

VILLAGE OF THORNTON

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MAY 4, 2026

President Maxine Reynolds called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m, and stated the meeting was being recorded by Clerk Kitakis and being streamed live on the Village of Thornton Facebook page. Residents were asked to silence electronic devices as a courtesy.

ROLL CALL

Present:

President Maxine Reynolds
Trustee Cunningham
Trustee Middlebrooks
Trustee Kaye
Public Works Superintendent Bryan Roberts
Park and Recreation Director Dunlop
Police Chief Wesolowski
Fire Chief Schweitzer

Also Present:

Attorney Touhy
Administrator Payne
Treasurer Simone Jackson
Clerk Nikki Kitakis

Absent:

Trustee Glaser
Trustee Pratscher
Trustee Pisarzewski

PUBLIC COMMENT

President Reynolds asked if there was any public comment regarding either agenda. No public comment was offered.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Trustee Piszewski

No report.

Trustee Cunningham

No report.

Trustee Middlebrooks

No report.

Trustee Kaye

No report.

Trustee Glaser

No report.

Trustee Pratscher

No report.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Simone Jackson reported that the Village cash position as of April 30, 2026 was \$8,754,546.84, noting that approximately 53% of the funds were related to the SOS Grant Program.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Attorney Touhy presented a proposed ordinance adopting an amended Public Comment Policy. Attorney Touhy explained the amendment stemmed from a request for review filed with the Illinois Attorney General's Public Access Counselor under the Illinois Open Meetings Act relating to the recording of Village meetings.

Attorney Touhy explained that while the Village has consistently permitted recordings of meetings in accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the amendment was being proposed to formally incorporate that language into the Village's written policy to remove any ambiguity.

The amendment clarifies that any member of the public present at a meeting may record the proceedings provided the recording does not disrupt the meeting. Attorney Touhy further explained that the presiding officer retains the authority to establish reasonable rules regarding the placement and use of recording equipment to ensure orderly conduct of meetings.

Discussion occurred regarding the Village's live streaming of meetings through Facebook and whether any additional risks were associated with allowing recordings. Police Chief Wesolowski stated the Village is required by law to allow meetings to be recorded and noted the Village has no discretion to prohibit such recordings under the Open Meetings Act.

The Board discussed that elaborate recording equipment or media setups may still require coordination with the Village to ensure meetings remain orderly and unobstructed.

No further questions were raised.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Payne reviewed several agenda items that would be presented for consideration during the Regular Board Meeting.

Line Item Transfers

Administrator Payne presented the following proposed line item transfers:

- Transfer of \$1,900 from the Fire Department Training Budget to the Fire Department Fuel Budget;
- Transfer of \$2,000 from the Fire Department Membership Budget to the Fire Department Operating Supplies Budget;
- Transfer of \$2,500 from the Fire Department Uniform Budget to the Fire Department Operating Supplies Budget;
- Transfer of \$1,500 from the Building Department Fuel Budget to the Fire Department Fuel Budget.

Administrator Payne explained the Building Department utilizes a fuel credit card billed through the Fire Department and the Fire Department has been covering those fuel expenses throughout the fiscal year.

No questions were raised regarding the transfers.

Purchase of 2026 Ford F-150 for ISATT

Administrator Payne presented proposals received for the purchase of a 2026 Ford F-150 vehicle for ISATT. The Board reviewed three submitted proposals.

Administrator Payne recommended approval of the lowest proposal submitted by Ziegler Ford in the amount of \$63,227.63.

No additional discussion occurred.

Ordinance Amending Municipal Code Regarding Unlawful Assembly and Disorderly Conduct

Administrator Payne presented a proposed ordinance amending the Municipal Code related to unlawful assembly and disorderly conduct. The ordinance was drafted in coordination with Police Chief Wesolowski and Attorney Touhy as a proactive measure addressing “teen takeover” incidents occurring in surrounding communities.

Discussion occurred regarding the proposed threshold of “three or more persons” contained in the ordinance language. Trustees questioned whether the number should be higher.

Police Chief Wesolowski explained the concern arises when gatherings begin escalating beyond manageable levels and stated the ordinance was intended to provide proactive authority before situations become unmanageable.

No further discussion occurred.

Purchase of Emergency Warning Siren

Administrator Payne presented a proposal for the replacement of the Village emergency warning siren located atop the original Fire Department building.

Fire Chief Schweitzer explained the siren was approximately sixty years old and recently failed due to ice-related damage. The equipment is no longer repairable and replacement parts are unavailable.

The proposal submitted by Federal Signal totaled \$33,501.10.

Extensive discussion occurred regarding aging infrastructure throughout the Village, including concerns about future failures and long-term planning for infrastructure replacement.

Trustees discussed the need to budget proactively for aging infrastructure and questioned how future replacement projects would be funded. Treasurer Jackson and Administrator Payne explained that infrastructure replacement projects would generally be funded through the Village Capital Fund and that the Village maintains a capital asset inventory identifying infrastructure age and estimated useful life.

Administrator Payne stated staff would continue reviewing available grants and external funding opportunities to offset future infrastructure costs wherever possible.

Chief Schweitzer further noted that additional warning sirens throughout the Village are also aging and may require replacement in future years.

Trustee Pratscher arrived during discussion of the warning siren item.

Purchase of Village-Wide Network Switches

Administrator Payne presented a proposal for the replacement of Village-wide network switches utilized for the Village computer systems, telephone systems, emergency dispatch systems, and overall network infrastructure.

Administrator Payne explained the current switches are outdated, some having been purchased used or dating back to approximately the year 2000, and are at severe risk of failure.

IT Director Watson addressed the Board and explained the network switches function as the “nervous system” of the Village’s communications infrastructure, controlling data flow for computers, phones, security systems, dispatch communications, pumping stations, and wireless access points.

Discussion occurred regarding the number of switches included in the proposal, with staff indicating approximately sixteen switches would be replaced throughout Village facilities.

IT Director Watson advised the new switches would improve overall network performance and reliability while replacing unsupported and outdated equipment.

He further explained the switches would optimize traffic flow between Village systems.

Discussion also occurred regarding the age of Village servers and future plans to upgrade server infrastructure and potentially transition from GroupWise email systems to Microsoft Office 365.

Trustees also discussed cybersecurity concerns and backup systems following prior technology issues experienced by the Village.

IT Director Watson informed the Board that a new Datto backup system had recently been installed, providing multiple backups per day along with cloud-based encrypted backup storage designed to protect Village data from future cyber incidents.

No further questions were raised.

Illinois America 250 Resolution

Administrator Payne presented a proposed resolution supporting the Illinois America 250 Commission and the nationwide commemoration of the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America occurring on July 4, 2026.

Administrator Payne read the resolution aloud into the record. The resolution recognizes the historical significance of the nation's founding and encourages Illinois communities to participate in educational and commemorative activities leading up to America's 250th anniversary.

No discussion occurred.

Ordinances Regarding Appointment Terms for Health Officer and Fire Chief

Administrator Payne presented two proposed ordinances amending appointment terms for the Village Health Officer and Fire Chief.

Administrator Payne explained the Village Code currently requires annual appointments for those positions each May 1st, unlike other appointed Village positions which continue until a successor is appointed.

The proposed ordinances would eliminate the annual appointment requirement and instead provide that appointments remain effective until successors are appointed.

No questions were raised.

THORNTON TOWNSHIP PRESENTATION

President Reynolds introduced Thornton Township Trustee Valerie, representing Thornton Township Highway Commissioner Antoine Russell.

Trustee Valerie presented funding from the Thornton Township Highway Department to the Village of Thornton derived from Personal Property Replacement Tax (PPRT) distributions.

The Village received an allocation of \$536.71 covering the period from March 2025 through February 2026.

The Township representative emphasized the continued partnership between Thornton Township and local municipalities and thanked the Village for its leadership and service to residents.

President Reynolds thanked Thornton Township for its continued support.

RESOLUTION FOR APPOINTMENT OF HEALTH OFFICER

Discussion occurred regarding the proposed appointment of David DuVall as Health Officer/Inspector for the Village of Thornton.

No concerns or comments were raised.

RESOLUTION FOR REAPPOINTMENT OF FIRE CHIEF

Discussion occurred regarding the proposed reappointment of Arthur Schweitzer as Fire Chief for the Village of Thornton.

No concerns or comments were raised.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Reynolds thanked all personnel involved in the recent hostage rescue incident occurring within the Village.

Police Chief Wesolowski addressed the Board and commended responding officers along with the South Suburban Emergency Response Team for their actions in safely resolving the incident and rescuing the involved children.

Chief Wesolowski stated the South Suburban Emergency Response Team had successfully completed three hostage rescue operations within the previous year and a half and expressed pride in the professionalism and dedication of the team.

President Reynolds noted the Village benefits greatly from Chief Wesolowski's participation with the regional emergency response team and acknowledged the advantage of immediate access to specialized emergency resources.

Tree Grant Acknowledgements

President Reynolds announced the Village recently received additional tree grants through Openlands and ComEd.

Trees were planted at Village Hall, the Community Center, and Merkitt Park during Earth Day weekend.

President Reynolds thanked all volunteers who assisted with the planting efforts, including Shirley from the Recreation Center, members of her family, Fabian Ruiz, and Assistant Director Amy Potwin for organizing the event despite the recent passing of her father.

Residents were informed that a limited number of trees remained available at the Recreation Center free of charge.

Youth Night Acknowledgements

President Reynolds thanked everyone involved in the successful 55th Annual Youth Night event and recognized Treasurer Simone Jackson for hosting the Youth Symposium held at the Recreation Center on April 25, 2026.

Upcoming Events

President Reynolds announced the following upcoming events:

- Coffee with the Mayor – May 9, 2026 from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at Village Hall;
- Senior Bingo and Luncheon – Wednesday, May 13, 2026 at 12:30 p.m. at the Community Center;
- Village-Wide Garage Sale – May 15 through May 17, 2026;
- Flood Brothers “Dump Your Junk Day” – Friday, May 22, 2026;
- Wolcott School Board Meeting and Book Fair activities;

- Memorial Day Parade scheduled for May 25, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.;
- Fall Fest vendor, crafter, and food truck registrations currently being accepted for the October 17, 2026 Fall Fest event.

Clerk Kitakis clarified that no permit is required to participate in the Village-Wide Garage Sale and participation on the Village advertising list is optional.

Discussion also occurred regarding signage regulations. Staff clarified that only Village-issued signs are permitted within parkways and all temporary signs must be removed by sunset on Sunday following the event.

OLD BUSINESS

Administrator Payne updated the Board regarding the underground fuel tank removal project at the former gas station property located on Williams Street.

Administrator Payne explained contractors recently discovered an undocumented underground fuel tank buried beneath asphalt and additional soil during remediation work.

The State Fire Marshal was notified and an additional removal operation was scheduled for the following Wednesday.

Administrator Payne advised the additional work would continue to be covered through grant funding.

President Reynolds expressed appreciation for the grant funding assistance, noting the substantial cost savings provided to the Village.

TREASURER'S COMMENTS

Treasurer Jackson thanked Recreation Director Dunlop, Assistant Director Amy Potwin, and staff for their assistance and professionalism during the recent Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Youth Symposium held at the Recreation Center.

Treasurer Jackson also thanked President Reynolds for attending and welcoming the participating youth.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Trustee Kaye and seconded by Trustee Middlebrooks to adjourn the meeting.

Voice Vote:

Ayes: All

Nays: None

Absent: Trustees Glaser and Pisarzewski

Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:57PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Nikki Kitakis
Village Clerk
Village of Thornton