

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE GURNEE VILLAGE BOARD**

**GURNEE VILLAGE HALL
MAY 2, 2022**

Call to Order

Mayor Hood called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Other Officials in Attendance

Patrick Muetz, Village Administrator; Austin Pollack, Assistant to the Village Administrator; Bryan Winter, Village Attorney; David Ziegler, Community Development Director; Heather Galan, Public Works Director/Village Engineer; Brian Gosnell, Finance Director; Christine Palmieri, Director of Human Resources; Ellen Dean, Economic Development Director; Nick Leach, Village Engineer; Molly Jones, Communications Supervisor; Jodi Luka, Management Analyst; John Kavanagh, Fire Chief; David Douglass, Battalion Chief; Brian Smith, Police Chief; Jeremy Gaughan, Police Commander

Roll Call

PRESENT: 6- Garner, O'Brien, Balmes, Thorstenson, Woodside, Ross
ABSENT: 0- None

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Hood led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Hood took a moment to recognize the passing of Grayslake resident and Eagle Scout Gavin Short who tragically lost his life in a car accident in Oklahoma.

**A. APPROVAL OF
CONSENT AGENDA**

It was moved by Trustee Balmes, seconded by Trustee Garner to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Roll call,

AYE: 6- Garner, O'Brien, Balmes, Thorstenson, Woodside, Ross

NAY: 0- None

ABSENT: 0- None

Motion Carried.

**B. CONSENT
AGENDA /
OMNIBUS VOTE**

The Village Administrator read the consent agenda for an omnibus vote as follows:

1. Approval of minutes from the April 18, 2022 meeting.
2. Approval of Ord. 2022 - 23 to delete the position of Vice Chairperson of the Village Board of Trustees.
3. Approval of Ord. 2022 - 24 appointing an Alternate Director for the Solid Waste Agency of Lake County (SWALCO).
4. Approval of Ord. 2022 - 25 authorizing execution of an agreement between the Village of Gurnee and the Aberdare Homeowners Association for upgraded street lights.
5. Approval of Police Department recommendation to renew a radio console service agreement for a period of six months with Motorola Solutions at a cost of \$22,428.00 (previous renewal approved January 10, 2022 - expense eligible for 100% reimbursement from the NLCC-ETSB).
6. Approval of annual performance bonus of 10% for the Village Administrator.
7. Approval of Payroll for period ending April 22, 2022 in the amount of \$915,132.79.
8. Approval of Bills for the period ending May 2, 2022 in the amount of \$636,335.50.

It was moved by Trustee Ross, seconded by Trustee O'Brien to approve the Consent Agenda for an omnibus vote as read.

Roll call,

AYE: 6- Garner, O'Brien, Balmes, Thorstenson, Woodside, Ross
NAY: 0- None
ABSENT: 0- None
Motion Carried.

C. PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

1. Presentation of Gurnee Teacher of the Year awards:
- Ashley Turkington – Warren Township High School District 121
 - Joe Rejczyk – Woodland School District 50
 - Lisa McLeRoy – Gurnee School District 56

Dr. John Ahlgrim, Warren Township High School District 121 Superintendent, introduced and spoke briefly about Ashley Turkington.

Dr. Lori Casey, Woodland School District 50 Associate Superintendent of Education, introduced and spoke briefly about Joe Rejczyk.

Dr. Colleen Pacatte, Gurnee School District 56 Superintendent, introduced and spoke briefly about Lisa McLeRoy.

Mayor Hood and Mr. Don Henderson presented each teacher with a plaque in recognition of their achievements. Mr. Henderson also presented each recipient with a check from the Donald Henderson Foundation.

2. Approval of Proclamation designating May 2022 as “Building Safety Month” in the Village of Gurnee.

Mayor Hood read into record.

It was moved by Trustee Balmes, seconded by Trustee Garner to approve a Proclamation designating May 2022 as “Building Safety Month” in the Village of Gurnee.

Voice Vote: ALL AYE: Motion Carried.

3. Approval of Proclamations designating May 15 - 21, 2022 as “National Police Week” and “National Public Works Week” in the Village of Gurnee.

Mayor Hood read into record.

It was moved by Trustee O'Brien, seconded by Trustee Woodside to approve Proclamations designating May 15 - 21, 2022 as “National Police Week” and “National Public Works Week” in the Village of Gurnee.

Voice Vote: ALL AYE: Motion Carried.

D. REPORTS

1. Presentation by Craig Rapp and Cory Poris Plasch – Gurnee Strategic Plan Stakeholder Engagement Data.

Cory Poris Plasch – Rapp Consulting Group – reviewed stakeholder data collected as part of the Village’s Strategic Plan update. Ms. Plasch started by sharing her background before she reviewed the results from a community survey, internal employee survey and six focus group sessions.

Following a review of specific survey results, Ms. Plasch reviewed major themes which were categorized into 11 broad categories with further detail within each. The 11 categories included:

- Location, Atmosphere and Amenities
 - “Gurnee has it all”- parks, shopping and a great location between Milwaukee and Chicago
 - Particularly advantageous for two-career households
 - Big box stores are plentiful and convenient
 - “Small town mindset” can make it difficult for new people to connect
 - Finding ways for the community to gather is important
 - Festivals or celebrations would be desired ways to come together

- Subdivisions can seem disconnected from the larger community
- Transportation
 - Commuting is easy
 - Overpasses should look more attractive
 - Public transportation is close for both Milwaukee and Chicago
 - Proximity of two major airports (Milwaukee and O'Hare) a big benefit
- Parks, Trails and Green Space
 - Open spaces are important
 - Opportunities to walk and bike are key amenities for many residents
 - Connectivity between trails an issue
 - Safe ways to cross Grand Avenue is a priority for residents, especially those with kids
 - Access to the Des Plaines River Trail
 - Sidewalks are a safety issue in places
- Public Safety
 - Overall seen as doing a good job by participants
 - Communications about recent car break-ins extremely helpful
 - Crime at Gurnee Mills and Six Flags seem isolated and don't impact residents
 - Police are seen as proactive and that prevented looting
 - Police Department efforts to interact with adults and kids appreciated
 - Recent increase in crime generated split responses, with some residents satisfied but others feeling more could be done
 - Staffing is a concern
 - Fire Department
- Public Works
 - Streets in good repair
 - Cul de sacs should be evaluated for resurfacing
 - Snow plowing is generally good, some want curb-to-curb
 - In general- Gurnee does a good job with the "basic stuff" like water, sewer and leaf pickup
 - Stormwater management a concern expressed by several groups
- General Village Feedback
 - Good Park District programming is an advantage for community
 - Communications between taxing bodies provides cohesive approach to serving residents
 - Weekly Village email is an important way to get information
 - Transparency is an important way to build trust and focus on it is important
 - Gathering input from residents was seen as important and the focus groups were appreciated
 - Participants wanted to know how community feedback is used in decision making
 - Utility processes can seem outdated, especially for multi-family housing
 - Being proactive with cybersecurity is important
 - Code enforcement is good
- Cost of Living/Housing
 - Mixed feedback about high density housing - some feel it should not be encouraged - more feel it is a way to make Gurnee affordable for young families
 - Townhouses/Row Houses seen as desirable high-density option
 - Housing prices are lower in Gurnee, but perceived amenities elsewhere can make Gurnee feel like a second choice
 - Hard for older people to downsize into suitable housing

- Schools
 - Upcoming school district referendum fueled a lot of discussion
 - Lack of accountability and transparency mentioned several times as a concern
 - Mixed responses on if schools provided a good education
 - Frustration over the amount of taxes that go to the school district
 - Size of schools is a concern, although efforts make it seem smaller

- Business Environment
 - New residents struggle to find out about business offerings in the community
 - Concerns about viability of Gurnee Mills because of contribution to tax base
 - Four of six focus groups discussed needs for improvement to building/zoning processes
 - Gurnee has a reputation as being difficult for contractors
 - Better standardization of permitting needed
 - Getting permits is seen as difficult and zoning laws are overly restrictive
 - Role should be created by Village to help navigate development process
 - New ideas are discouraged
 - More needs to be done to help businesses develop and grow

- Development
 - A community gathering place would be welcomed, a true “downtown” recognized as likely not possible
 - More locally owned options like brewpubs and small restaurants wanted
 - Coopers Hawk is a BIG win
 - No more mattress stores or chicken restaurants
 - Efforts to bring tech businesses appreciated
 - Most focus groups in favor of diversified commercial and industrial opportunities including warehouses, tech or light manufacturing could be a good fit
 - More salaried/corporate jobs needed
 - Planning and Zoning board seen as a “log jam” by some, should be more open to new and innovative ideas

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
 - Diversity, equity and inclusion were woven into many conversations
 - The diversity of Gurnee including race, religion and ethnicity is overwhelmingly seen as an asset
 - Increased diversity in schools can be a challenge as some teachers are not prepared for different cultures

Next Ms. Plasch reviewed major priorities that emerged from the stakeholder sessions. These priorities include:

- Walkability** (most responses)
- Downtown-like area to gather*
- Green space connectivity
- Preservation of open space
- Safe way to cross I-94*
- Building connections in community through events*
- More high-density housing options* (2nd most responses)
- Small business retention and growth
- Business amenities such as co-working or maker spaces, biz incubator
- Bolstering jobs
- New development
- Village needs to be seen as creative and business friendly
- Public safety/public services*
- Village needs to be creative and business friendly*
- Better permitting/relationships with contractors/hire business support person*
- Air quality
- Cybersecurity

- Stormwater management
 - Items with * were mentioned multiple times by multiple participants.

Trustee Garner asked about the diversity of the response group and why the small percentage of those that identified as people of color. Ms. Plasch stated this unfortunately is a common trend seen in surveying nationally. She stated she has found there is a general feeling of mistrust of government in diverse groups which impacts response rates. She continued to say that 10% of respondents to Gurnee survey efforts identified themselves as people of color and this is actually pretty good compared to national response rates. Trustee Garner stated this is a huge untapped resource and efforts must continue to gather input from these groups. Ms. Plasch agreed and stated there are some specific actions that can be taken to try to increase these rates.

Trustee Ross asked if the respondents provided suggestions on how the Village could “listen more” to residents. Ms. Plasch stated the focus groups were very appreciative of the opportunity to share thoughts. She stated this is just one example of a method the Village could in the future. Ms. Plasch continued to state that the sentiment post-pandemic seems to be that people want to participate more and know more about their local governments.

Trustee O’Brien asked about the top priorities and which were the Top 3. Ms. Plasch stated she worked to group them into themes – walkability, high-density housing options, downtown-like area to gather, building communities/opportunities to connect, public safety and business opportunities were top priorities.

Trustee Balmes asked about planning and zoning process concerns. Ms. Plasch stated she heard from multiple residents and one business owner. She stated some of the feedback was actual experience, while some was based on what they have heard from others. She stated there is certainly a perception that improvements are needed.

Mayor Hood thanked Ms. Plasch for the presentation and her efforts to date.

Village Administrator Muetz stated this information was presented in anticipation of the May 20th retreat so the Board is prepared and aware of community concerns and desires.

Ms. Plasch stated a SWOT survey will be sent to the Board and staff participants. It will be emailed and is important for the group to complete. It will be combined with all other information collected to date to assist with setting priorities going forward.

E. OLD BUSINESS

None.

F. NEW BUSINESS

1. Approval of staff and advisory board appointments as recommended by Mayor Hood:

Village Staff:

Village Administrator	Patrick Muetz
Budget Officer	Patrick Muetz
Treasurer	Patrick Muetz
Finance Director	Brian Gosnell
IMRF Agent	Brian Gosnell
Village Engineer	Nick Leach
Public Works Director	Heather Galan
Police Chief	Brian Smith
Fire Chief/ ESDA Director	John Kavanagh
Community Development Director	David Ziegler
Village Attorney	Bryan Winter
Deputy Village Clerk	Donna Dallas

Planning and Zoning Board:

Board Chairman – Term Expiring 4/30/24	Jim Sula
Board Member – Term Expiring 4/30/24	Edwin Paff
Board Member – Term Expiring 4/30/24	Dane Morgan
Board Member – Term Expiring 4/30/23	Liliana Ware

Civil Service Commission:

Commissioner – Term Expiring 4/30/25 Diane Summers

Police Pension Board:

Board Member – Term Expiring 4/30/24 Ed Conarchy

Fire Pension Board:

Board Member – Term Expiring 4/30/24 Ed Conarchy

Environmental Sustainability Committee:

Member – Term Expiring 4/30/23 Rick Osa

Member – Term Expiring 4/30/23 Shelley Lazarus

Member – Term Expiring 4/30/23 Lucie Bednar

Member – Term Expiring 4/30/23 Kaitlyn Boyett

PSEBA Hearing Officer:

Term Expiring 4/30/23 Jason Guisinger

Administrative Hearing Officer:

Term Expiring 4/30/23 Yolanda Torrez

It was moved by Trustee Woodside, seconded by Trustee Thorstenson to approve of staff and advisory board appointments as recommended by Mayor Hood.

Roll call,

AYE: 6- Garner, O'Brien, Balmes, Thorstenson, Woodside, Ross

NAY: 0- None

ABSENT: 0- None

Motion Carried.

- 2. Approval of Ord. 2022 - 26 adding one Class 1 Tobacco and Alternative Nicotine Products License (Incidental Sales) by amending Section 7-8 of Chapter 7 of the Gurnee Municipal Code entitled "Tobacco and Alternative Nicotine Retailers" (Bittersweet Golf Course – 875 Almond Road).

Village Administrator Muetz said Bittersweet Golf Course has historically had a small selection of cigars available for golfers to purchase. This is the result of customer demand. In conjunction with this, Bittersweet holds a State license for tobacco sales, but was unaware of the new Village requirement to secure a local license. In order to meet customer desires, GolfVisions is requesting a Class 1 (incidental sales) Tobacco License. Cathy Ralston, Bittersweet General Manager, will serve as tobacco manager.

Administrator Muetz also stated Merit Club will be requesting a Tobacco Licensee. Similar to Bittersweet, it was unaware of the new Village requirement.

Trustee Ross asked if Bittersweet would only be selling cigars. Administrator Muetz said yes.

It was moved by Trustee Balmes, seconded by Trustee Thorstenson to approve of Ord. 2022 – 26 adding one Class 1 Tobacco and Alternative Nicotine Products License (Incidental Sales) by amending Section 7-8 of Chapter 7 of the Gurnee Municipal Code entitled "Tobacco and Alternative Nicotine Retailers" (Bittersweet Golf Course – 875 Almond Road).

Roll call,

AYE: 6- Garner, O'Brien, Balmes, Thorstenson, Woodside, Ross

NAY: 0- None

ABSENT: 0- None

Motion Carried.

G. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

Closing Comments

None.

It was moved by Trustee Balmes, seconded by Trustee Garner to adjourn the meeting.

Voice Vote: ALL AYE: Motion Carried.

Mayor Hood adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

**Andrew Harris,
Village Clerk**