

**CITY OF ALPENA, DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
MINUTES OF A NORMAL MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY BOARD  
APPROVED 2/3/2026**

Meeting date of Tuesday, January 6, 2026 at 3:00 pm

Meeting was held at City Hall Council Chambers, 208 N. First Ave. with the option for members of the public to join virtually.

Present: Todd Britton, Corey Canute, Loren Jackson, Brian Peterson, Rachel Smolinski, Melissa Tolan-Halleck, Ben Young

Absent: Mike Mahler (virtual), Matt Wojda, Cassandra VanHorn, Andrea Yoxsimer (virtual)

Staff Present: Anne Gentry

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**AGENDA ITEMS**

**1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm by Vice Chairperson Tolan-Halleck.

**2. Citizens Appearing before the Authority:** None.

**3. Approval of the Agenda:** It was moved by Smolinski and seconded by Jackson to approve the agenda as presented. All ayes. Motion carries.

**4. Review and Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meetings (December 2025):** It was moved by Smolinski and seconded by Young to approve the minutes from the December 2025 Board Meeting as presented. All ayes. Motion carries.

**5. Hearings:** None.

**6. Executive Director's Report:** Gentry reported on the following:

- New Year's Eve was a success despite the cold and snowy weather. There was great attendance around midnight, and the band was happy with attendance. The fireworks show was a hit and well-received. Department of Public Works helped immensely with set-up and clean-up. HPC Credit Union sponsored an additional \$1,000 to purchase additional solo stoves that we can use at various events.
- The holiday season is complete at the Water Street Commons. The Christmas at the Commons event was well-attended despite the cold; vendors reported it was the biggest sales day of the season. Players lent us a mobile bar for the event. There are minor tweaks for next year.
- Michigan Arts & Culture Council grants are due January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Gentry is planning on submitting a request for Fresh Waves and a music pavilion at the Water Street Commons.
- The facades at 616 N 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave and 121 W Washington Ave are complete and requested grant reimbursement.
- Bay Athletic Club & Thunder Bay Community Health Services opened before Christmas and are happy with their new location at 200 W Chisholm St. Tastes of Thailand, Crepe Diem, and Blue Moon Café also all opened over the last month. 2025 ended on a strong note with 10 new businesses opening downtown in total and 19 facades under construction.

- Gentry shared January priorities including reviewing the strategic plan, planning for Water Street Commons' 2026 seasons, drafting a budget, and creating a program to present a sign/plaque to projects that have been supported by the DDA.

**7. Correspondences:** None to share.

**8. Review and Acceptance on Monthly Financial Reports (December 2025):** It was moved by Smolinski and seconded by Britton to receive and file the financial reports from December 2025. All ayes. Motion carries.

**9. Committee Reports:**

- Budget/ Finance: Smolinski, Tolan-Halleck, Britton, and Young volunteered to serve on this committee this year. Gentry will organize a meeting in January to review a draft budget.
- Education & Promotion: Jackson shared updates about Christmas at the Commons on December 13<sup>th</sup>, final plans for New Year's Eve, Ice Festival on February 21<sup>st</sup>, and ideas for a spring event.
- Design & Beautification: Did not meet. No report given.
- Economic Development: Gentry gave an update on the committee's discussion about parameters for the Activation Grant program and how the year ended at the Water Street Commons.

**10. Report from the City of Alpena:** Smolinski reported on the following:

- It's the time of year for planning for the year ahead. The City has been in Capital Improvement Project planning across departments and is about to enter budget season.
- Construction projects are nearly done for the year.
- There was some discussion amongst the Board about curbside recycling that is currently being offered by a private business.

**11. Unfinished Business:** None.

**12. New Business:**

- Downtown Dollars Accounts: It was moved by Britton and supported by Canute to close the two existing Downtown Dollars accounts at Nicolet National Bank and transfer the funds into the new account ending in 3441; and to add Anne Gentry, Savannah Peterson, Alisha Bouchard, and Rachel Smolinski as signers to the account. Roll call vote was taken. All ayes.
- Cassandra VanHorn Board Seat: VanHorn graduated from high school this year. The Board discussed different ways of engaging students from the high school moving forward.

**13. Adjournment:** There being no other business, it was moved by Smolinski and seconded by Jackson to adjourn the meeting at 3:32 pm.

*Minutes prepared and submitted by Anne Gentry.*