

VILLAGE OF THORNTON, ILLINOIS

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

February 17, 2026 | 6:00 PM

1. Call to Order

President Reynolds called the Committee Meeting to order for the Village of Thornton, Illinois on **February 17, 2026 at 6:00 PM**.

This meeting was recorded by **Clerk Kitakis** and streamed live on the Village of Thornton Facebook page. President Reynolds asked that all electronic devices be silenced.

2. Roll Call

Present:

President Maxine Reynolds
Trustee Cunningham
Trustee Middlebrooks
Trustee Glaser
Trustee Pratscher
Trustee Pisarzewski
Public Works Superintendent Roberts
Park & Recreation Director Dunlop
Police Chief Wesolowski
Fire Chief Schweitzer

Absent: Trustee Kaye

3. Committee Reports / Department Updates

Building Department Report – Trustee Pisarzewski

Trustee Pisarzewski reported the following for the month of January:

- 11 Building Permits Issued
- Permit Fees Totaled \$980
- Assessed Value of Permits: \$89,310
- 276 Inspections Completed
- 9 Citations Issued

No discussion.

Cash Position Report – Trustee Cunningham

Trustee Cunningham reported the Cash Position for February as of February 13th to be **\$9,830,192,092**.

No discussion.

Community Center / Programming – Trustee Middlebrooks

Trustee Middlebrooks reported:

- Fitness Center is running a special frozen rate through March
- Weekly Senior Car Clubs, AA Meetings, and TOPS Meetings continue
- Indoor Pickleball Court available for residents 18+ to reserve on Tuesdays and Thursdays through April
- Monthly Senior Bingo Luncheon, Free Chair Yoga, and Free Family Movie Night continue
- Upcoming events can be found on Comcast Channel 4, Facebook, and the Village website

No discussion.

Public Works Department- Alternate Trustee Pratscher

J.U.L.I.E Locates: 5

Water Main Breaks: 1

Repaired Hydrant 0

Water Service Line Repair 0

Sewer Complainants: 2

Sanitary Sewer Repairs 0 –

Called out 6 times for snow and ice. –

Holiday decorations taken down.

Daily tasks: Cleaning and maintenance at Village buildings (Village Hall, Fire Department, Police Department, Recreation Department, Public Works, 2 pump stations and lift station). Water system reads and analysis, Ground maintenance as needed.

No discussion.

Police Department Report – Trustee Glaser

Trustee Glaser presented the January report:

- 644 Calls for Service
 - 25 Assists to Other Agencies
 - 57 Assists to Citizens
 - 21 Suspicious Activity Calls
 - 4 Theft/Burglary/Robbery Incidents
 - 511 Citations Issued
-

Fire Department Report – Trustee Pratscher

Fire Chief Schweitzer reported:

- 0 Tickets
 - 110 Emergency Responses
 - 261 Hours Logged
 - Citizen’s Fire Academy to begin the following day
-

Finance Report – Treasurer Jackson

General Fund – January 2026

- Revenues: \$902,149.55
- Expenditures: \$578,546.14
- Excess Revenues Over Expenditures: \$323,603.41

Water Fund – January 2026

- Negative Revenue Flow: \$35,378.06
- Expenditures: \$60,284.51
- Excess Expenditures Over Revenue: \$95,662.54

Proposed Immaterial Variance and Bank Reconciliation Tolerance Policy

Presented by Treasurer Jackson

Treasurer Jackson presented a proposed **Immaterial Variance and Bank Reconciliation Tolerance Policy** for the Finance Department.

Treasurer Jackson explained that during the course of monthly bank reconciliations, minor variances may occasionally arise despite reasonable and thorough investigative efforts. In some instances, the staff time required to resolve very small discrepancies may exceed the financial significance of the variance itself.

Treasurer Jackson noted that the Village currently does not have a formalized policy governing how such immaterial variances should be handled when identified during reconciliation processes. The proposed policy would establish:

- A defined materiality threshold
- Required documentation and investigative standards
- A formal approval process prior to clearing any variances
- Aggregate limits on allowable adjustments
- Monthly reporting requirements
- Safeguards to prevent misuse
- Oversight procedures including review by the Finance Committee

Treasurer Jackson clarified that the intent of the policy is not to permit unexplained adjustments, but rather to create a transparent and documented process that balances fiscal accuracy with responsible use of staff time and administrative resources.

Board discussion included:

- Questions regarding whether adoption of such a policy would permit reconciliations to be considered complete despite minor discrepancies.
- Concerns about prior reconciliation practices and the importance of ensuring accurate financial records.
- Discussion of past reconciliation efforts requiring significant staff time to resolve very small dollar differences.
- Clarification that under the proposed policy, all incoming and outgoing transactions must still match Village records prior to any variance being cleared.
- Explanation that each variance would be documented with the investigative steps taken to locate the discrepancy prior to any adjustment being made.
- Acknowledgment that some discrepancies may originate from prior fiscal periods, including periods impacted by the prior network security incident and documentation loss.

Treasurer Jackson advised that the policy would require that:

- Any reconciliation variance be fully documented.
- Supporting investigative notes be retained.
- A monthly report identifying the variance be submitted.
- Any subsequent discovery resolving the variance be documented and reflected in future reporting.

It was further noted that auditors typically review the presence of documented internal controls and reconciliation procedures rather than isolated minor discrepancies, and that adoption of a formal policy would assist in demonstrating consistent financial practices and reduce the likelihood of audit findings stemming from undocumented reconciliation differences.

Following discussion, consensus of the Board was reached to amend the proposed policy as follows:

- Increase the allowable monthly reconciliation variance from **\$100 to \$200**.
- Increase the annual aggregate allowable variance from **\$500 to \$2,400**.

Board members additionally requested that any monthly reconciliation variance be reflected in Finance reports provided to the full Board to ensure transparency and allow for review of any developing patterns.

Administrator Payne advised that Attorney Toohey will prepare a Resolution incorporating the agreed-upon amendments for consideration at the **March 2, 2026 Board Meeting**.

4. Village Administrator Report – Administrator Payne

Police Budget Line Item Transfer

Request by Police Chief to transfer **\$5,000** from Contractual Services into Vehicle Maintenance.

Purchase – Bait Vehicle Kit

Purchase includes installation, training, and two vehicle tracking units.

Total Cost: **\$12,255**

Funded in part by donated funds in the amount of **\$8,608.98** from the National Insurance Crime Bureau.

Purchase – Two 2026 Ford Explorers

Three proposals were received.

Lowest bidder: **Ziegler Ford**

Total Cost: **\$113,655.26**

Purchase to be funded through Secretary of State Grant funds.

Redevelopment Agreement Amendment – 110 S. Williams Street

Administrator Payne reported:

- Original agreement approved June 2024
- Agreement expired June 2025
- Proposed one-year extension through June 2026
- Contractual consideration listed as \$1
- Original property purchase price: \$5,000

Consensus support noted. No vote taken.

Vacant and Foreclosed Property Registration Ordinance

and HERA Property Registry Agreement

Administrator Payne presented the proposed Ordinance requiring the registration of vacant and foreclosed properties, along with a one-year agreement (with automatic renewals) with HERA Property Registry to administer and maintain the registry program.

Administrator Payne explained that the ordinance would require certain vacant and foreclosed properties to register with the Village. HERA would provide tracking services, ownership identification, compliance

monitoring, and assist with enforcement and collections. The intent of the ordinance is to ensure accountability for property maintenance, particularly in cases of foreclosure where properties may sit vacant and become nuisances.

Mr. Stan Urban of HERA addressed the Board and provided an overview of the program. He explained:

- HERA does not contact occupants of properties in foreclosure.
- Registration fees cannot be passed on to residents under certain state-level interpretations.
- The registry primarily targets financial institutions and mortgage holders responsible for foreclosed properties.
- HERA purchases foreclosure data directly from Cook County and maintains updated tracking.
- The average foreclosure collection rate is approximately 96%.
- HERA provides monthly reporting to the Village and remits collected registration fees (minus HERA's administrative portion).
- The Village would not receive invoices from HERA; instead, the Village receives revenue directly from collected registrations.
- Registration fees are typically paid by banks or their designated property registrars.
- The program is currently used by numerous South Suburban communities and members of SSMMA.
- Communities have reported substantial revenue offsets that assist with public works and nuisance maintenance costs.

Board discussion included:

- Concern regarding situations where a private homeowner passes away and a family member is maintaining the property while preparing it for sale.
- Clarification that the definition of "registrable property" within the ordinance could be amended to exclude homes actively listed for sale or properties being maintained in transition.
- Discussion regarding whether properties listed for sale should be considered vacant.
- Clarification that foreclosure properties and privately owned vacant properties are addressed separately in the ordinance language.
- Discussion regarding discretionary enforcement and the ability of the Village to grant reasonable extensions in hardship situations.
- Discussion of potential exemption scenarios such as snowbirds or temporary vacancy with notice.
- Clarification that a property being properly maintained and in ordinary transitional use may not rise to the level of a nuisance or registrable vacancy depending on ordinance language.

Administrator Payne noted that any requested amendments to the definition section should be provided in advance of the March 2nd meeting so the language may be reviewed prior to adoption.

Registration Fee Discussion

The proposed ordinance included a semi-annual registration fee of \$325 per property.

Board discussion included:

- Consideration of fairness to residents versus financial institutions.
- Comparison of fees in neighboring communities ranging from \$125 to \$575.
- Concern about excessive fees creating hardship for private individuals.
- Acknowledgment that the majority of registrable properties are bank-held foreclosures.

After discussion, consensus of the Board was reached to set the semi-annual registration fee at:

\$350 per property

It was noted that:

- HERA retains \$125 per registration.
- The Village receives the remaining balance.
- Monthly reporting will be provided to the Treasurer.
- Implementation would begin following adoption at the March 2, 2026 Board Meeting.
- Onboarding and departmental training would occur prior to implementation.

Administrator Payne confirmed the ordinance and agreement will be placed on the March 2, 2026 agenda for formal consideration

5. Continued Discussion – Wolcott School Traffic Safety

Administrator Payne continued discussion regarding traffic safety concerns in the residential area surrounding Wolcott School. Administrator Payne noted that at the previous meeting, the majority of the Board was not in favor of the initially proposed one-way street configuration and presented an updated proposal for review.

The revised proposal includes:

- Reversing the existing one-way traffic flow on Hubbard Street.
- Establishing coordinated one-way traffic flow on both Hubbard Street and Wolcott Street directing traffic toward Margaret Street.
- Maintaining Marion Street, Eleanor Street, and Harriet Street as two-way streets to accommodate residential access and garage backing movements.

Public Works Superintendent Roberts explained that the revised configuration would create a controlled “horseshoe-style” traffic flow pattern intended to reduce cut-through traffic from Margaret Street toward the school and park areas. This configuration would allow vehicles dropping off or picking up students to enter the neighborhood via Marion, Eleanor, or Harriet Streets and exit safely toward Margaret Street without creating conflicting traffic patterns.

Board discussion included concerns about:

- Through-traffic utilizing the neighborhood to avoid train delays.
- Vehicles parking improperly during student drop-off and pick-up times, thereby obstructing two-way traffic and creating congestion.
- The safety of children playing in the area and walking to and from school.
- Traffic backups caused by vehicles traveling in opposing directions on narrow residential streets during peak school hours.

It was noted that the proposed changes would prevent vehicles from traveling directly from Margaret Street toward the school area on Hubbard or Wolcott Streets, thereby reducing non-local traffic entering the neighborhood during high-volume times.

Police Chief Wesolowski advised that during school arrival and dismissal times, the Police Department may be able to assign an officer to assist with traffic control at Harriet Street, subject to availability and emergency

response needs. The possibility of assigning a crossing guard at Harriet Street was also discussed as an additional safety measure.

Engineer Kaminsky provided clarification regarding the distinction between speed bumps and speed humps (or tables), noting that speed humps are typically three to four inches in height and approximately twelve to fifteen feet in length, and are more appropriate for residential roadway use.

Engineer Kaminsky estimated the cost of installing speed humps to range from approximately **\$5,000 to \$10,000 per unit**. Additional considerations discussed included:

- Potential interference with snow plowing operations.
- Drainage impacts.
- Appropriate placement to avoid driveways, fire hydrants, and intersections.
- Maintenance requirements and long-term liability concerns.
- Recommendation to limit installations to no more than one per block if pursued.

Engineer Kaminsky recommended implementing traffic-flow adjustments, signage, and enforcement as an initial measure before considering installation of speed humps, in order to evaluate whether operational changes alone sufficiently improve safety conditions.

Board members discussed the possibility of implementing the revised one-way configuration first, monitoring its effectiveness, and pursuing additional traffic calming measures at a later date if necessary.

Direction was given to place the revised traffic-flow proposal on the next Board Meeting agenda for formal consideration.

6. President's Announcements

- Adult Book Club: February 18
- Family Movie Night: February 20
- Adult Paint Night: February 27
- Wolcott School – No School February 26–27
- SSMMA Vendor Fair Social: March 19 (RSVP by March 9)
- Fire Department Blood Pressure Checks Sundays 10 AM – 12 PM
- 2026 Dog Tags Available at Village Hall for \$5

7. Public Comment (Agenda Items Only)

Resident inquired regarding Shredding and E-Cycle Events.

Proposed Dates:

- **April 18, 2026**
- **October 17, 2026 (10:00 AM – 12:00 PM)**

Confirmation pending from Flood Brothers.

8. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn made by **Trustee Pratscher**, seconded by **Trustee Middlebrooks**.

All in favor: **Aye**

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned.