



## **Town of Cortland**

### **Board of Trustees Town Board Meeting**

Town Hall, 59 S. Somonauk Road Cortland, IL 60112

September 08, 2025

#### **MINUTES**

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#### **CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / ROLL CALL**

Mayor Pietrowski called the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 7:00 p.m. The pledge of Allegiance was recited and roll was called showing as present Trustees Stone, Fioretto, Haier, and Olson. Shown as absent were Trustees Siewierski and Corson. Quorum was present. Also present were Public Works Director Joel Summerhill, Engineer/Zoning Administrator Brandy Williams, Police Chief Lin Dargis, and Attorney Kevin Buick.

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Trustee Haier moved to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Trustee Olson. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion.

#### **PUBLIC WISHING TO SPEAK**

David Pehlke addressed the Board and brought up points regarding the proposed ordinance for allowing chickens. He asked the intent of the solid fence, costs could be prohibitive.

#### **PRESENTATION**

##### **1. OFFICER COMMENDATION PRESENTED BY CHIEF DARGIS**

Chief Dargis called Officer Robert Harris to be presented with an Award of Merit for his extraordinary dedication, tenacity, and impact on one of the most consequential investigations in the department's history. The case, over the course of twenty-four months was instrumental in breaking a child pornography network, including coordinating with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Homeland Security Investigations, and the U.S. Marshals Service to pursue out-of-state warrants, execute tactical arrests, and ensure no stone was left unturned in the pursuit of these predators. Chief Dargis stated "It is with great pride and profound respect that we present Officer Robert Harris with the Town of Cortland Police Department Award of Merit. His service reflects the very best of our mission, our oath, and our shared commitment to protect those who cannot defend themselves". The full award citation is included as an appendix to these minutes.

##### **2. FY2025 Audit Report by Brian LeFevre**

Brian LeFevre of Sikich Certified Public Accountants presented the final FY25 Town of Cortland Audit which he reviewed with the Board. He reported that the Annual Financial Report has a designation of unmodified opinion. An unmodified opinion, also known as a "clean" opinion, is a statement from an auditor that a company's financial statements are accurate and reliable. He stated that the TIF audit carries the same unmodified opinion. The audit went smoothly and documents were presented in a timely manner. He stated that Lauterbach & Amen staff were easy to work with. He stated that the Comptroller's report would be completed within two-weeks.

3. **Cortland Fire Protection District - Chief Trent Moser, Trustee Mark Yaeger Discussion of proposed expansion and intent to pursue an Intergovernmental Agreement for use of TIF funds**

Fire chief Trent Moser addressed the Board stating the Cortland Fire Protection District is in process of developing plans to expand its existing building to the west. They would add to the existing building on a lot that they own. They have no specific plans and no architect at this time. He stated that the Fire Protection District would be coming to the Board in the future for discussion regarding use of TIF dollars to supplement current funds. When asked regarding a separate location due to growth Chief Moser stated a separate location creates a different manpower need as well as equipping the second building. They work well with mutual aid from Sycamore, DeKalb, and Maple Park.

**NEW BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**

4. **Accept FY2025 Audit**

Trustee Stone moved to accept the FY25 Audit as presented, seconded by Trustee Fioretto.

Roll call vote:

Yea: Trustees Stone, Fioretto, Olson, Haier

Nay: None

Absent: Trustees Siewierski and Corson Motion Carried

5. **Consider a motion to approve the proposal of Royer for construction paving at 250 S Halwood St in the amount of \$11,830, funds from budget line 01-6100-811 Capital Outlay, Construction**

Trustee Olson moved at approve the proposal of Royer for construction paving at 250 S Halwood St in the amount of \$11,830, funds from budget line 01-6100-811, Capital Outlay, Construction. The motion was seconded by Trustee Stone.

Roll call vote:

Yea: Trustees Stone, Trustee Fioretto, Trustee Olson, Trustee Haier

Nay: None

Absent: Trustees Siewierski and Corson Motion Carried **C 2025-13**

6. **Consider a motion for approval of the rental agreement from Atlas Bobcat for the rental of a Bobcat L85/L95 loader for winter operations. Rental expense to be paid from 01-6100-245 (Equipment Rental); Rental length will be November 2025 through February 2026.**

Trustee Stone moved to approve a rental agreement with Atlas Bobcat for the rental of a Bobcat L85/L95 loader for winter operations at \$2,800 per month November 1, 2025, through February 28, 2026; monies from line 01-6100-245 Equipment Rental. Trustee Haier seconded the motion.

Roll call vote:

Yea: Trustees Stone, Fioretto, Olson, Haier

Nay: None

Absent: Trustees Siewierski and Corson Motion carried. **C2025-14**

7. **Consider a request to change the current codified hourly rate of mowing private property from \$125 to \$200 per hour, with a minimum of one hour charged. This change would be reflected in Title 1, Chapter 8, Section 4 of the Town Code**

The Board entered into discussion regarding the town's codified rate for mowing private property. Public Works Director Summerhill stated that the current rate of \$125 per hour (minimum of one hour) does not cover town costs to deploy and wages of employees to mow. The trustees agreed that this process should be a deterrent and agreed that the price should be increased. An ordinance amending the Code will be prepared for future action.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**

8. **Discussion of draft ordinance allowing domesticated hens and backyard coops**

Mayor Pietrowski opened the discussion by allowing Mr. Pehlke to express his concerns with the proposed language.

Mr. Pehlke stated that the wording is confusing "confined within a coop or a run", solid fence/privacy fence does not aid in keeping birds in a yard as they can partially fly. His other concern was inspections between 8 am and 8 p.m. He would not be comfortable with an inspection while not on the property.

Zoning Administrator comments:

What department is reviewing the applications, issuing the permits?

Who is confirming zoning and square footage?

Is a separate accessory structure permit required?

A "coop" is not a permitted accessory structure in the Zoning Code.

"Animal houses, for domesticated animals, not to exceed 16 square feet in area and four feet in height" is permitted in rear yards.

Ms. Williams made other comments as well; **BOLD** could be additional language; Section Two

##### **5-1B-1 Definitions**

Domesticated Hen:...does not include the words "**or agricultural**" property as permitted.

##### **5-1B-3 Restrictions**

A. Only lots zoned and used for single-family purposes....**or agriculture?**

D. Coops must be in rear yards and at least thirty (30) feet distant from neighboring dwellings and not less than ten (10) feet from property lines, **and not within any easement**

##### **5-1B-4 Coop and Fence Requirements**

A. A chicken coop up to one hundred and forty-four (144) square feet and an outside run of at least thirty-two (32) square feet is required. Does the outside run require a permit?

C. Hens must be confined within the coop at all times. Should this say enclosure?

Ms. Williams stated if this is to be permitted an amendment to the Zoning Code is required. As it reads currently coops are not listed as a permitted use; Accessory Structures. An amendment of this type requires the Planning Commission to hold a public hearing and provide a recommendation to the Board.

Discussion ensued regarding a building permit fee with the possibility of eliminating Section 6. There is consensus that there would be no free-range chickens and coop and enclosure would be required.

The consensus of the Board was to move forward with the Zoning Code amendment. Draft additional ordinance changes and include zoning language as it may look. The draft will be brought back to a future meeting.

## **COMMENTS**

There were no comments.

## **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS**

Department reports were included in the packet. There were no questions from the Board.

## **MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor Pietrowski reported that the police department is preparing a request for proposals for 50 W Maple Ave. He has heard there has been some interest in the property at 67 S Somonauk Rd for commercial use, there has been no actions to date. A parking ordinance amendment is being planned for a future meeting. The fall parade is Sunday, October 12 with music in the park from 1-4 p.m. after the parade.

The mayor reported a business open house held on Benson Ave this past weekend was well attended.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Fioretto moved to adjourn, seconded by Trustee Olson. Unanimous voice vote carried the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Aldis  
Town Clerk

LIN K. DARGIS  
CHIEF OF POLICE



250 S. Halwood Street  
Cortland, Illinois 60112  
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Email: Cortlandchief@cortlandil.org

September 8, 2025

Mayor  
Members of the Town Board

It is my great honor to recognize Officer Robert Harris with the Award of Merit for his extraordinary dedication, tenacity, and impact on one of the most consequential investigations in this department's history.

In November of 2023, Officer Harris initiated an investigation under Cortland PD Report 2311-0025, a child pornography case that quickly expanded beyond our borders. Over the course of twenty-four months, Officer Harris logged more than twelve hundred hours of meticulous investigative work. His relentless pursuit of justice resulted in:

- The execution of over fifty search warrants
- The identification and arrest of seventeen separate offenders across seven different states
- A total of three hundred and four supplemental case reports compiled and submitted

This case demanded interagency cooperation at the highest levels. Officer Harris coordinated with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Homeland Security Investigations, and the U.S. Marshals Service to pursue out-of-state warrants, execute tactical arrests, and ensure no stone was left unturned in the pursuit of these predators.

The primary offender in this case was ultimately convicted and sentenced to 40 years in state prison, a powerful outcome that reflects the strength and depth of this investigation. Jail sentences for multiple offenders in other states are pending and promise to be lengthy as well.

This investigation did not just clear a case—it dismantled a network.

Officer Harris exemplifies what it means to be a modern-day guardian of justice. His professionalism, perseverance, and unwavering moral compass serve as a blueprint not only for our department but for law enforcement everywhere.

It is with great pride and profound respect that we present Officer Robert Harris with the Town of Cortland Police Department Award of Merit. His service reflects the very best of our mission, our oath, and our shared commitment to protect those who cannot defend themselves.

Congratulations, Officer Harris. You have made this town proud.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Lin Dargis", written over a faint circular stamp.

Chief Lin Dargis  
Town of Cortland Police Department