

MINUTES OF MAYOR NELSON AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THE REGULAR MEETING OF
THE VILLAGE OF FLOSSMOOR, ILLINOIS HELD ON MARCH 3, 2025

VILLAGE HALL

MARCH 3, 2025

7:00 PM

Mayor Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Village Clerk LoGalbo took roll.

PRESENT: Mayor Nelson, Trustees Bradley-Scott, Daggett, Driscoll, Lofton, Mitros, Mustafa

ALSO PRESENT: Village Manager Bridget Wachtel; Assistant Village Manager Jonathan Bogue; Finance Director Ann Novoa; Chief of Police Carl Estelle; Fire Chief Bob Kopeck; Director of Public Works John Brunke; Director of Building & Zoning Scott Bugner; Community Engagement Manager Stephanie Wright; Assistant to the Village Manager/ Communications Manager Nicole Castagna; Acting Village Attorney Karl Ottosen; 68 community members, media, and others.

Mayor Nelson reminded everyone that the Village Board meeting was being streamed via Zoom for the convenience of those unable to attend the meeting in person but noted that only the Zoom audio was working at that time. Mayor Nelson requested that commentors abide by the Village's public comment policy, which includes, but is not limited to, stating their name and address after they approach the podium, acting with decorum, and addressing the comments to the public body as a whole and not a single member of staff. Mayor Nelson asked that speakers limit their comments to five minutes or less per person for a maximum of thirty minutes of public comment time.

Citizens Present Wishing to Address the Board:

Citizens Present Wishing to Address the Board on an Agenda Item & Non-Agenda Item

(It should be noted that in reporting these comments, the Village has not researched the accuracy of any comments.):

Flossmoor resident Kevin Dorsey's comments, in summary, were regarding him being a twenty year resident, his opposition to the termination process of former Police Chief Jones, how he looks forward to having a good relationship with Police Chief Estelle, supported him, and encouraged the community to support the new Police Chief as well.

Flossmoor resident Andrea Perry's comments, in summary, were regarding her opinion that there was a disconnect between the Village administration and the Flossmoor community, an HF Chronicle article regarding Chief Jones in March 2024, statements made by Assistant Village Manager Bogue and Mayor Nelson, Reverend Emory and former Police Chief Jones' interactions with Mayor Nelson, and Perry's expectations for Village Staff, the Village Board and the Mayor.

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Recognitions and Appointments:

Mayor Nelson referred to Agenda Item #1 – Appointment of New Member to the Art Commission. Mayor Nelson called for a motion to Approve the Appointment of Leona Calvin to the Art Commission. Trustee Lofton so moved, seconded by Trustee Mustafa.

Mayor Nelson explained that Leona Calvin was a thirty-five-year resident of Flossmoor, an educator, and an Advisory Board member of the Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park. She also thanked the other members of the Art Commission who were present at the Village Board meeting.

The Board expressed their support and their gratefulness for Calvin serving on the Art Commission.

Mayor Nelson called for a vote on the motion as presented. Motion passed by a roll call vote.

AYES: Trustees Bradley-Scott, Daggett, Driscoll, Lofton, Mitros, and Mustafa.

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

NAYS: None

Mayor Nelson referred to Agenda Item #2 – Appointment of New Member to the Green Commission. Mayor Nelson called for a motion to Approve the Appointment of Dr. Judy Johnson to the Green Commission. Trustee Mitros so moved, seconded by Trustee Daggett.

Mayor Nelson noted that Dr. Judy Johnson was a retired dentist, a master gardener, and a Board Member of the Thorn Creek Audubon Society. She also thanked the other members of the Green Commission who were present at the Village Board meeting.

The Board expressed their support and their gratefulness for Dr. Johnson serving on the Green Commission.

Mayor Nelson called for a vote on the motion as presented. Motion passed by a roll call vote.

AYES: Trustees Bradley-Scott, Daggett, Driscoll, Lofton, Mitros, and Mustafa.

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

NAYS: None

Mayor Nelson referred to the Consent Agenda (which encompassed Agenda Items 3-6):

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting Held on February 17, 2025
4. Presentation of Bills for Approval and Payment as Approved by the Finance Committee (March 3, 2025)
5. Consideration of a Contract for the Design Engineering for the CBD Sanitary Sewer Relocation Project
6. Consideration of an Ordinance of the Village of Flossmoor, Cook County, Illinois Approving a Special Use for a Swimming Pool at 1401 Brassie Avenue

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Mayor Nelson called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Trustee Mitros so moved, seconded by Trustee Daggett.

Trustee Bradley-Scott requested that item #5 be pulled off of the Consent Agenda.

Mayor Nelson called for a motion to approve items #3, #4, and #6 of the Consent Agenda. Trustee Lofton so moved, seconded by Trustee Daggett.

Mayor Nelson called for a vote on Consent Agenda items #3, #4, and #6. Motion passed by a roll call vote.

AYES: Trustees Bradley-Scott, Daggett, Driscoll, Lofton, Mitros, and Mustafa.

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

NAYS: None

Mayor Nelson referred to Agenda Item #5 – Consideration of a Contract for the Design Engineering for the CBD Sanitary Sewer Relocation Project. Mayor Nelson called for a motion to Approve a Contract for the Design Engineering for the CBD Sanitary Sewer Relocation Project. Trustee Mustafa so moved, seconded by Trustee Bradley-Scott.

Trustee Bradley-Scott inquired about the location of the Sanitary Sewer Relocation Project, whether the Civic Center and/ or the businesses would qualify for TIF funds or any other relief funding for damage caused by previous backups.

Public Works Director Brunke explained that a public sewer runs under the Civic Center. He discussed the associated issues and the plans to relocate it. He also noted the cost savings by having Baxter & Woodman work on the project since they were already doing work on the Central Business District Project. Brunke discussed.

Village Manager Wachtel explained that the TIF district had just been set up and that funds had been allocated towards the proposed townhome development on Flossmoor Road as previously approved by the Village Board. Wachtel also noted that the Village strives to maintain awareness and assist businesses with grants.

Director of Building & Zoning Scott Bugner stated that there was no current damage in the basement of the Civic Center of which he was aware.

Acting Village Attorney Karl Ottosen explained that he did not think that basement remediation would qualify for a TIF expense.

Trustee Daggett noted that he had been in the basement areas of the Civic Center and that some would not be able to be used for anything and most businesses had repaired prior flooding damage, and that perhaps the Village could assist them with obtaining overhead sewers or backup prevention.

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Mayor Nelson noted that she is a member of the Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce, and they work with Flossmoor regarding grant opportunities for small businesses.

Trustee Mitros noted that the Civic Center should have overhead sewers in the basement for tenants and that all residents would like assistance with flooding issues in their homes.

Trustee Mustafa inquired about the budgeted and allocated amounts and the probable cost.

Public Works Director Brunke responded that the money would be carried over to pay for construction costs. Brunke explained the industry term probable cost.

Mayor Nelson called for a vote on the motion as presented. Motion passed by a roll call vote.

AYES: Trustees Bradley-Scott, Daggett, Driscoll, Lofton, Mitros, and Mustafa.

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

NAYS: None

Reports of Committees, Commissions and Boards:

Mayor Nelson noted that there were sixteen new engraved bricks installed in downtown Flossmoor last week, and she thanked residents, especially a large group from Ballantrae, and those that purchased them for the holidays.

Mayor Nelson also noted that the Community Relations Commission was working on planning the New Resident Event that would be taking place in May.

Action Items:

Mayor Nelson referred to Agenda Item #7 – Consideration of a Side Letter of Agreement Between the Village of Flossmoor and the Illinois Fraternal Order of Police Labor Council on Behalf of the Flossmoor Police Officers. Mayor Nelson called for a motion to Approve a Side Letter of Agreement Between the Village of Flossmoor and the Illinois Fraternal Order of Police Labor Council on Behalf of the Flossmoor Police Officers. Trustee Daggett so moved, seconded by Trustee Driscoll.

Police Chief Carl Estelle explained that the signing bonus will allow the Flossmoor Police Department to provide a signing bonus for new and lateral police officers that join the Department, which will make the Department more competitive with other Departments in the South Suburbs and Chicagoland area.

Mayor Nelson noted that neighboring communities are offering signing bonuses, too.

The Board shared their support and inquired about the Village's competitiveness compared with other departments, the range of the bonus, and the timing of the bonus payouts.

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Assistant Manager Bogue explained that the step system in the contract is shorter than other contracts, which also makes the Department competitive.

Chief Estelle provided information regarding the discretion of the bonus payment amounts and how they will be paid out.

Mayor Nelson called for a vote on the motion as presented. Motion passed by a roll call vote.

AYES: Trustees Bradley-Scott, Daggett, Driscoll, Lofton, Mitros, and Mustafa.

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

NAYS: None

Mayor Nelson referred to Agenda Item #8 – Consideration to No Longer Hold Confidential the Executive Session Minutes of April 1, 2024, April 9, 2024, April 15, 2024 and May 6, 2024. Mayor Nelson called for a motion to No Longer Hold Confidential the Executive Session Minutes of April 1, 2024, April 9, 2024, April 15, 2024 and May 6, 2024. Trustee Daggett so moved, seconded by Trustee Lofton.

Mayor Nelson explained that the issue at hand came up at the previous board meeting, and Trustee Daggett suggested the release of the minutes.

Trustee Daggett provided a statement regarding why he thought the minutes at issue should be released. He said that although he was generally not supportive of releasing executive session minutes due to the confidential nature of the items discussed, he thought it was appropriate and in the community's best interest in this instance due to the doubt that had been cast regarding Chief Estelle's hiring process.

The Board shared their support for releasing the minutes of the executive sessions at issue.

Trustee Bradley-Scott inquired about releasing the audio of the executive sessions and stated her desire to have the audio recordings released to the general public via FOIA and/ or on the Village's website.

Acting Village Attorney Karl Ottosen explained his position on whether the executive session minutes could be released and the limited circumstances where others could hear the recordings. Given Village Attorney Orr's reported position on the matter, Ottosen and Orr would discuss the issue and report back to the Board.

Mayor Nelson called for a vote on the motion as presented. Motion passed by a roll call vote.

AYES: Trustees Bradley-Scott, Daggett, Driscoll, Lofton, Mitros, and Mustafa.

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

NAYS: None

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Discussion Items:

Mayor Nelson referred to Agenda Item #9 – Discussion of the Sale of 19725 Governors Highway to On the Fly Hospitality for Flossmoor Smokehouse.

Mayor Nelson explained that in 2021, the Village acquired 19725 Governors Highway through a donation. Flossmoor resident Ayom Siengo and Chef Won Kim, who have been involved with several Flossmoor charitable projects, have partnered to propose Flossmoor Smokehouse.

Siengo provided a PowerPoint presentation and explained their motivation for the project, their professional background including Chef Won Kim's other two restaurants, and their proposal for a high-quality BBQ restaurant with indoor and outdoor space to dine and entertain in a family-friendly environment. Siengo also shared their requests from the Village, including assistance in acquiring available land at 19725 Governors Highway, a reduction or waiver of building and development fees, relief from fees associated with permitting, zoning, and construction inspection fees, property tax stabilization or additional abatement support including Class 8 tax abatement. Siengo also noted that their planned timeline was 12–24 months once they have the property under their control and noted that they have plans for a second location in Flossmoor in a couple of years after the opening of the first location.

Mayor Nelson noted that the Village will provide them with as much support for the project as possible and will be looking for grants to assist them with the project.

The Board was asked by Mayor Nelson whether they would 1) support the conveyance of the land to Siengo and Kim, and 2) a reduction of building and development fees (just pass through fees to Siengo and Kim), and 3) a Class 8 tax abatement with a make-whole agreement.

The entire Board shared their support for Siengo and Kim's three requests, and Mayor Nelson explained that Village Attorney Orr would be directed to draft a redevelopment agreement for the project.

Mayor Nelson referred to Agenda Item #10 – Discussion of the FY 26 Preliminary Budget.

Village Manager Bridget Wachtel provided a presentation on the FY 26 Preliminary Budget, which focused on two of the Village's major funds, the General Fund, and the Water & Sewer Fund. Wachtel explained that the Water & Sewer Fund had been suffering from financial distress over the last several years but that it had been turning around due to system improvements. The Village currently has a 79% bill to purchase ratio but anticipates that the percentage will increase due to additional improvements, most notably the new meters accounting for more low flow usage. Wachtel also highlighted the Village's water supply contract with the Village of Homewood for the next 25 years with a cap of no more than a 3% per year, which is a huge accomplishment for the Village. She also reported an operating surplus for the Water & Sewer Fund.

Wachtel discussed planned projects that would impact the Bond Fund.

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Wachtel explained that the General Fund accounts for the Village's operations, and personnel and fixed costs represent 89% of the Village's budget. She discussed the health of the General Fund and noted that the audited fund balance as of April 2024 was \$8.3 million, which is an increase of \$1.8 million over the last ten years. The Village has two layers of operating reserves – \$3.6 million in accordance with the Village's 33% operating reserve policy and a \$400k working cash fund. The remaining balance of the \$8.3 million is used to support the Village's finance and facilities projects.

The Board discussed the good news regarding the Fund's healthy financial situation and what impacts the Village budgeting for a deficit.

Wachtel discussed the FY 25 projections for the Village's operating position and total fund position, that the Village is projecting to end 2025 with an operating and total fund deficit, and that the Village is projecting less of an operating and total fund deficit than budgeted. She discussed revenues and expenditures and noted that the Village was projected to receive more revenue than budgeted, and on the expenditure side, the Village was projected to be slightly worse than budgeted, including the maintenance needs for the Village's facilities.

Wachtel presented the FY 26 preliminary budget. Wachtel discussed revenues, including projected sales tax of \$173k more than budget and increased income taxes. Since Meijer opened in 2016, sales tax revenue has increased eight times the amount and has sustained operations for the Village. Wachtel also explained how the state income tax or the LGDF fund has been swept by the State, and municipalities are trying to restore the State's obligated 10% local contribution through legislation.

Wachtel explained that the Village uses a save then spend philosophy where the Village tries to pay for capital improvements with cash on hand. Wachtel reviewed the capital projects for both FY 25 and FY 26. Brunke discussed the capital improvement project and plan for the Village to demolish and acquire 1648 Western Ave., which is in a floodplain.

Wachtel discussed some of the updates with the State of Illinois that impact the Village's bottom line, including the grocery tax that will not be collected by the state, police and fire pension tiers for retirees, and LGDF. Wachtel explained that the Village will need to update the 5-year analysis which could impact the Board's decisions with respect to new revenues or adjusting service levels.

Mayor Nelson thanked Wachtel for the presentation and noted the importance of advocacy on behalf of the Village, economic development, pursuing grants, and prudent financial planning by the Village.

Mayor Nelson referred to Agenda Item #11 – A Motion to go into Executive Session to Discuss the Employment of Specific Individuals, Property Acquisition and Litigation.
There was no need to enter into Executive Session.

Trustee Mustafa thanked Public Works for stopping by her house to share information about the boil water notice.

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Trustee Daggett shared about the Police Department's ride along program that residents could look into.

Trustee Driscoll shared information about the upcoming St. Baldrick's fundraiser that he would be participating in.

Trustee Lofton inquired about the property on Flossmoor Road and Kedzie, and Mayor Nelson noted that the property was for sale.

Acting Village Attorney Karl Ottosen noted that he would be working with Flossmoor until May, there would be another Acting Village Attorney at the first meeting in April, and Kathi Orr would be at the second meeting in April.

Village Manager Wachtel thanked the Village's department heads for their work on the preliminary budget and noted that animal and vehicle stickers were on sale in-person and online.

Mayor Nelson noted that a new business opened up in the Shops on Sterling called Pinky's that does waxing and eyelash extensions, and that a balloon business would be opening there soon as well.

Mayor Nelson noted that on March 15, 2025 the Village would have a community parade starting at the Flossmoor Community House at 1:00 pm.

She also encouraged residents to help pick up litter when they went for a walk.

As there were no other items to discuss, Mayor Nelson called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Mitros so moved, seconded by Trustee Bradley-Scott, and passed by a voice vote.

AYES: Trustees Bradley-Scott, Daggett, Driscoll, Lofton, Mitros, and Mustafa.

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

NAYS: None

The Regular Meeting was adjourned at 10:22 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Gina A. LoGalbo

Village Clerk