



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

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

1. Mayor Mike James called the December 11, 2025, meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Roll call was taken. Trustees present were Maureen Roach, Diana Reynolds, Stephanie Adkisson, Brian Warfel, and Toby Twyford. There was a quorum present. Trustee Sarah Gassaway was absent at roll call but arrived at 7:04 p.m. and was present for all votes taken during the meeting. 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 Roach and seconded by Adkisson. Approved 6-0
5. Presentations
 1. Harvest Solar – presented by Dalton Balagna. Solar option for reducing the cost incurred with the new water plant. Showed image of possible placement for solar panels. Dalton mentioned that putting panels on the building would have some limitations with the shadows from the water tower. If panels were installed on the building, it would be about 20% savings on our monthly Ameren bill. If the village installed solar panel arrays on the ground, then we would have 40% savings on our monthly Ameren bill. After 5 or 6 years, the panels would be fully paid off. Or the third option is the solar panels could be put on top of another Village building that has more roof space and would give about a 30% monthly savings on our Ameren bill. As an example, he showed what the program would look like financially for the Village. Net system price is \$43,000 after rebates. It would take 5 years to pay off the panels in the model he proposed. The IL Climate Bank offers a way to help fund the initial installation cost. Bakewell had questions about impact to insurance, warranty, repairs, or damages from weather to the solar panels. Dalton responded that they are weather and hail rated. The panels have a 25-30 year production and manufacturing warranty. Inverters can fail, but that is factored into the 30-year pro forma. Bakewell asked how long Harvest Solar has been in business, and Dalton answered that Harvest Solar has been in business since 2010. They mostly focus on farms, corporations, and municipalities. Bakewell had a question about Harvest Solar filling out the Form 990 information for the solar panels if we go this route and he said they can help fill out the tax forms and IL paperwork as well. Reynolds asked what happens when the life of the solar panel is done, he said the Village would have to recycle or dispose of them at that point. Mayor James asked what the disposal cost would be, and Dalton said he will get back to us on that. Dalton also noted there is a Mid-July cutoff for some of the current government incentives.
 2. Morton Buildings -- presented by Scott Prior and Rex Urban. They shared a preliminary concept for a possible new Village Hall. Lease with option to purchase. When the lease is paid out, the Village would have complete ownership of the building. The building

would have to be paid out of the operating budget. You can purchase the building early if you wish. Because the Village owns the land it would be built on, we would do a base lease so they can build a building on our property. It would be located by the police department. The payments happen once a year for the building lease. \$5,000 required to start step 1. The lease agreement could be 10-15 years long. The Board approved the mayor to continue working on the new Village Hall building project and asked Attorney Wall to draft a consent resolution to approve the funding needed to proceed with step 1.

6. Zoning Board of Appeals

1. 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 Adkisson and seconded by Warfel. Approved 6-0
2. A motion to approve Resolution 2025-R46 Authorizing and Approving Annexation Agreement with Vestco Ventures LLC and the Village of Downs was made by Twyford and seconded by Roach. Approved 7-0 (Mayor also voted yes, as he votes on all annexations)
3. 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 Warfel and seconded by Adkisson. Approved 6-0
4. 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 Reynolds and approved by Warfel. Approved 6-0
5. A motion to approve Ordinance 2025-33 Approving Zoning Variance on Parcel #29-04-400-040 Tract 3 Reducing Rear Setback from 40' to 25' was made by Adkisson and seconded by Reynolds. Approved 6-0

7. Events – Presented by Mayor James

1. Cookies with Santa was last weekend. There were approximately 300 children in attendance. Slightly lower than previous years. But it was a very successful event and Mayor James expressed appreciation for all the work by Stephanie Adkisson, Jessica Miskulin, and their team that made this such a successful event.
2. 4th of July – this summer is the 250th celebration of the 4th of July for America. Mayor is soliciting for contractor to do the fireworks.

8. Engineer & Development Report – presented by Mike Buzicky

1. Downs Water Plant Improvements
 - a. Great water coming out and water softening is getting fine-tuned. Mayor reminded everyone that in-home water softeners need to be turned off or the water will be over softened and can be corrosive and possibly harm plumbing. Gassaway asked about output of the water plant and considerations for the Village going forward as growth continues in the community. Punchlist items are getting completed. Leander completed theirs, waiting on the plumbers to finish their punch list items.
2. Downtown Streetscape and Parking Lots Project
 - a. Coming to an end. Knapp has completed all of their work. A few remaining items, including one streetlight that is still being installed. The railings and handrails will be installed after the seating wall cap in done (waiting on weather for the wall cap). The other streetlights have been installed. Ideally 2-3 weeks to complete these items.

- b. Mike Buzicky explained the funds used versus funds remaining. The details are listed on the board documents on the MSA report.
 - c. Mayor mentioned that the village is planning for - 4 trash cans, 2 benches, 2 picnic tables, and pergolas would go above the picnic tables, these are some of the proposed items to finish out the streetscape project.
 - 1. Reynolds mentioned a possible 2-foot discrepancy with their property and mayor answered that our engineers did surveys of the entire downtown area prior to the project starting. Mike Buzicky also spoke about the surveys that were done prior to the streetscape project starting.
 - d. Main street sidewalk is done and was part of the project as well.
 - 3. Downs Crossing Water-main Extension – written report from Brown and Roberts
 - a. There is a change order on the agenda for cell telemetry vs radio telemetry.
 - b. Leaks in the line were found, repaired, and met the IEPA requirements.
 - c. Bacterial testing was conducted and passed. IEPA operating permit approval was issued for 12/5/2025.
 - d. Elevated tower – still need to do water sampling for the tower.
 - 4. S. Lincoln and Colleen Lane Road Project
 - a. Mayor reported that the road construction has halted due to weather issues and might not be able to make more progress until next spring.
 - 5. Other Engineering or Development Updates (none at this meeting)
9. Mayoral Report – presented by Mayor James
 - 1. He has on the agenda to approve Mayor to attend an upcoming Annual Rural Community and Economic Development Conference.
 - 2. Freedom Oil gas station has been sold to a new entity. Working on liquor license and gaming license for the new owner, but those need to be suspended until those are in place.
 - 3. Mayor explained some of the plat items below in the consent agenda.
10. Trustee Reports
 - 1. Building Report – reported by Reynolds.
 - a. Sent cyber security email to Attorney Wall, but that will be reviewed at the next board meeting
 - b. 1 permit, 2 FOIA's, update on 188 trash 153 recycle bins have been ordered which will be delivered next week to resident's weather permitting.
 - 2. Water and Sewer Report – reported by Twyford – nothing to report this meeting
 - 3. Police Report – reported by Roach and Chief Dingler
 - a. Conducted interviews for a new part-time police officer – Note: Officer Thornton has decided to stay on with the Village, and we are so grateful to have him continue. Ricardo Hernandez will be hired as a PT police officer to help grow our PD department and coverage. Hernandez will have to go through background checks, but he interviewed really well and is a very strong candidate. Waiting for background checks but they should be able to start once that clears. They had other strong candidates that were very articulate and were great options as well.
 - b. Roach showed an example of the new Village golf cart permit cling that would cost \$6, so increasing the cost of the permit from \$50 to \$60.

- c. Chief reported about their calls for the month, including some burglaries and car break-ins, 24 tickets were issued last month, also working on end of the year reports.
 4. Streets Reports – reported by Warfel
 - a. Warfel commended the Public Works crew for all of the snow removal.
 5. Parks, Community Center and Food Pantry Report – reported by Adkisson.
 - a. Food pantry- Adkisson encouraged extra donations and is asking for special items in addition to everyday items, like cereal, etc. Shout out to Bill Clark who is at the food pantry every day organizing and working.
 - b. Park lights all were put up – more than previous years. Needs help cleaning out the storage trailer.
 6. Finance and Services Report – presented by Gassaway and Treasurer Bakewell
 - a. Finance committee met to discuss water increase rates and tax levy.
 - b. Bakewell went over the finance packet that was distributed to each trustee. She explained a few specific items on the bills to pay report, including TIF 3 payments.
 - c. Balance Sheet – Bakewell explained money held in our bank accounts.
 - d. Summarized budget is in the packet as well as a tax levy sheet that Bakewell went over.
 - e. Water rate increases were discussed and proposed. As examples: 2000-gallon users would see a \$28.50 monthly increase and 3000-gallon users would see a \$34.50 monthly increase for another bucket of users.
11. Discussion (none this meeting)
 1. Other
12. Public Comment (none this meeting)
13. A Motion to Approve Items Contained within the Consent Agenda was made by Warfel and seconded by Gassaway. Approved 6-0
14. A Motion to Approve Consent Agenda was made by Gassaway and seconded by Adkisson. Approved 6-0
 1. Motions
 - a. Motion to Approve the November 13, 2025 Village Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes
 - b. Motion to Approve the November 13, 2025 Village Board of Trustees Executive Meeting Minutes
 - c. Motion to Approve Renewal of PACE Guard Dog Program for the Village of Downs Water Testing not to Exceed \$400
 - d. Motion to Approve Mayor Attendance to the Annual Rural Community and Economic Development Conference
 - e. Motion to Approve Amendments to the Village of Downs Fee Schedule
 - f. Motion to Hire Ricardo Hernandez as a Part-Time Police Officer for the Village of Downs at \$30 per hour Starting Feb 1, 2025, subject to background checks, Reporting to the Chief of Police
 2. Ordinances
 - a. Ordinance 2025-30 Approving the Levy and Assessment of Taxes for the Corporate Purposes of the Village of Downs, McLean County, Illinois for the Fiscal Year of May 1, 2026 Through April 30, 2027

- b. Ordinance 2025-31 Amending Chapter 12 – Water of the Village of Downs Municipal Code
 - c. Ordinance 2025-32 Amending Water Service Rates for OMR, Debit Service, and Capital Cost in the Village of Downs
 - d. Ordinance 2025-34 Approving the Revised Final Plat of Burr Oak Lake Subdivision
 - e. Ordinance 2025-35 Approving the Final Plat of Myszka Subdivision Within 1.5 Miles of the Village of Downs
 - f. Ordinance 2025-36 Amending Chapter 8 – Traffic, Streets, and Parking of the Village of Downs Municipal Code
3. Resolutions
 - a. Resolution 2025-R53 Authorizing and Approving Renewal of the Village of Downs Liability Insurance with ICRMT as of December 1, 2025
 - b. Resolution 2025-R54 Authorizing and Approving Agreement Between KCN Solutions INC and the Village of Downs for Bulk Softener Salt
 - c. Resolution 2025-R55 Authorizing and Approving Agreement with Engineered Solutions Midwest, Inc. and the Village of Downs for Telemetry Additions to Water Main System
 - d. Resolution 2025-R56 Authorizing and Approving Agreement Between Plumb Crazy Plumbing Heating & Air and the Village of Downs for Seating Wall Limestone Cap Installation
15. New Business
1. Motions
 - a. A Motion to Proceed with the Proposed Streetscape Project Trash Cans, Tables, Benches, and Pergola was made by Roach and seconded by Gassaway. Vote: Reynolds—No; All others—Yes. Approved 5–1
 2. Ordinances
 3. Resolutions
16. Old Business (none this meeting)
1. Motion to Continue the Village of Downs Regular Board of Trustees Meeting on _____, @ 7 pm at the Village Hall
17. A Motion to Approve Payment of Bills was made by Roach and seconded by Gassaway. Approved 6-0
18. Executive Session (no Executive Session this month)
19. Action on Executive Session Items (no Executive Session this month)
20. Other Business (none)
21. A Motion to Adjourn at 9:05 p.m. was made by Warfel and seconded by Adkisson. A quorum remained. Approved 6-0

Respectfully submitted,



Rachel Eagles, Village of Downs Clerk