



Village Hall
211 S. Seminary St,
PO Box 18
Downs, IL 61736

Village of Downs Board of Trustees Regular Meeting September 11, 2025, 7 p.m. @ Village Hall & via Zoom

1. Mayor Mike James called the September 11, 2025, meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.
2. Roll call was taken. Trustees present were Maureen Roach, Diana Reynolds, Stephanie Adkisson, Sarah Gassaway, Brian Warfel, and Toby Twyford. There was a quorum present. Also present were Mayor Mike James, Clerk Rachel Eagles, Treasurer Julie Bakewell, and Village Attorney Dawn Wall.
3. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
4. Events – presented by Mayor James
 - a. The Events committee met last Tuesday
 - b. The committee approved the expenses for the upcoming Haunted House
 - c. They also approved Cookies with Santa (1st Saturday and Sunday in December)
5. Engineer & Development Report
 - a. Downs Water Plant Improvements –
 - a. IEPA Operating permit approved.
 - b. Water samples have passed.
 - c. Alarm dialer system in place and functioning
 - d. Demo of exterior Filter Tank early September
 - e. Demo of interior old piping, pumps, and chemical equipment through September
 - f. Clean up yard site end of September
 - g. Any final seeding September/October
 - h. Softening is up to 60%
 - b. Downtown Streetscape and Parking Lots design - presented by Greg (Crowe?)
 - a. Seminary street progress is going well
 - b. They plan to start paving Seminary St next week and hopefully have it completed in one week. Flagging operations will be utilized for traffic control with no more than one lane closed at a time
 - c. Greg explained the funding breakdown to the trustees
 - d. Remaining funds offer a \$17,000 buffer
 - e. He anticipates some deductions of about \$40,000
 - f. He clarified that he misspoke last meeting, that there will not be a cap on the seating walls, but Knapp provided a change order quote of \$25,197.50 to put caps on the seating walls if we want those. The caps would include a decorative textured finish. The caps were not included in the original bid.
 - g. Roach asked if the deductions include the street lights—the answer is yes, those are included in the bid already.

- h. Warfel asked if by the bakery and in front of Donna's—why did we not ramp both ends with concrete? The answer is it would have had to go on into the property of The Station.
 - c. Downs Crossing Watermain Extension – report given by Matt Tosh
 - a. Watermain pipes have all been installed
 - b. Working with Quincy to put water into the water main and working towards a successful pressure test. They found one small leak and possibly one other area of a leak, which is being troubleshot at this point.
 - c. No delays at this point to report
 - d. Elevated storage tank—waiting on tank access road, and telemetry panel needs installed that will communicate with the boosting pump station
 - e. Submitted potential change order for a modified access that will reduce maintenance required around the water tank, Corn Belt has offered to help provide rock for the area
 - d. S. Lincoln, Colleen Lane, and Hillard Court Road Projects
 - a. Supposed to start in September. Mayor James will check in with them again to see where they are at with the project.
 - e. Other Engineering or Development Updates
 - a. West Main Street Sidewalk--Bid opening was held on Tuesday, September 9, with one bid submitted by Knapp in the amount of \$43,996.80. The engineer's estimate was \$31,688.00. The cost of clearing the site and landscape restoration was \$11,520 that was \$10,270 more than the estimate. The Village staff could handle those items to reduce the costs of the project. The Village could also reduce some of the cost by supplying the rock for the subbase under the concrete sidewalk and by supplying asphalt millings for grading the sidewalk to the fire department property and grading the area to drain properly. Mayor James noted that this is a TIF eligible expense.
 - b. MFT Program-Chip Seal Program was completed last week. The roads include Main Street from Seminary to Huff and Pintail Lane from Main to Gadwall. McLean County also came back out to fix spots that needed to be re-touched after the first chip seal application.
 - c. Safe Routes to School Grant Application—there is twice as much money for the program, so hopeful we can get funding this year. This grant would supply funds for safe school routes sidewalk improvements on Main Street from Gadwall Lane to Price Street. The grant application deadline is October 13, 2025. We need letters of support and testimony from residents for our grant application. We will most likely hold a public hearing for this. Please encourage constituents to write testimonies of need for the sidewalk in this area. This is the third time the Village has tried to get this grant.
6. Mayoral Report was presented by Mayor James
- a. McLean County Strategic Land Use Plan—they reached out to the Mayor about current and future plans. It is on the board docs, please read it on the share point.
 - b. Rails to Trails—is back rolling again. The Village had committed \$1,500 to that in the past, are we still on board with that? It would extend the constitution trail from Bloomington to Mansfield.
 - c. Charging stations – possible vehicle charging stations in Downs have come back to the table. We do not have a location that is suitable in size and location on Village owned

property, so the mayor has reached out to Mobil. Mobil was open to the discussion, but they need a lot more information before any movement forward.

7. Trustee Reports

- a. Building Report- presented by Diana Reynolds. Five new FOIA's for the month. Two open FOIA's. A few garbage misses, but GFL corrected them immediately. Building code and chapter amendments. Insurance application renewal is happening next week. She also has three building ordinance violations she received from Roach that are being looked at.
- b. Water and Sewer Report - presented by Toby Twyford. Just smiling.
- c. Police Report - presented by Maureen Roach and Chief Dingler.
 - a. Sept 5th was the mobile clinic. They had four people attend the mobile clinic. Roach discussed with the mobile clinic team about maybe having them come during the farmers market to reach more people.
 - b. Looking at new ticket system for common violations. Chief shared more details about the new ticket system. He also ordered more traffic tickets, which we have already received.
 - c. There was water theft this past month that was investigated by Officer Ty. Chief reported that Ty did a fantastic job understanding the process and wrote a great report.
 - d. There were many different items that chief reported they were dealing with over the past month. The police department reported: two domestic verbal cases, they assisted state troopers with a crash, two attempted suicides were responded to, and twenty-nine traffic stops.
 - e. RMS and CAD systems are making a night and day difference.
 - f. The Ford is having some issues but is operational and in use.
 - g. Working on various maintenance issues as well.
 - h. Investigation into illegal dumping is underway.
- d. Streets Reports - presented by Brian Warfel. He reported that things are going well, even though they only have three employees right now. Caleb has been clearing trees where the new sidewalk will go in. Need to hire one to two more people for the department. Mayor mentioned we have four or five driveways that need fixed, and he is looking at an outside contractor to fix them since we are down with streets staff. Warfel mentioned we might want to look at a policy/timeframe for fixing these types of things.
- e. Parks, Community Center and Food Pantry Report - presented by Stephanie Adkisson and Eric Thompson.
 - a. Eric sent in a recommendation for the Farmers Market Committee. The recommendation is for one of their volunteers, Wyatt Haworth, who is a Tri-Valley senior. He has taken over many responsibilities for the market, so Eric is recommending Wyatt to be on the Village Farmers Market committee. Eric gave some stats of marketing and Facebook engagements due to Wyatts' great work. Reynolds and Adkisson both vouched for Wyatt being added to the committee. Lisa Huff is asking to be removed from the Farmers Market committee.
 - b. Adkisson updated that we have two very dead trees in the park that are a safety concern. She has sought two estimates to get them removed.

- c. Toddler size slide in park playground has a crack, and Adkisson is looking into repair vs replacement. Decoration of the park will start in mid-October.
- d. Mussel survey is being done in Kickapoo creek by a mussel expert that studies mussels. The mussel expert reported that we have 21 mussel varieties in our creek in Downs.
- e. The committee will be working over the winter on restoring the old bell tower from the old school building that will be moved to a village park.
- f. Adkisson also mentioned that she wanted to thank Eric Thompson for his efforts in running such a great village market each week.
- f. Finance and Services Report - presented by Sarah Gassaway and Treasurer Julie Bakewell.
 - a. Bakewell went over the bills to pay report and pointed out unique bills.
 - b. Bakewell also mentioned that we have a new amazon account that each trustee received an invite to access it. Please price compare when using it.
 - c. Bakewell explained cash on hand report that was provided to the trustees.
 - d. All of the individual fund reports are available on the board folder.
 - e. Keeping an eye on increases in water treatment plant expenses with supplies and electricity to get a feel for what the increased costs are for the new plant so we can budget accurately.
 - f. Bakewell received the finished financial audit; she is reviewing it and will get her questions to the auditors next week. The auditors will be here in person at the October meeting to go over the audit.

8. Discussion

- a. Mayor attended an IEPA meeting in Springfield about the orphaned gas tank that was discovered during the early stages of the Streetscape project. Mayor reported that he is pursuing grant funding to help remediate the gas tank testing, sampling, and any additional removal if needed.
- b. Street sign installation will be scheduled soon.

9. Public Comment

- a. Diana Reynolds – As the property owner of the tax office on Seminary Street, she stated that their property survey pin number was knocked out when the streetscapes project crew started digging in that area. She asked Knapp Concrete to mark the property, and she mentioned that the new sidewalk goes six inches onto her property. Greg with MSA said that the sidewalk is not on her property, but in the right-of-way area, which is 16 feet from the building.
- b. Eric Thompson – had a question about the trash contract – asking if recycling can be every other week instead of the 2nd and 4th weeks, as the current schedule can cause confusion in the months with a 5th week. Mayor responded that we have had our trash contract with GFL for quite a while and if we changed the parameters of the contract, it would be very likely our rates would go up because we would not fall under our renewable clause. Eric also said, “thank you so much for the new water”. They were able to get rid of their water softener and are so grateful for the new water. He is also grateful to not be paying for the water that was required to flush his water softener.
- c. Email from Cheryl Bach was read by the clerk. Cheryl had two questions.
 - a. “Has the Finance Committee met and determined what amount our water bills will be increased?” The answer is that the Finance Committee is in discussion

about the upcoming increase, but that they need hard numbers from the new water treatment plant to determine the actual increase in cost of running the new plant. The target increase has been \$15 per month, but that should offset a lot of households that previously had the cost of paying to soften the water in each home, which is now done at the new water plant before the water is distributed to the community, so water softeners should not be needed anymore.

- b. "A resident who has not lived in Downs a long time asked me if the Sewer Debt charge is a forever charge or if the debt will be paid off and when. I did not the answer, so I am asking the Board." The answer is that the charge for sewer debt will only be until the sewer debt loan ends, which is in 2031 or 2032.
 - d. Peggy Keylin – added comments via Zoom.
 - a. She noted improved sight lines when turning onto Seminary Street.
 - b. She asked about pedestrian safety signs; the mayor responded that crosswalk markings will be added.
 - c. She expressed concern about the lack of trees downtown and suggested the Village plant more.
 - d. She thanked the Village for the new water system and asked how often the mains are flushed and what the schedule is.
 - e. She recommended Main Street sidewalks and pedestrian crossings.
 - f. She asked when the road to Roanoke project would begin (next month) and whether Roanoke is paying for it (yes).
 - g. She was glad to hear the Rails-to-Trails project is moving forward.
 - h. She supported Wyatt joining the Farmers Market Committee.
 - i. She asked why the gas tank wasn't removed before the streetscape project; the answer was that its presence was unknown at that time.
 - e. Julie James mentioned via Zoom that Wyatt was such a help with Cookies for Santa and she wishes more adults would step up to help like he does.
10. A Motion to Approve Items Contained within the Consent Agenda was made by Twyford and seconded by Adkisson. Approved 6-0
11. A Motion to Approve Consent Agenda was made by Adkisson and seconded by Gassaway. Approved 6-0
- a. Motions
 - a. Motion to Approve the August 14, 2025 Village Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes
 - b. Motion to Approve the August 14, 2025 Village Board of Trustees Executive Meeting Minutes
 - c. Motion to Approve Wyatt Haworth and removing Lisa Huff to the Village of Downs Farmers Market Committee effective August 1, 2025
 - d. Motion to Approve Jonathan Alarie Eagle Scout Project Effective August 14, 2025
 - b. Ordinances
 - c. Resolutions
 - a. ~~Resolution 2025-R Authorizing and Approving Independent Contractor Agreement Cleaning Buildings for the Village of Downs~~ Removed from consent agenda, waiting for missing details to complete the agreement at a future meeting.

- b. ~~Resolution 2025-R34 Authorizing and Approving Community Solar Agreement Between Solar on Earth and the Village of Downs~~ Moved below to vote on separately.
- c. ~~Resolution 2025-R___ Authorizing and Approving Ameren Non-Residential Electric Relocation Project not to Exceed \$7,500~~ Moved below to vote on separately.
- d. Resolution 2025-R36 Authorizing and Approving Stump and Tree Removal Agreement Between _____ and the Village of Downs not to Exceed \$10,000
- e. ~~Resolution 2025-R___ Authorizing and Approving Utility Easement with Ameren and the Village of Downs~~ Moved below to vote on separately.
- f. Resolution 2025-R37 Authorizing and Approving Bid from McLean County Asphalt Co., Inc. for 2025-2026 MFT Seal Coat Bituminous Streets Project
- g. Resolution 2025-R38 Authorizing and Approving Bid from Knapp Concrete, INC for Sidewalk Project on West Main Street

12. New Business

- a. Motions
- b. Ordinances
- c. Resolutions
 - a. ~~Resolution 2025-R___ Authorizing and Approving Independent Contractor Agreement Cleaning Buildings for the Village of Downs.~~ Removed from vote, waiting for missing details to complete the agreement at a future meeting.
 - b. ~~Resolution 2025-R___ Authorizing and Approving Utility Easement with Ameren and the Village of Downs.~~ Removed from vote, will be voted on at a future meeting.
 - c. A motion to approve **Resolution 2025-R39** Authorizing and Approving Ameren Non-Residential Electric Relocation Project not to Exceed \$7,500 (removed from above) was made by Roach seconded by Adkisson. **Approved 5-1 Vote: Yes-5 | No-1 (Reynolds) | Abstain-0**
 - d. A motion to approve **Resolution 2025-R34** Authorizing and Approving the Community Solar Agreement Between Solar on Earth and the Village of Downs (with negotiations in progress to increase the rate from 10% to 20%), was made by Roach and seconded by Gassaway. After discussion, A motion to table Resolution 2025-R34 until negotiations are complete, was made by Roach and seconded by Gassaway. **The motion to table carried 6-0.**

13. Old Business (*No action was taken in old business.*)

- a. Motion to Continue the Village of Downs Regular Board of Trustees Meeting on _____, @ 7 p.m. at the Village Hall
14. A Motion to Approve Payment of Bills was made by Roach and seconded by Adkisson. Approved 6-0
15. A Motion to Enter Executive Session at 9:12 p.m. for Semi-Annual Review of Meeting Minutes, Annexation Agreements, and Development Agreements was made by Adkisson and seconded by Twyford. Approved 6-0
- a. Semi-Annual Review of Meeting Minutes
 - b. Annexation Agreements
 - c. Development Agreements

16. Action on Executive Session Items

- a. ~~Resolution 2025-R___ Authorizing the Village Clerk to Destroy Executive Session Audio Tapes Over Eighteen Months Old~~ (none are being destroyed)
- b. A Motion to Approve Resolution 2025-R35 Authorizing the Village Clerk to Release Specific Executive Session Minutes of the Village of Downs was made by Adkisson and seconded by Warfel. Approved 6-0
- c. A Motion to Approve Resolution 2025-R40 Authorizing the Village Clerk to Keep Sealed Specific Executive Session Minutes of the Village of Downs was made by Warfel and seconded by Gassaway. Approved 6-0

17. Other Business (none this meeting)

18. Mayor Mike James called the September 11, 2025, Board of Trustees meeting back to order at 9:47 p.m. A final roll call was taken. Trustees still present were Maureen Roach, Diana Reynolds, Stephanie Adkisson, Sarah Gassaway, Brian Warfel, and Toby Twyford. A quorum remained. Also still present were Mayor Mike James, Clerk Rachel Eagles, Treasurer Julie Bakewell, and Village Attorney Dawn Wall
19. A Motion to Adjourn at 9:48 p.m. was made by Warfel and seconded by Adkisson. Approved 6-0

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Eagles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rachel Eagles, Village of Downs Clerk