

VILLAGE OF THORNTON

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 6, 2026

1. Call to Order

The Committee Meeting of the Village of Thornton, Illinois was called to order at 6:01 PM by Mayor Reynolds. The meeting was recorded by Clerk Kitakis and streamed live. Attendees were asked to silence electronic devices.

2. Public Comment

No public comments were made.

3. Committee Reports

Trustee Piszczewski – No report.

Trustee Pratscher – No report

Trustee Cunningham – No report.

Trustee Middlebrooks – No report.

Trustee Kaye – No report.

Trustee Glaser – Absent.

4. Police Department – Line Item Transfer

Trustee Cunningham requested approval of a \$1,000 line item transfer for the Police Department. No discussion occurred at the committee level.

5. Treasurer’s Report – Water Fund (Expanded Discussion)

Treasurer Jackson presented a detailed and extended discussion regarding the condition of the Water Fund. She explained that the fund became negative in January 2025, with December 2024 being the last positive month, and has continued on a steady downward trend with no recovery.

Treasurer Jackson clarified that the Water Fund is an enterprise fund, stating: “It is supposed to be self-sustaining. If you are not charging what it costs to provide the service, you are essentially operating at a loss.”

Treasurer Jackson emphasized that the responsibility for setting rates lies with the

Board, not administration.

Treasurer Jackson explained that water rates must account for the full cost of operations, including:

- Water purchase
- Infrastructure
- Repairs
- Staffing
- Billing and administrative costs

Treasurer Jackson stated:

“It’s not just the water — it’s everything it takes to deliver and maintain that service.”

During discussion, Trustees raised questions regarding past rate increases and supplier contracts. Treasurer Jackson explained that regardless of supplier increases:

“Rates must be adjusted accordingly, or the fund will continue to decline.”

A critical issue was identified:

A 2024 approved rate increase was never implemented, meaning the Village continued charging outdated rates.

Discussion also clarified that capital improvement charges are separate from water usage and are used to repay infrastructure funding.

Trustee Pisarezewski asked how the deficit is currently being covered, Treasurer Jackson stated:

“We are internally borrowing — wherever we have money, that is what is being used.”

Treasurer Jackson further emphasized:

“We are subsidizing the Water Fund.”

Trustee Piszewski asked if the repairs done by Calumet City Plumbing are paid from the Water Fund. Treasurer Jackson confirmed expenses are paid from the water fund.

Treasurer Jackson concluded by stating that the current structure is not sustainable and that a stabilization plan will be required moving forward. She encouraged Trustees to review the data and ask questions before future decisions are made. Treasurer Jackson also stated water rates are set by the board. Not the administration not the treasurer, not public works. The board of trustees determines the water rates.

6. Engineer Report

Engineer Kaminsky reported no items.

7. Attorney Report

Attorney Toohey reported no items.

8. Administrator Report

A. Police Department – Line Item Transfer

Administrator Payne confirmed the request previously introduced by Trustee Cunningham for a \$1,000 line item transfer for the Police Department.

She explained that:

- Funds would be transferred from Contractual Services to the Uniforms line item
- The transfer is necessary to cover departmental needs within the current fiscal year

No additional discussion was held at the committee level. The item will be brought forward for formal consideration at the Regular Board Meeting.

B. Purchasing Policy Amendment – Recurring Fixed Obligations

Administrator Payne then presented a proposed amendment to the Village's Purchasing Policy, explaining that the current policy is creating operational challenges related to recurring monthly expenses.

She specifically referenced the Village's Blue Cross Blue Shield health insurance invoices, noting:

- The monthly invoice is approximately \$70,000
- The invoice is typically received around the 14th of each month
- Payment is due by the 1st of the following month

She explained that:

- Historically, Blue Cross Blue Shield allowed a 30-day grace period
 - Effective April 1, that grace period has been eliminated
 - The Village will now incur a 1% late fee if payment is not made by the due date
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Conflict with Current Policy

Administrator Payne explained that under the Village's current purchasing policy:

- Any expenditure over \$10,000 requires Board approval
- This requirement creates difficulty in processing time-sensitive payments

She provided an example:

- If the invoice is received shortly before a Board meeting
 - There is not sufficient time to include it on the voucher list
 - This creates a risk of late payment penalties, even when funds are available
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Recent Example

Administrator Payne noted that:

- The April Blue Cross Blue Shield invoice had to be approved via email by Board members
 - While effective in that instance, this is not a sustainable or formal process
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Proposed Solution

To address the issue, Administrator Payne proposed adding a new provision to the purchasing policy titled:

“Recurring Fixed Obligations”

This amendment would allow:

- Routine recurring expenses to be paid when due without prior Board approval
 - The Board to be notified after payment is made
 - The expense to be included on the next voucher list for transparency
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Review & Compliance

Administrator Payne confirmed that:

- The amendment was developed in coordination with Attorney Touhy
- The Village’s auditors reviewed and approved the amendment

Administrator Payne emphasized:

“This is not about bypassing Board oversight, but ensuring the Village can meet its obligations in a timely and responsible manner.”

Board Response & Next Steps

There were no objections raised during discussion.

The item will be placed on the agenda for the Regular Board Meeting for formal consideration and approval.

9. Adjournment

A motion was made by Trustee Pratscher and seconded by Trustee Cunningham to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 6:26PM.

Village Clerk Nikki Kitakis