

Committee of the Whole
April 27, 2026
MINUTES
6:00pm

Board present: Steve Buss, Claudia Simpson, Brian Peight, Brooke Baldauf, Dean Rood, Brandon Smith, Tillie Coomber, Nicole Callos. Not present: Christin Keeffer. Also present: Brian Nott, Louise Workinger, Bridgette Stocks, Brian Lamphere, Lindsay Buss, George Gaulrapp, Henry Saavedra, Andrea Winter, Nicole Haas.

Call to Order

1) The Committee of the Whole meeting of April 27, 2026 was called to order by President Buss at 6:08pm following a Special Board Meeting.

Public Participation

2) President Buss welcomed Andrea Winter and Nicole Haas from The Greater Freeport Partnership. Andrea Winter presented with their annual report. Highlights included: Helped to establish \$725K worth of State grants to the surrounding area. Currently working to expand the enterprise zone of Lena, as it stops at Adkins. 85 acres in total will be added as platted, undeveloped subdivisions. This allows the builder/buyer no sales tax on building materials, and 3-year property tax abatement that transfers to the homeowner. Nicole Haas gave updates on what the Greater Freeport Partnership has been working on their newsletter in regard to events. The Free-Aquana Cycle will take place on June 6th from McHenry to Galena to Quad Cities through Ottawa, a total of 500 miles. Due to construction, Shippee Road will be closed June 6th. Chief Lamphere will coordinate with County regarding traffic control/signage. Looking for funding from IDOT. There will be a Pilot Memorial Dedication at the end of May. Buss expressed appreciation toward Nicole and Andrea and the GFP for all their behind the scenes work and all they do.

George Gaulrapp from ComEd was present to share his experience from the April 17th tornado. He expressed thanks to Katie Quittschreiber from the Lena Brewing Company. ComEd replaced 85 utility poles in 1.5 days with a rotating crew of 200 trucks and 220 people beginning 6pm on that Friday evening. He stated patience was exhibited throughout the Village for his crews even through complications. Volunteers were amazing. The Fire Department was incredible. He was glad to have met so many individuals.

Approval of Minutes – March 23, 2026 Committee of the Whole & Special Meeting

3) On a motion by Rood second by Peight approving all meeting minutes from March 23, 2026 Committee of the Whole and Special Board Meetings. ALL AYE.

Discuss 4/17/2026 Tornado

4) Smith explained the importance of acquiring a back-up generator for the waste water treatment plant to avoid a back up of sewage. The sewer department lost a main screen; this will need to be replaced soon. The Village plans to draft a resolution to join IPWMAN for \$100 a year that allows for manpower during catastrophes. 11 fire departments were called from outside of town and 83 volunteers arrived to assist in the tornado effort. Buss noted that Stephenson and Ogle County, The City of Freeport, State Police and County Reserves all came to help. He stated townships from hours away were offering assistance and he would like to help from the municipality side for an emergency playbook for others.

Discuss Battery Energy Storage Systems

5) Nott explained the following logistics regarding the proposed systems: Stephenson County has an ordinance outlining requirements for battery storage systems. Areas of concern included: Water quantity used to cool the systems, fire suppression, individual company requirements, noise and visual concerns, spill containment, zoning. This will be further evaluated.

Discuss Fehr Graham Grants

6) Bridgette Stocks gave the following updates: Grant agreement for Milfred has been awarded. Lena Safe Routes to School will be announced any day. LaHood grant is awaiting congress approval of budget October 1st. ITEP year (even years) due October 6th. IDOT seminar on June 17th and will have more information. Bridgette Stocks explained there is COVID funding yet available with a focus of commercial demolition.

Discuss Ordinance Pricing

7) Peight inquired about right-of-way ordinance pricing. Nott explained one fee covered multiple ordinances. Callos stated the attorney billing statement should be in closer to the end of the month with that dollar amount.

Adjournment

8) On a motion by Peight second by Smith to adjourn the April 27, 2026 meeting at 7:20pm. ALL AYE.

Submitted by Claudia Simpson, Village Clerk