the end of FY 2026–2027. Since its initial approval, this dedicated funding has enabled the City of Clare to complete significant parks and recreation projects, including acquisition of 303 Pinecrest and development of the Emerald Isle Recreation Complex; acquisition and relocation of the historic Clare Railroad Depot and support for rehabilitation of the depot and railcars; closure of the 2.3 mile gap in the Pere Marquette Rail Trail; and purchase of numerous park benches, tables, and related amenities.

A substantial list of additional capital improvements remains, including continued development of the Emerald Isle Recreation Complex and the skate and bike park; campground upgrades at Pettit Park; improvements to existing park restrooms, ballfields, and playgrounds; completion of Lake Shamrock dredging and beach restoration; construction of a kayak/canoe launch; and construction of an outdoor restroom at the Clare Historic Union Depot trailhead. Many of these priority projects, as identified in the City's Parks and Recreation 5 Year Master Plan, will not be completed—or will be significantly delayed—if the millage is not renewed by the electorate.

The City Staff and the City's Parks & Recreation Advisory Board consider the proposed future capital improvements essential to maintaining and improving quality of life for Clare residents and suggest that the continuance of this dedicated millage is imperative to continue the type of improvements that have been made to date as a result of the millage.

If this millage is to continue, the Clerk's office must provide the proposed ballot language to the Clare County Clerk by Tuesday, April 28, 2026, for inclusion on the August ballot. Therefore, the City Commission is asked to consider approving this topic as an item on the August ballot. Suggested ballot language for this millage proposal is attached. The Commission is asked to approve the proposed ballot language.

“Shall the City of Clare, Clare and Isabella Counties continue to levy 0.7363 mills (\$.7363 per \$1,000.00) on taxable value of property located in the City of Clare for four years beginning with the 2027 tax year and running through 2030 tax levy year (inclusive), which will raise in the first year of such levy an estimated revenue of \$87,420.90 to be

used for parks and recreation purposes. This is a renewal of a millage that will otherwise expire in 2026. Taxes within the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and Tax Increment Finance Authority (TIFA) districts will be distributed as prescribed by law.”

Motion by Commissioner Murphy second by Commissioner Bussell to approve the ballot language to be presented to voters by adoption of Resolutions 2026-013. Roll call vote: Yeas: Commissioners Bob Bonham, Kim Bussell, Maegan Jenkins, and Carolyn (Gus) Murphy. Nays: None. Absent: Pat Humphrey. *Motion Carried.*

F. STREETS IMPROVEMENTS MILLAGE RENEWAL BALLOT LANGUAGE APPROVAL

The voter-approved 3-mill street millage levy, which has been reduced to 2.9456 mills through required millage rollbacks is scheduled to expire at the end of FY 2026-2027. We have been able to make extraordinary improvements in the City of Clare on our city streets including the reconstruct of Rainbow Drive from Glendale Drive to Glendale Drive, reconstruct of the 200 Block East Fourth Street, a thin overlay on Schoolcrest Avenue, mill and fill on Maple Street from Seventh Street to State Street, a 1.5 overlay on Witbeck Drive and Point Drive, the 200 and 300 Block of East State Street, and the 500 Block of Pine Street since this dedicated, voter-approved millage was instituted. There remains a list of proposed capital improvements for streets yet to be completed in the next few years including Mary Street, the 600 block of Pine Street, the 100 block of West Third Street, the 300 Block of East Seventh Street, and a complete reconstruct of John Street between Mary and Woodlawn that are listed in the City’s CIP, which simply will not be accomplished or will be long-delayed if the millage is not again approved by the electorate of Clare.

The proposed future capital improvements are essential to maintaining and improving quality of life for Clare residents and continuance of this dedicated millage is imperative to continue the type of improvements that have been made to date as a result of the millage.

If this millage is to continue, the Clerk’s office must provide the proposed ballot language to the Clare County Clerk by Tuesday, April 28, 2026, for inclusion on the August ballot. Therefore, the City Commission is asked to consider approving this millage renewal as an item on the August ballot. Suggested ballot language for this millage proposal is attached. The Commission is asked to approve the proposed ballot language.

“Shall the City of Clare, Clare and Isabella Counties continue to levy 2.9456 mills (\$2.9456 per \$1,000.00) on taxable value of property located in the City of Clare for four years beginning with the 2027 tax year and running through 2030 tax levy year (inclusive), which will raise in the first year of such levy an estimated revenue of \$349,731.09 to be used for the purpose of street improvements authorized by law. This is a renewal of a millage that will otherwise expire in 2026. Taxes within the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and Tax Increment Finance Authority (TIFA) districts will be distributed as prescribed by law.”

Motion by Commissioner Jenkins second by Commissioner Murphy to approve the ballot language to be presented to voters by adoption of Resolutions 2026-014. Roll call vote: Yeas: Commissioners Bob Bonham, Kim Bussell, Maegan Jenkins, and Carolyn (Gus) Murphy. Nays: None. Absent: Pat Humphrey. *Motion Carried.*

G. DISCUSSION TOPIC-CHARTER AMENDMENT- SECTION 6.2, REGULAR MEETINGS

Recently the City Commission inquired about the option to potentially meet once a month instead of twice a month. Currently the city charter has language relating to the time, place, and frequency of City Commission meetings, so staff reviewed potential options and solutions related to this topic. The City Attorney has prepared a Confidential Legal Opinion which was shared with the City Commission on this issue. The discussion tonight is for further conversation related to potential options to possibly accomplish this change and potential next steps if the Commission decides they may want to pursue the option that would change the specific language in the Charter. If that is the case, it is an extensive process with the procedures outlined by Michigan Compiled Laws, The Home Rule City Act 279 of 1909; Attorney General Letter to the Michigan Bureau of Elections dated January 24, 2022; Notice from the Office of the Governor to the Michigan Bureau of Elections dated August 30, 2021; Municipal Report from the Michigan Municipal League updated January 2016; and One-Pager Plus leaflet provided by the Michigan Municipal League.

The Commission directed staff to draft and present proposed Charter Amendment language for discussion at the first meeting in April. These options will be considered for potential submission to the Attorney General for review and to the Governor for approval, with the goal of placing the measure before voters at the November General Election.

8. TREASURER'S REPORT: The Treasurer provided a report to the Commission.

9. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Lake Shamrock Dredging. Mechanical dredging by the city will continue at the west end of the lake as time and weather permit. Savin's hydraulic dredging continues to be paused due to the temperature and ice formation on the lake. They have pulled the barge for the season and will be back to start work in 2026 as soon as possible, weather permitting. I did speak to Savin recently and with the cold hard winter that we have had the ice does not look to be opening anytime soon on the lake so there is very little chance that they will be able to get on the lake to start, let alone finish, their remaining work before the March 15th through June 30th fish spawning pause occurs. This means that they will be back the beginning of July to complete the dredging when the fish spawning restriction is lifted. They estimate about 4 to 6 weeks of dredging remaining with completion by mid to late August.

Lake Shamrock Dam Project. For the dam project, our engineering firms, GEI and Spicer, have completed the design work for the new dam, emergency/auxiliary spillway, and the new walkway. The project has been out to bid for the last several weeks. Sealed bids were opened at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 24, 2026; two bids were received (Fisher Contracting and Anlaan Corporation). Unfortunately, the bids came in higher than anticipated by 2 or 3 million dollars. Fisher Contracting was low bid at \$8,891,895 and Anlaan Corporation was \$9,970,000. This will require the engineers to do a detailed review to make sure the bid items are correct and to potentially look at ways to allow the city to reduce the costs by changing the scope or phases if possible. Currently, we do not have enough funding in place with the grant dollars we currently have received to fully fund both phases of the project at those amounts. We will be talking to EGLE and FEMA to see if there are additional grants or other funding sources available. Once the bids are fully reviewed, I will be bringing a recommendation to the City Commission for approval. We anticipate the project to commence this spring. We are still waiting on the grant agreement with FEMA and will bring that to you at a future meeting.

DDA Meeting. The DDA held their most recent meeting on February 12, 2026. They had several items and discussion topics on their agenda which included:

- Approved the renewal of a contract with Hometown Decoration & Display for downtown holiday decorations.
- Discussion regarding the possible establishment of a DDA Social District.
- Discussion on the status of the future downtown entry/gateway signs.
- Discussion on the status of the Downtown/Depot Public Restrooms project.
- Approved the attendance excusal of two members of the DDA Board.
- Approval of Minutes and Financials.

Planning Commission Meeting. The Planning Commission held a meeting on February 11, 2026 and acted on items on their agenda which included:

- Elected 2026 Chairperson – Jason Lowe
- Elected 2026 Vice Chairperson – Nick Wyman
- Annual review of bylaws
- Public Hearing and Special Use Permit Review and Approval – K-Berger, LLC (Culvers) – Expansion to add a second drive-thru at their restaurant on South Clare Avenue.
- Public Hearing and Site Plan Review and Approval – 7-Eleven, LLC (Speedway) – Renovation and rehabilitation (new fuel tanks, canopy, and drives, remove kerosine tank and build a dumpster enclosure on the west side of the property).
- Approved the 2025 Annual Report of Planning Commission.
- Approved the excusal of two members of the Planning Commission from the meeting.

Note: There is no rule that requires a joint meeting of the City Commission and the Planning Commission. We have not held one the last couple years as the Annual Report has sufficed, but if at any time the City Commission feels that it would be beneficial, we can look at scheduling a joint meeting in the future.

City Commission Nominating Petitions. Reminder: The City of Clare is accepting nominating petitions for the non-partisan offices of City Commissioner (2 seats). Nominating Petitions will be accepted up to 4 p.m. on April 21, 2026. City Commissioners serve a four-year term. Qualifications require applicants of the office of the city commission to be duly qualified electors of the city who have been residents thereof for at least two years immediately prior to the date of the election, to be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2026. For additional information, contact City Clerk Diane Lyon, dlyon@cityofclare.gov, 989-424-4068. I have also attached the public notice which contains more information.

Addendums:

City Wide Let Run Water Notice. The City of Clare's 'Let Water Run' order that went into effect January 26, 2026 has now ended effective March 2, 2026.

Irish Festival. Clare's 51st annual Irish Festival takes place from March 11-14 and will have lots of great activities during the week and weekend. You can visit the Clare Area Chamber of Commerce webpage and Facebook page to find the list of events, specials, and entertainment going on all through the festival.

March Board of Review. The March Board of Review will meet at Clare City Hall, 202 W. Fifth Street, Clare MI 48617, at the following times:

March 3, 2026 (4:00 pm) – Organizational Meeting – No Appeals

March 9, 2026 (9:00 am – 3:00 pm) – Appeal Hearings

March 12, 2026 (3:00 pm – 9:00 pm) – Appeal Hearing

If you have questions about your Tax Assessment Change Notice or wish to schedule an appointment, contact the City Assessor's Office at 989-424-4066 or 231-519-1632, or email Assessor@cityofclare.gov.

11. *COMMUNICATIONS: *Approved by Consent Agenda.*
12. EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENT: Tom Prinstill noted that, based on his extensive service on various boards over the years, requiring attendance at meetings with no actionable agenda items results in an unnecessary use of everyone's time.
13. COMMISSION DISCUSSION TOPICS: None.
14. *APPROVAL OF BILLS: *Approved by Consent Agenda.*
15. *PROFESSIONAL & EDUCATIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES: *Approved by Consent Agenda.*
16. ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Commissioner Bussell seconded by Commissioner Murphy to adjourn the meeting. Roll call vote: Yeas: Commissioners Bob Bonham, Kim Bussell, Maegan Jenkins, and Carolyn (Gus) Murphy. Nays: None. Absent: Pat Humphrey. None. *Motion Carried.* The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Bob Bonham, Mayor Pro Tem

Diane M. Lyon, City Clerk