



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

Village of Downs Board of Trustees Regular Meeting August 14, 2025, 7 p.m. @ Village Hall & via Zoom

1. Mayor Mike James called the August 14, 2025, meeting to order at 7:07 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 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
 - Boy scout presentation was added--Jonathan Alarie, representing the Boy Scouts of America, presented a proposal for his Eagle Scout project. He distributed a handout outlining plans to repair the wood ramp on the creek trail in Kickapoo Park and to install a new bench as part of the improvements. In response to a question from Roach regarding materials, Jonathan confirmed that he will be using pressure-treated lumber. He also noted that he has arranged with Lowe's to purchase the materials at cost. Jonathan aims to complete the project by December.
Note: This item will be added to next month's agenda, as it was not listed on this month's agenda.
 - Solar presentation from Solar on Earth—Sumeet presented via Zoom a potential program that would provide solar energy credits on the Village's Ameren electric bills. She explained how the program works through the use of renewable energy credits. Roach inquired about the cost to participate, and Sumeet clarified that there is no direct cost—participants receive at least a 10% discount on their annual Ameren electricity spend. In response to a question from the Treasurer regarding penalties or time commitments, Sumeet stated that there is a one-year commitment, with the discount continuing for up to 15 years. When asked if the solar credits could be adjusted as electricity usage fluctuates, Sumeet confirmed that recalibrations are possible if they are notified of usage changes. *Note: no action was taken on this presentation.*
5. Events – No reports this meeting. Just gearing up for Haunted House season.
6. Engineer & Development Report – presented by Greg Crowe
 - Downs Water Plant Improvements
 - a. August 22—hoping to be fully online
 - b. August 18—training and full inspection
 - c. Water has successfully passed all tests
 - d. Demolition of old water plant equipment will happen in September and October.
 - Downtown Streetscape and Parking Lots design
 - a. Storm sewer work is mostly complete on West Franklin Street and Seminary Street. Curb work on the west side of Seminary Street is scheduled to begin next week, with paving set to commence in the coming weeks. Voucher #5 has been submitted to HUD for reimbursement. The remaining grant balance is slightly over \$1 million, with approximately half of the total grant funds utilized so far. While there have been some change orders, the project team is hopeful that anticipated cost savings will help balance the overall budget and allow full use of the grant funds.

- b. The mayor reported that three quotes were received for the necessary electrical improvements needed:

1. Midwest Electric: \$12,200
2. Heartland Electric: \$15,561
3. Webber Electric: \$29,700

Greg clarified that these electrical improvements must be handled separately from the grant funding. An easement with Ameren will need to be approved to proceed. The electrical work is required due to the removal of overhead utility poles in the alley and on Seminary Street. All affected electrical lines will now be installed underground with new conduits, and reconnected to private buildings, including the installation of new code-compliant meter boxes. After discussion, the Board agreed to proceed with Midwest Electric, pending further conversation regarding project specifications.

- c. The sidewalk plan is being finalized and is expected to be paid with the existing grant funds.
- d. Brian Adkisson asked via a Zoom comment if there would be a cap on top of the planter box in the new Streetscape? The response was yes. Greg provided a brief explanation of the planned transition and design.
- Downs Crossing Watermain Extension – Brown and Roberts were not available to present, so an update is on the SharePoint. Mike read the report. He believes all of the watermain installation is complete. Adkisson mentioned an area of paved road that needs fixed from watermain installation that affected the road negatively.
- S. Lincoln and Colleen Lane Road Project – there have been some constituent questions on this, and Mayor James reported that they are hoping to start in November with the road reconstruction and road work.
- Other Engineering or Development Updates
 - a. Greg reported that MSA is gathering information in preparation for the 2025 Safe Routes to School Grant application. The proposed project involves sidewalk improvements on the north side of Main Street, from Gadwall Lane to Price Street. The application deadline is October 13, 2025.
 - b. The Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) chip seal project is currently out for bid. Bids will be opened on August 25 at 9:00 a.m. The roads included for chip seal repair are:
 1. Main Street (from Seminary to Huff)
 2. Pintail Street (from Main to Gadwall)
 - c. ITEP Grant Consideration--The Village is also revisiting the potential for applying to the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP) grant for future improvements.

7. Mayoral Report was presented by Mayor James

- Complete FOIA and OMA Training – Trustees and Village Officials are reminded to complete the required FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) and OMA (Open Meetings Act) training. Certificates of completion should be submitted to the Village Clerk upon completion.
- James is actively working on TIF extensions with the school and taxing bodies—the purpose is to extend out the timeframe and utilize the dollars for debt service repayment, especially for Downs Crossing.
- Bid estimates were received for LED lighting improvements on all the buildings in town from William Masters and from Midwest. Solicited from Heartland, but did not get a bid, James will circle back to see if they want to submit a bid.
- James is exploring extended warranty options for the Altofer backhoe and gathering additional information on an extended service warranty for the new generator. These items will be brought before the Board for consideration in the near future.

8. Trustee Reports

- Building Report – report was presented by Diana Reynolds. 11 FOIA's this month. 1 permit for occupancy, 1 permit for building, 1 permit for pool, and 2 new building permits for Beecher. Recycle can was replaced by GFL. Building committee meeting met and they presented items in the consent agenda below. Diana explained the items from the building committee.
- Water and Sewer Report –reported by Twyford. He mentioned he is glad that we are nearing the final part of the water plant being fully functional.
- Police Report – reported by Roach and Chief Dingler
 - a. September 5th —mobile clinic will be in Dooley park.
 - b. Seeing a lot of chronic repeat offenders of village ordinance violations. Asking trustees for discussion of what to do with repeat offenders. Discussion was had about various fine structures leading up to possible property liens. Attorney Wall spoke into the legal limitations of municipal citation enforcement.
 - c. Chief reported that the whole county got a new management system, which has created a lot of problems as it was rolled out. The new system is interesting and allows for easier reporting. This past month he dealt with a couple of domestics, drinking issues, criminal trespass of property, and a warrant for an arrest. Also dealing with a new dispatch system.
 - d. Sign will be put up for the police station soon.
 - e. State Farm will be donating new tables for the PD. Also got new garbage cans for the pavilion from them.
 - f. 50% of time was spent on patrol, 25% admin, 25% on building upkeep/maintenance.
 - g. Officer Ty Thornton is returning on 8/25/2025.
- Streets Reports – reported by Warfel. They had to terminate a public works employee a week ago. Two seasonal employees are almost done for the summer with their last day being tomorrow. That leaves two full-time employees going into the fall with our consultant as well. They will need to hire some new people for the streets department.
 - a. Recognition signs for new three Tri-Valley state champions will go up soon.
- Parks, Community Center and Food Pantry Report – reported by Adkisson.
 - a. Adkisson is going tomorrow to look at new recycling and trash bins for the park.
 - b. There are two trees that are fully dead that need to be removed. Getting bids from three companies for removing the dead trees.
 - c. Food pantry is doing well. Need more donations for the food pantry. Will be getting lists of what the current needs are for donations.
- Finance and Services Report – reported by Gassaway and Treasurer Bakewell.
 - a. Gassaway reported that finance committee met, but that they are still in discussions, so no action items at this point.
 - b. Bakewell presented financial packet. She pointed out unique items on the bills to pay report. There were no questions about the bills to pay report.
 - c. State of IL has recovered from their year end closure, so we are once again receiving IEPA grant payments that started coming in last week. With receiving grant payments, we are now paying out bills from those funds.
 - d. Detail from the profit and loss report is available on SharePoint in the board folder for today's date.
 - e. Treasurer reported that the IL Sales Tax allocation program is broken right now. Waiting for the state to fix that so we can see detail for that.
 - f. Working closely with our auditors continues. Currently working on list of ninety items the auditors requested, which Bakewell has responded to about eighty-five of the questions already.

9. Discussion

- Adkisson made a statement regarding a prior interaction and conversation that Diana Reynolds had with Chief Dingler. Conversation ensued, including input from Attorney Wall.

10. Public Comment

- An email was read from constituent Cheryl Bach: “I would like to know exactly what amount of the government grant for Streetscape has been received by the Village-only that amount not any received from McLean Road Dept.”
 - a. Clerk will send MSA report that was presented to trustees at this meeting, with current amounts received, to Cheryl Bach via email.
 - b. Clarification was made by Mayor James that the Village is reimbursed as each bill is submitted as construction stages are completed on the streetscapes project. Our federal grant was approved, and the money that was awarded to us is secure and is guaranteed to us.
- Julie James— question asked via Zoom “why Reynolds addressed Chief instead of Mayor”—the response was that was previously answered earlier in the meeting.

11. A Motion to Approve Items Contained within the Consent Agenda was made by Gassaway and seconded by Roach. Approved 6-0 *Note: request was made by Warfel to vote individually on grocery tax and building permit fee and process, those were removed from consent agenda to new business below.*

12. A Motion to Approve Consent Agenda was made by Gassaway and seconded by Adkisson. Approved 6-0

- Motions
 - a. Motion to Approve the July 10, 2025 Village Board of Trustees Special Meeting Minutes
 - b. Motion to Approve the July 10, 2025 Village Board of Trustees Regular Meeting Minutes
 - c. Motion to Approve the July 10, 2025 Village Board of Trustees Executive Meeting Minutes
 - d. ~~Motion to Approve Changes to the Village of Downs Building Permit Fee Schedule~~ *Moved below to vote on separately.*
 - e. ~~Motion to Approve Changes to the Village of Downs Building Permit Process~~ *Moved below to vote on separately.*
 - f. Motion to Approve Wage Increase for Caleb Smith, Full-Time Public Works Maintenance Worker for the Village of Downs at \$20 per hour Starting August 16, 2025
 - g. Motion to Approve Reappointment of Julie Bakewell as the Treasurer, Budget Officer and TIF Administrator in the Village of Downs at \$47 /hr for Term to Expire August 2026 and effective August 1, 2025
- Ordinances (22)
 - a. ~~Ordinance 2025-22—Implementing a Municipal Grocery Retailers’ Occupation Tax and a Municipal Grocery Service Occupation Tax for the Village of Downs~~ *Moved below to vote on separately.*
- Resolutions (32)
 - a. Resolution 2025-R32 – Ratifying Consent Resolution Authorizing and Approving Agreement Between CWM Company, Inc and the Village of Downs not to Exceed Six Thousand Dollars (\$6,000)
 - b. Resolution 2025-R33 – Authorizing and Approving Grant to Award a Bid for the Village of Downs Motor Fuel Tax Chip Seal Project in an Amount not to Exceed \$40,000.00

13. New Business

- Motions
 - a. A motion to Approve Changes to the Village of Downs Building Permit Fee Schedule was made by Roach and seconded by Reynolds. Approved 6-0
 - b. A motion to Approve Changes to the Village of Downs Building Permit Process was made by Reynolds and seconded by Adkisson. Approved 6-0
- Ordinances
 - a. A motion to approve Ordinance 2025-22 – Implementing a Municipal Grocery Retailers' Occupation Tax and a Municipal Grocery Service Occupation Tax for the Village of Downs was made by Gassaway and seconded by Warfel. Approved 6-0
- Resolutions

14. Old Business (no action was taken in old business)

- Motion to Continue the Village of Downs Regular Board of Trustees Meeting on _____, @ 7 p.m. at the Village Hall

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

16. A Motion to Enter Executive Session for annexation agreements, development agreements, and personnel was made by Gassaway and seconded by Warfel. Approved 6-0 at 10:05 p.m.

- Annexation Agreements
- Development Agreements
- Personnel

17. Action on Executive Session Items – no action was taken from Executive Session

18. Other Business

19. Mayor Mike James called the August 14, 2025, Board of Trustees meeting back to order at 11:21 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 present were Clerk Rachel Eagles, Treasurer Julie Bakewell, and Village Attorney Dawn Wall

20. Motion to Adjourn at 11:22 p.m. was made by Warfel and seconded by Adkisson. Approved 6-0



Rachel Eagles, Village of Downs Clerk