



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

Village of Downs Board of Trustees Regular Meeting

November 13, 2025, 7 p.m. @ Village Hall & via TEAMS

1. Mayor Mike James called the November 13, 2025, meeting to order at 7:13 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. A Motion to Approve the Agenda and Order was made by Gassaway and seconded by Adkisson. Approved 6-0
5. Presentations
 1. Sumeet was supposed to present regarding the proposed solar agreement from Solar on Earth, but assuming maybe she is having difficulties entering the TEAMS meeting as well, so she did not present.
6. Zoning Board of Appeals (O 24, R 46)
 1. A motion to approve Ordinance 2025-24 Approving the Rezoning of Parcel No.(s) 29-05-325-001, Outlot A of the Burr Oaks Lake Subdivision from R-1 - Low Density Residential to A - Agriculture was made by Adkisson and seconded by Gassaway. Approved 5-1 (Twyford - NO).
 - a. Gassaway asked what the purpose of going for R-1 to Agriculture. Soper was in attendance and spoke to the reason for changing it which is making it congruent with the parcel next to it.
 - b. There was a question about Burr Oaks West subdivision.
 2. A motion to approve Ordinance 2025-25 Annexing the Territory Set Forth in the Annexation Agreement Executed Between the Vestco Ventures LLC and the Village of Downs was made by Roach and seconded by Gassaway. Approved 5-1 (Reynolds - NO).
 3. A motion to approve Resolution 2025-R46 Authorizing and Approving Annexation Agreement with Vestco Ventures LLC and the Village of Downs was made by Warfel and seconded by Roach. Approved 4-2 (Reynolds - NO; Twyford - NO).
 4. A motion to approve Ordinance 2025-26 Approving Zoning Map Amendment on Parcel #22-30-426-015 from A - Agriculture to R-1 - Low Density Residential with Variance was made by Adkisson and seconded by Warfel. Approved 4-2 (Reynolds - NO; Twyford - NO).
 5. A motion to approve Ordinance 2025-27 Approving Zoning Map Amendment on Parcel #22-30-426-014 from A - Agriculture to R-1 - Low Density Residential was made by Gassaway and seconded by Adkisson. Approved 5-1 (Reynolds-NO).
7. Events – presented by Mayor James
 1. The Haunted House season has concluded. 5,145 people attended. Record number for the year with extra two nights added. Very successful year with very few issues. Great season.
 2. Decorating in the park
 3. Dec 6/7 – Cookies with Santa – same 3 sessions as previously. Same ticket sign up program as was used for the haunted house.
8. Engineer & Development Report
 1. Downs Water Plant Improvements – presented by Greg Crowe
 - a. Working on final punch list items
 - b. How to keep water from pooling in the plant

- c. Leander is working with Mayor to get things finalized.
- 2. Downtown Streetscape and Parking Lots Project – presented by Greg Crowe
 - a. Getting very close to completion. Knapp has finished their work. A few remaining items, one of which is a streetlight that needs to be installed by Weber Electric after Ameren removes their pole. Pedestrian railings by ramps still need installed after the seating wall cap is installed. \$12,417.17 for the seating wall cap including materials and installation (2-4 weeks estimate). Plumb crazy will be providing a formal estimate to the board.
 - b. Gassaway had a question why the pole was not removed by Ameren yet? Mayor said he asked them for an update, Warfel has also called Ameren twice, and no response from Ameren to either of them. Greg will call his rep at Ameren again tomorrow to follow up.
 - c. Greg asked what the board will want to do with the remaining funds. We should come in about 40 grand under the contracted amount. We will spend all of the HUD funds, but some of the MCHD funds will remain.
 - d. There was conversation about street furniture for the streetscape project.
 - e. Adkisson asked where the accessory poles are for the lights so she can put up Christmas lights. Greg responded--Weber will need to install them. Adkisson also asked for banner measurements so she can order new flags.
 - f. Reynolds mentioned the new handicap sign installed on the street parking is near where the person parking opens the passenger side door and the door is hitting the post. Question about the fire hydrant that is completely covered by the brick wall. The answer was that fire hydrant is not usable and has been out of service for some time.
- 3. Downs Crossing Water-main Extension – presented by Matt Tosh
 - a. The phase 1 watermain contractor made some progress. The electrical bucket was installed and they have power now. They did a start-up of the booster pump station and the pressure-reducing stations. They were able to run pumps. Working out some glitches of communication within the system for it to run properly. The contractor is using the new pump station to get water for water samples. Water sampling will start next week.
 - b. Water tank update—contractor went out on November 1 and did some site grading. Waiting for fence materials. Hoping to have the fence installed before Thanksgiving. As soon as that is complete, rock will be completed as well.
- 4. S. Lincoln and Colleen Lane Road Project – presented by Mayor James
 - a. Mayor reported that they have completed concrete road all the way from the far east corner all the way up to the south part of S. Lincoln. They will continue north as weather allows. Great progress that will continue.
- 5. Other Engineering or Development Updates – presented by Greg Crowe
 - a. Sidewalk on west main street has been completed, and they will submit that on our behalf for the grant.
 - b. Safe Routes grant application was submitted. Hoping for good news as we submitted a much stronger application this time.
 - c. Mayor requested that Greg send a full copy of the grant that was submitted and Greg said he will get that to the mayor.
- 9. Mayoral Report – presented by Mayor James
 - 1. Mayor noted a 2024 scrivener's file error for Ordinance 2024-18 that was used twice in November and then again in December. The ordinance in December will be changed to 2024-17 since that number was skipped. where a number was used twice mistakenly
 - 2. Stump removal project resulted in additional costs related to Oak Bros' work as shown in the amended agreement below. The Board needs to approve the amount that exceeded the original \$10,000 approval by \$1,350.

3. Parcel approval in consent agenda for a property that is out of the village, but within 1.5 miles of village. We can approve and then it will go to the county.
4. Morton Buildings—Mayor started a process over a year ago with Morton Buildings looking at possibly building a new village hall near the police building. They would build it and we would lease it from them for a period of time. Then we could rent out the current village hall for a business.
5. Some liquor commission approvals are below. Paul Blackwell retired from the liquor commission. New members are listed below. Need to add a club class and also special event liquor licenses. These changes would go into a new ordinance. Changes in Freedom station new owners and possible changes to their liquor license with new owner. There was some discussion about opening up the special permit liquor license for events to vendors in McLean County, not just Downs businesses, as the needs for the beer garden at the 4th of July event have increased.
6. FOIA—expenses. We will start charging for certain FOIA requests that are time-consuming for our staff and our attorney. The law allows for this and Mayor asks the board to consider this practice for FOIA's that are time consuming.
7. Water fee increases – finance committee is having discussions; the final fee increase has not been implemented even though the plant is up and running which costs the Village more each month.
8. BNWRD—annexation letters are going out now. On all of our water bills, there is a fee for pre-annexation fee we have to collect because we are not contiguous with BNWRD, now we are contiguous with BNWRD, so everyone has to sign paperwork of what was agreed up on in 2011, which stated if we ever became contiguous with BNWRD, we would have to have each home owner sign the annexation paperwork. There is a fee if they do not sign the paperwork. The fees are waived for the Downs homeowners if they sign the paperwork now.

10. Trustee Reports

1. Building Report – presented by Diana Reynolds
 - a. Reynolds reported that she had 4 FOIA's this month, Solar Field Permit was issued, insurance renewal was completed (increase in premium due to adding new water plant, new water tower, pumping station) and that will be submitted, GFL reached out and she has put info on the website and Facebook for people to get free trash or recycling receptacles. She has paperwork for cyber liability insurance that she wants the mayor to look at from Van Gundy. Mayor requested she send it to him and Attorney Wall as well.
2. Water and Sewer Report – presented by Twyford
 - a. Nothing to report this month.
3. Police Report – presented by Roach and Chief Dingler
 - a. Ordinance revision for Chapter 16
 - b. Chief Dingler Reported on activity for the Police Department including traffic stops and more serious calls as well.
 - c. Haunted House went without issue. First time in Chief's 11 years where there were zero issues.
 - d. Chief added comment thanking Adkisson for getting things lined up for better bar service at the 4th of July event
 - e. FOIA requests have been difficult and very time consuming
 - f. Needing to hire a new officer for the police department
4. Streets Reports – reported by Warfel
 - a. Lost a public works employee, so needing to hire more help
 - b. Putting in a new gutter drain off of Main Street
 - c. Finishing up a few other projects before the end of the year
 - d. Snow removal prep is in progress

5. Parks, Community Center and Food Pantry Report – presented by Adkisson
 - a. Food Pantry – churches around town and donation from CIA—the food pantry was able to get 72 thanksgiving dinners to distribute in addition to our regular distribution. Asking donors to donate extra for Christmas time needs of the food pantry. Gift card donations to the food pantry are appreciated as well.
 - b. Christmas decorating is in full force. She had advertised for volunteers and so far has had zero volunteers. Adkisson is frustrated as she needs help. Saturday (November 15) from 9 am to 1 pm there will be a decorating party in the park to get the Christmas decorations up in the park.
 - c. Cookies with Santa decorating will be coming up soon.
 - d. Planning to do a trail of decorated trees. There will be a decorated tree in the gazebo and then other trees that will be decorated that people can walk through. Various local businesses are going to decorate a tree for the tree walk. The lighting of the lights will happen on November 29 at 6 pm. Asking for village involvement on the Village of Downs tree in the gazebo.
6. Finance and Services Report – presented by Gassaway and Treasurer Bakewell
 - a. Gassaway reported that October was a busy month with financial items pertaining to the Haunted House.
 - b. Finance committee met and discussed various items, but nothing for the board yet.
 - c. Janice Cuba has been helping the finance team to get information as they evaluate the new water rates.
 - d. Bakewell went over the bills to pay report which is on the Board Share Point drive and paper copies were also provided to each trustee. Bakewell discussed unique items.
 - e. Bakewell also discussed the balance sheet and the Profit and Loss Budget vs. Actual. She mentioned upcoming levy that will be discussed and passed in December.
 - f. On December 2, there is a group (Mayor, Janice Cuba, Michele Tocco, and Treasurer) that will be looking at the Locus software package as a potential for the village to look at for billing, finance, permitting, etc.
 - g. Cara Russow will be attending the Illinois Municipal League's Treasurers Institute this year.
 - h. Discussion is ongoing regarding health insurance benefits for FT staff and the renewal costs that are upcoming.
 - i. Treasurer will talk to Janice Cuba about the option of accepting credit cards for bill payments to the Village.
 - j. Opening a new bank account so the new water debt service can sit in its own account. This will make it easier to see how much money we have saved or put aside that will be used solely for water debt service. This is on the consent agenda below.
11. Discussion (none this meeting)
 1. Other
12. Public Comment
 1. Kailey Gassaway – came to ask if the Village wants to renew their yearbook ad with Tri Valley. She wanted to approach us early so that the ad can be worked out early and avoid frustrations from past years. Pricing should be the same if the Village wants the exact same ad the Village has had for the last two years. There are only 3 people on the yearbook staff, but her and her advisor have talked and there are some changes in the works that will make things easier for the Village in the future. She will leave her and her advisor's emails if we have questions or concerns.
 - a. Mayor mentioned how last year we ended up with the same ad as the previous year, and if we place an ad this year, we will want a new ad design. Mayor asked Kailey to start a draft for our ad and then trustees can give input for changes before finalizing.

13. A Motion to Approve Items Contained within the Consent Agenda was made by Gassaway and seconded by Roach. Approved 6-0
14. A Motion to Approve Consent Agenda was made by Roach and seconded by Gassaway. Approved 6-0
 1. Motions
 - a. Motion to Approve the August 14, 2025, Amended Meeting Minutes
 - b. Motion to Approve the October 9 and 23, 2025 Village Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes
 - c. Motion to Approve the October 9 and 23, 2025 Village Board of Trustees Executive Meeting Minutes
 - d. Motion to Approve Setback Variance for 19356 E 850 North Road, Bloomington, PIN 22-32-176-004, Within 1.5 Miles of the Village of Downs
 - e. Motion to Approve Opening a Water Fund Money Market Account with Busey Bank for Water Debt Service
 - f. Motion to Approve Members of the Events Committee: Mike James, Stephanie Adkisson, Julie James, Cyndi Miller, Steve Miller, Jill Combs, Erik Rasmussen, Jessica Miskulin
 - g. Motion to Approve New Member of the Parks Committee: Lori Bricker-Roland
 - h. Motion to Approve Members of the Liquor Commission: Vicki Prochnow and Brandon Adkisson
 2. Ordinances
 - a. Ordinance 2025-28 Approving the Final Plat of Burr Oak West Subdivision
 3. Resolutions
 - a. Resolution 2025-R47 Authorizing and Approving Amended Stump and Tree Removal Agreement Between Oak Bros. Tree Care & Removal, LLC and the Village of Downs for a Total Cost Not to Exceed the Sum of \$11,350.00
 - b. Resolution 2025-R48 Authorizing and Approving Amended Agreement Between CWM Company, Inc and the Village of Downs for a Total Cost not to Exceed Nine Thousand Five Hundred Eighty-Two Dollars (\$9,582)
 - c. Resolution 2025-R49 Authorizing and Approving Agreement Between Midwest Electric and Service Inc and the Village of Downs for LED Light Installation
15. New Business
 1. Motions
 2. Ordinances
 - a. A motion to table Ordinance 2025-29 Amending Village of Downs Municipal Code for Ordinance Violations was made by Roach and seconded by Warfel. Motion to table approved 6-0
 - b. A motion to remove this item from the consent agenda and to table Ordinance 2025-__ Amending Chapter 8 – Traffic, Streets, and Parking of the Village of Downs Municipal Code was made by Gassaway and seconded by Roach. Motion to remove from consent agenda and to table was Approved 6-0
 3. Resolutions
 - a. A motion to approve Resolution 2025-R50 Authorizing and Approving General Engineering and Planning Services Agreement Between MSA Professional Services, Inc and the Village of Downs was made by Adkisson and seconded by Warfel. Approved 6-0
 - b. Resolution 2025-R__ Authorizing and Approving Agreement with Engineered Solutions Midwest, Inc. and the Village of Downs for Telemetry Additions to Water Main System (no action this meeting)
16. Old Business
 1. Motion to Continue the Village of Downs Regular Board of Trustees Meeting on _____, @ 7 pm at the Village Hall

2. Resolution 2025-R34 Authorizing and Approving Community Solar Agreement Between Solar on Earth and the Village of Downs (Roach/Gassaway Tabled Roach/Gassaway 6-0) The item was brought back to the table with a motion by Roach and seconded by Gassaway. Discussion ensued, including a review of the 20% dual-billing discount with a ten-year lock. The motion failed 0-6 (all trustees voted NO).
3. A motion to approve Resolution 2025-R43 Authorizing the Village Clerk to Release Specific Executive Session Audio Recordings of the Village of Downs, was brought back to the table by Adkisson and seconded by Gassaway. Discussion noted that the item had previously been tabled because the full Board was not present, and it was now ready for consideration since all members were in attendance. Motion passed 4-2 (Roach – NO; Reynolds – NO; Adkisson – YES; Gassaway – YES; Warfel – YES; Twyford – YES), subject to the redaction of private health information mentioned about a specific individual.
 - a. Reynolds made a comment regarding transparency.
4. A motion to approve Resolution 2025-R51 Authorizing and Approving Utility Easement with Ameren and the Village of Downs was made by Gassaway and seconded by Adkisson.
Approved 6-0
5. A motion to approve Resolution 2025-R52 Authorizing and Approving Agreement Between Midwest Electric and Service Inc and the Village of Downs for Electrical Service Relocation was made by Roach and seconded by Gassaway. Approved 6-0

17. A Motion to Approve Payment of Bills was made by Roach and seconded by Gassaway. Approved 6-0

18. A Motion to Enter Executive Session at 9:51 p.m. was made by Roach and seconded by Gassaway.
Approved 6-0

1. Developer Agreements
2. Annexation Agreements

19. The board returned to regular session at 10:56 p.m. 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

20. Action on Executive Session Items (no action was taken)

21. Other Business

22. A Motion to Adjourn at 10:56 pm was made by Roach and seconded by Reynolds. Approved 6-0

Respectfully submitted,



Rachel Eagles, Village of Downs Clerk