



Village of Downs

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Village President, Village Board and Clerk

Village President	Public Safety / President Pro Tem	Public Works	Building/ FOIA Officer	Streets	Finance	Parks/Youth Center/Food Pantry	Clerk
Open	Maureen Roach	Toby Twyford	Diana Reynolds	Brian Warfel	Sarah Gassaway	Stephanie Adkisson	Rachel Eagles

Board of Trustees Executive Session

July 10, 2025

Personnel

- Interim Mayor Maureen Roach called the Executive Session Board of Trustees meeting to order on July 10, 2025, at 6:04 p.m.
- Roll call was taken. Trustees present were Maureen Roach, Diana Reynolds, Stephanie Adkisson, Sarah Gassaway, Brian Warfel, and Toby Twyford. A quorum was present. Also present were Clerk Rachel Eagles, Treasurer Julie Bakewell, and Village Attorney Dawn Wall.
- The purpose of going into Executive Session was personnel. Three mayoral candidates were interviewed.
- Mayor Candidate Diana Reynolds** — Introduced herself as a lifelong resident with generations of family in Downs. She shared her professional background, starting at Walgreens at age 16, eventually becoming a Special Project Leader opening and closing stores statewide, opening the first one-hour photo lab in town, and later managing multiple stores. She also worked with programs training students from local schools and colleges. After 25 years, she retired to assist her husband in their Downs-based tax business, including undergoing tax training, and she has been working in their business for the past nine years. She is an active volunteer, a founding member of Downs CIA, and has helped with Toys for Tots, crossing guard duties, and other community needs. She confirmed she meets all mayor qualifications and looks forward to working with each trustee to move the Village forward.
 - Trustee Questions to Diana Reynolds
 - Adkisson** asked about desired changes and constituents' expectations. Reynolds said residents feel unheard and she wants to address their concerns directly. On future development, she supports sustainable growth, adequate resources, and resident input. Regarding her work schedule, she plans to hire help for her business to free up her time for mayoral duties. On Village events mentioned in her letter, she noted past but not recent involvement.
 - Gassaway** asked why she is running now, also asking about her prior public experience, and why she ran for trustee instead of mayor previously. Reynolds said she has as much experience as any new mayor would and did not run for Mayor earlier because her father was very ill.
 - Twyford** asked about continuing projects and funding. She will work with Brown and MSA to ensure details are handled and is willing to assist directly with water plant work. On past disagreements about water plant funding, she said the past can't be changed but hopes improved water will satisfy residents.

- d. **Warfel** asked about major projects Diana supported in the last five years. She cited multiple zoning board projects she was in favor of. Regarding the concrete plant, she clarified she opposed its location, not the project itself, due to its impact on her family.
5. **Mayor Candidate Brian Peterson** — Introduced himself as a Beecher Trails resident and spoke about his family. He decided to apply for mayor because the position had been open for a long time. As a local business owner, he believes he brings a useful perspective on community needs. He stated that while the current project across the street is fine, sidewalks near the school should be a higher priority (became emotional while speaking). He also said property taxes are necessary.
 - Trustee Questions to Brian Peterson
 - a. **Adkisson** asked about Peterson’s municipal experience. He has 30+ years in the construction industry but no direct experience with municipalities or mayoral duties. On volunteer involvement, he serves on the Tri-Valley Education Foundation and his wife is active in the PTA. Regarding balancing mayor duties with his business, he said he works from 4 a.m. to 10 p.m. and delegates tasks to his team. On future development, he suggested zoning for larger homes to increase property tax revenue, adding amenities such as an ice cream shop, and addressing community needs as a team. He has lived in the Village about four years.
 - b. **Gassaway** asked why he is running now and did not run earlier. Peterson said someone needed to step up, and while Mike could have had the spot, he is now running again, calling the situation “very high schoolish.” He acknowledged it takes thought and commitment to run. When asked about any property issues in Beecher Trails the board had handled, he noted a neighbor’s driveway tiles have been missing for months and said such issues should be resolved promptly. He suggested driving around to note what needs attention.
 - c. **Warfel** asked why Peterson left the only board meeting he has ever attended early after attending only a small part of it. Peterson said he left after hearing the zoning vote outcome, and because the meeting hall was hot.
 - d. **Twyford** asked about three major projects he is aware of; Peterson mentioned only the water tower.
 - e. **Reynolds** asked his top priority for change. Peterson said one person wanted park updates/changes. While he has heard suggestions from outside sources about what the park used to be, he is not familiar with the financials or limitations.
6. **Mayor Candidate Michael James** — Presented three reasons for running. First, he previously did not run because his wife, Julie, did not want him to continue as mayor; however, with a new clerk in place and seeing how the role has affected Roach, she is now supportive. Second, he wanted to give others the opportunity to run. Third, he felt the other interested candidate was not qualified.
 - Trustee Questions to Michael James
 - a. **Adkisson** asked about his goals for the Village and unfinished work. James said he wants to complete current projects, which will require additional state and federal funding. He plans to reduce Village debt, work on TIF extensions, and increase sales tax revenue by attracting businesses such as Dollar General. He emphasized that developing Downs Crossing is essential to paying for the water tower and water main extensions, and that commercial development is critical. He has ongoing discussions with Corn Belt and is focused on bringing in businesses that fit community needs.

- b. **Twyford** asked about his outlook on the three current major projects. James said the Village's poor water quality is well known and was delayed due to funding limitations, but funding became available due to resources MSA helped the Village identify.
 - c. **Warfel** asked about a high-level strategic economic plan. James said he will continue pursuing commercial economic development in a smart, controlled way. He is less focused on residential development, stating however that it also brings necessary property tax revenue.
 - d. **Reynolds** asked why he chose not to run previously despite unfinished projects, and about his current contract with a 30-day clause (Attorney Dawn Wall confirmed it can be voided if he is appointed mayor). She also asked if there is a conflict of interest with his wife serving on the Zoning Board (Attorney Wall confirmed there is none). On zoning, James said both residential and commercial development will be needed in Downs Crossing to make it financially feasible.
7. A motion to exit the Executive Session was made at 6:52 p.m. by Gassaway and seconded by Reynolds.
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