

September 10, 2026

TO: President Gustafson & Members of the Village Board of Trustees

FROM: Scot Wrighton, Interim Village Administrator

RE: Committee-of-the-Whole Item #2: **Proposed Village Code Revisions, Part 1**

Several sections of the Roscoe Village Code are in need of updating, customizing development rules to fit Roscoe, overall modernizing, and removing provisions dating from when the village was much smaller, had less staff, and when there were political turmoils that may have resulted in new ordinance language only intended to deal with isolated disputes over process and authority. I have discussed some of these issues with Village Board members, and pointed out that revising key sections of the Village Code soon—especially those tied directly to governance—will be important as the Village Board seeks to recruit a permanent village administrator next year. Prospective administrator candidates will want to know if the roles and responsibilities of the village administrator are clear, well-defined, and resemble best practices in other communities operating under the same governmental form as Roscoe. Equally important is clarifying the legislative policy-making functions of the governing body, minimizing special power carve-outs, and describing more completely how village board decision-making works.

Most of the “governance” revisions I would like to recommend are contained in Title II (Administration), Chapters 20 through 27. This memo, the attached document, and this September 15 committee of the whole agenda item deal only with the governance provisions of Chapters 20 through 23. That is why I call it “Proposed Village Code Revisions, Part 1” because Part 2 will address Chapters 24 through 27 at a later date. Part 2 will focus on village taxes, purchasing policies, travel, bidding and investment policies, among other governance subjects. My recommendations for ordinance amendments are detailed in the attached document wherein I have shown recommended ordinance language deletions using ~~green strike-outs~~, and proposed new language using **red bold italic type**. To more fully explain my thinking about the recommended revisions, I have frequently inserted into the text of the attached document blue-coded **COMMENTARY & OPTIONS** narratives. These interpretive notes are in a smaller type font to denote that they are only sidebar explanations, and are not intended to be retained as ordinance language. The attached document is intended as a working draft to be discussed in the Committee-of-the-Whole meeting, whereat the Village Board can hopefully reach agreement about the proposed amendments they can support, and then direct that these changes be included these in a final version to be submitted at a later time for formal action at a Village Board meeting. The changes will be submitted to the village attorney for review only after the Board has discussed them in committee of the whole and provided direction as to the way forward.

Illinois cities and villages all operate under one of three forms of local municipal government—each one outlined in detail in state statutes (in sections known collectively as the Illinois Municipal Code). The three are: commission form, city manager form, and strong mayor form. Municipalities can switch from one form to another only by referendum. However, cities and villages operating under both commission form and the strong mayor form are allowed to delegate far-reaching administrative and operations management to city administrators and village administrators by ordinance; but these delegations of power derive their legal authority from village ordinances, and not a referendum. Hundreds of Illinois municipalities operating under the strong mayor and commission forms have adopted administrator ordinances. The Village of Roscoe is currently a strong mayor form municipality with an administrator ordinance. While the Illinois Municipal Code spells out the authorities, powers and responsibilities of city and village managers, there is no statutory template for administrator ordinances, meaning some administrator ordinances are better than others. In my consulting practice, I recommend that municipalities operating under the strong mayor and commission forms adopt ordinances that track with the model administrator code produced by the National Civic League, and a model administrator ordinance distributed by the Illinois City/County Management Association (ILCMA). I have also examined ordinances from other Illinois villages operating under the exact same form of government as the Village of Roscoe. Best practices embodied in these model administrator ordinances make-up most of the proposed re-write of the village administrator section of the attached recommended updates.

A village administrator ordinance should also serve to separate the service operations, administrative and management responsibilities of the professional staff, from the policy-making, intergovernmental coordination and citizen engagement responsibilities of the village's elected officials, to the extent allowed by the Illinois Municipal Code. Current Roscoe ordinances do not sufficiently clarify this division. Accordingly, the proposed revisions to Title II—Administration—make the following substantive amendments:

1. Language laying out a detailed and proscriptive process for hiring a new administrator have been eliminated
2. Former language repeatedly saying that the administrator will “assist” or “facilitate” or “encourage” with various activities and functions of local government has been replaced with words like “supervise” and “direct” and “perform” and “appoint” and “recommend” which better characterize the role of the administrator for which he/she is fully accountable to the village president and village board.
3. Language clarifying and amplifying the role of the village president in the strong mayor/administrator form is added
4. Proposed revisions state that the administrator is responsible for leading collective bargaining negotiations, determining parameters for new labor contracts from the governing body, and returning tentatively agreed-upon labor contracts to the governing body for approval or rejection, and doing so with *less* participation by representatives of the Village Board
5. While the village president and village board appoints the police chief and other department heads, the ordinance revision clarifies that ALL department heads are supervised, coordinated and managed by the village administrator.

6. The list of administrator duties starts with broad language asserting that he/she shall “enforce all the laws and ordinances of the village.”
7. The current simultaneous appointment of the same person to serve as treasurer and comptroller is altered to separate the positions for the purposes of “separation of duties” compliance; but this revision has been constructed in a such a way that it will not require the hiring of additional staff.
8. A revision has been added to make the village attorney’s attendance at all village board meetings discretionary and optional.

It is requested and recommended that the Village Board review and discuss the proposed ordinance revisions and indicate to staff during the committee of the whole meeting which ones can proceed to final adoption at a future Board meeting.