

Committee of the Whole
August 25, 2025
MINUTES
6:00pm

Board present: Steve Buss, Claudia Simpson, Brian Peight, Brooke Baldauf, Dean Rood, Brandon Smith, Joe Hallstrom, Nicole Callos.
Not present: Christin Keeffer. Also present: Brian Nott, Lindsay Buss, Joyce Roling, Louise Workinger, Brandon Wirtjes

Call to Order

1) The Committee of the Whole meeting of August 25, 2025 was called to order by President Buss at 6:00pm.

Public Participation

2) There was no public participation at this time.

Approval of Minutes – July 28, 2025

3) On a motion by Rood second by Bauldauf approving the meeting minutes from July 28, 2025. ALL AYE.

Discuss Blighted Homes

4) 1) Buss explained that Lamphere had Safebuilt come to inspect several properties. Letters will be sent to some property owners with time frames to comply by. 2) Brandon Wirtjes explained that he had made contact with the property owner of the Oak Street blighted home regarding potentially purchasing the property. The property owner had also been at Village Hall and had the inspection process and requirements made clear to them by Nicole Callos. 3) The inspector was not able to enter the apartment on Railroad Street but did include the exterior in their report.

Discuss Property Damage Ordinance

5) Police Chief Brian Lamphere had asked the Board to consider an ordinance that would hold people accountable for damage to Village property such as sidewalks, trees, signs etc. There have been a few occurrences recently within the Village that prompted the importance of an ordinance. The attorney will be reviewing the draft before Board approval. Peight and Nott will be checking with the Safe Routes to School draft as well.

Discuss Civil Related Ordinance Review

6) Nott provided consideration and recommendations for the Village ordinance and permit speculations that Fehr-Graham could assist with enforcing. All information for requirements for each building permit are listed in the ordinance with QR codes on the permit itself, but there have been no resources to date to follow up on whether the structures actually follow ordinance guidelines. The sidewalk replacement program should require inspection of work ensuring ADA compliance per Federal guidelines before being reimbursed. The requirements vary pending whether the location is considered a Village right of way, County, or a State route. Rood stated that other inspectors use photos to verify compliance. There was discussion held on how there could be follow up for utility companies. Nott explained permit fees in Lena are much lower than other communities, and raising them would allow for the Village to better afford review of permitted work. Hallstrom offered his experience with TIF reimbursement that there were set guidelines that had to be followed and verified before any reimbursement would be issued. The bottom line was that it has to be made clear with future permits that there will be an inspection, and if a reimbursement is an option- there will not be money paid back if work is done incorrectly. Buss referenced situations where developers did a job that was not up to code, and it becomes the new owners responsibility. Nott explained there was an issue where a clay sewer service line was tied into incorrectly on Lena Street. It was discovered during a recent point repair, but was clear upon discovery that it had been an issue for quite some time. Nott will be getting pricing on a few (2-6) of the line items for Fehr-Graham services presented.

Discuss Railroad Street Parking Lot

7) Nott explained that the IEPA generally does inspections every 5 years. The Lena Subway was flagged for landscaping surrounding the property. The hard cap surface was installed on the surrounding driveway/parking lot in 2013 by a previous owner and LEDC. It was found that the way surface and landscaping were installed could allow for leakage that is not in accordance with environmental requirements. Raised planters were mentioned as a potential solution. The Village responsibility is the parking lot, which could possibly be covered under HMA. If no repairs are done, it would be an issue to sell the property in the future.

Discuss Village Newsletter

8) Baldauf stated upcoming events to be listed in the Village Newsletter: Cemetery write up, Sewer Lining Update, Mayor Buss's write up, Trick or Treat, Leaf pick up, JCE Update, Giving Tree, Christmas Parade, Christmas with Santa, and Sierra's life saving award. Done by September 22nd to be mailed October 1st.

Discuss Civic Symposium on September 11th & 12th

9) Callos stated the office will be closed September 11th as she and Madi Becke will be going to the Civic Symposium to get updates on Village software, and Nicole will come back to have the office open on the 12th.

Welfare of the Village

Buss reminded everyone that Fall Fest will be September 5th-6th.

Adjournment

10) On a motion by Smith second by Rood to adjourn the August 25, 2025 Meeting at 6:55pm. ALL AYE.

Submitted by Claudia Simpson, Village Clerk