

**MINUTES
OF THE
REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
TUESDAY, January 27, 2026**

As provided by public notice, the Village Board of the Village of Northfield met in the Boardroom of the Village Hall on Tuesday, January 27, 2026 for the Regular Board meeting. The meeting was called to order by President Tracey Mendrek at 7:02 PM.

CALL TO ORDER

The Deputy Village Clerk took the roll call.

PRESENT: President Tracey Mendrek

 Trustees Charles Orth
 Tom Whittaker
 Todd Fowler
 Matt Galin
 Andrew Juedes
 Ed Elfmann

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Village Manager Patrick Brennan
 Village Attorney Greg Jones
 Police Chief Mike Hutensky
 Fire Chief Alan Berkowsky
 Community Development Director Steve Gutierrez
 Director of Administrative Services Melissa Jewett
 Deputy Clerk Holly Fabbri

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Trustee Whittaker requested a moment of silence in honor of retired Police Officer Thomas Schaffer, who dedicated 26 years of service to Northfield before retiring in 2014 and who died recently.

Village President Mendrek stated that the Village recently introduced a new Commendation and Award Program to honor employees whose performance exemplifies exceptional dedication, professionalism, or service to the community. She noted that staff members were encouraged to nominate colleagues they believed deserved this honor. She said that the 2025 award winners could not attend but were as follows: Thomas Hanus for the Meritorious Service Award and Chris Stanke for the Distinguished Service Award.

Fire-Rescue Chief Berkowsky recognized Mike Talend's promotion to Fire-Rescue Lieutenant.

VILLAGE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Village President Mendrek noted that the Park District President and Executive Director were in attendance to provide an informational presentation about the upcoming referendum.

Village President Mendrek remarked that an initiative had been launched to enhance public outreach tools, including the implementation of a new email distribution service designed to more effectively deliver safety and other updates, as well as newsletters to residents. She mentioned that a new business newsletter had recently been disseminated and was met with positive feedback.

PARK DISTRICT INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATION

Bridget Kennedy, President of the Northfield Park District, and Bill Byron, Executive Director of the Northfield Park District, were introduced. Kennedy delivered a PowerPoint presentation to inform the public about the Park District's upcoming March 2026 referendum, detailing how the funds from the proposed tax rate increase would be allocated to benefit the community.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Chaya Rubenstein said she was speaking on behalf of the League of Women Voters Winnetka-Northfield-Kenilworth. She thanked Village Manager Brennan, Village President Mendrek, Trustee Galin, and Trustee Orth for attending the State of the Village Tea. She urged the public to go to the website at lwb.org for information on candidate forums and voting details.

APPROVAL OF BILLS AND DISBURSEMENTS – November/December 2025

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Juedes, to approve the bills and disbursements from November 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025.

Village Manager Brennan provided an overview of the highlighted items on the disbursements sheet.

President Mendrek opened the floor to questions and comments from the Trustees and there were none.

After opening the floor to comment from the public and hearing none, President Mendrek called for a roll call vote.

AYES: Orth, Whittaker, Fowler, Galin, Juedes, Elfmann

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

The motion passed with six votes in favor, and none opposed.

OMNIBUS VOTE - CONSENT ITEMS

The Village President asked the Deputy Clerk to read the Consent Agenda items into the record. Those were reported as follows:

2. Approval of Minutes – December 2, 2025
3. Adoption of an Ordinance Authorizing an Indemnification Agreement with Cook County
4. Approval of a resolution to appoint delegates and alternate delegates to the Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy (NIPSTA)
5. Adoption of an Ordinance Declaring Property Surplus and Authorizing the Disposal Thereof
6. Approval of Intergovernmental Agreement with the Village of Winnetka for Fire Training Tower Usage and Maintenance
7. Authorization to Purchase a Replacement Ford F-350 and Utility Box Through Lindco Equipment Sales of Merrillville, Indiana, in the Estimated Amount of \$75,600

Trustee Fowler made a motion, seconded by Trustee Whittaker, to approve Consent Agenda items 2 through 7.

President Mendrek opened the floor to questions and comments from the Board. A trustee inquired if the cost for the fire training tower was normal. Fire Chief Berkowsky replied that replacement of the burn room lining systems was routine maintenance. Another trustee had a question regarding which roadways were covered by the Indemnification Agreement with Cook County, and Village Manager Brennan clarified that this did not cover any roadways owned by IDOT.

After opening the floor to comment from the public and hearing none, President Mendrek called for a roll call vote.

AYES: Orth, Whittaker, Fowler, Galin, Juedes, Elfmann
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

The motion passed with six votes in favor, and none opposed.

AUTHORIZATION TO EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH WIGHT & COMPANY OF DARIEN, IL FOR ORCHARD LANE PARKING LOT DESIGN SERVICES IN THE ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF \$34,000

Trustee Juedes made a motion, seconded by Trustee Fowler, to authorize the execution of an agreement with Wight & Company of Darien, Illinois, for Orchard Lane parking lot design services in the estimated amount of \$34,000.

Village Manager Brennan stated that for many years, the Village has been pursuing authorization to build a public parking lot in the 1700 block of Orchard Lane, on a wooded,

vacant parcel owned by Cook County. He noted that the parcel has use restrictions that give IDOT the right of refusal for any use. He remarked that the Village recently received a “no further objections” response from IDOT, clearing the way for design of the parking lot to proceed. He noted that staff prepared a Request for Proposals (RFP) for design services, and Wight & Co. was selected based on their demonstrated experience and offering the lowest price.

President Mendrek opened the floor to questions and comments from the Trustees. One trustee inquired about the adjacent property owners. Village Manager Brennan replied that the proposed parking lot lies north of two privately owned parking lots, and the Village has contacted those owners who were supportive and agreed to participate in the parking lot layout planning. Another trustee inquired about the potential use of pavers and their long-term durability, particularly in relation to aging and the impact of snowplows. Village Manager Brennan responded that interlocking pavers would be a suitable choice, noting that they perform well.

After opening the floor to comments from the public and hearing none, President Mendrek called for a roll call vote.

AYES: Orth, Whittaker, Fowler, Galin, Juedes, Elfmann
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: None

The motion passed with six votes in favor, and none opposed.

APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT TO THE SAFEbuILT PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT

Trustee Whittaker made a motion, seconded by Trustee Juedes, to approve an amendment to the SAFEbuILT Professional Services Agreement.

Community Development Director Steve Gutierrez stated that the Village contracts certain plan review, inspectional services, code enforcement, and permit administration with SAFEbuILT Illinois LLC (SAFEbuILT). He noted they were seeking an amendment to the Village’s current agreement, initiated in 2021, to increase hourly rates for its services. He remarked that SAFEbuILT has not raised its fees in the past five years, and the proposed amendment also eliminates the 24-hour minimum requirement—a threshold the Village typically does not meet.

President Mendrek opened the floor to questions and comments from the Trustees, and there were none.

After opening the floor to comments from the public and hearing none, President Mendrek called for a roll call vote.

AYES: Orth, Whittaker, Fowler, Galin, Juedes, Elfmann
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

The motion passed with six votes in favor, and none opposed.

AUTHORIZATION TO PLACE AN ORDER FOR A REPLACEMENT AMBULANCE FROM FOSTER COACH SALES OF STERLING, ILLINOIS, IN THE ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF \$480,000

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Galin, to authorize the placement of an order for a replacement ambulance from Foster Coach Sales of Sterling, Illinois, in the estimated amount of \$480,000.

Fire-Rescue Chief Berkowsky stated that the Village has one ambulance that has been in service since 2016, noting its estimated front-line service is 10-12 years. He explained that production and delivery of a new ambulance is currently estimated to take 24-30 months. He noted that staff is seeking authorization to purchase a replacement ambulance and acknowledged the large investment. He added that, if approved, the current 2016 ambulance would be reassigned as a reserve unit. The Village does not currently have a reserve ambulance.

President Mendrek opened the floor to questions and comments from the Trustees.

After opening the floor to comment from the public and hearing none, President Mendrek called for a roll call vote.

AYES: Orth, Whittaker, Fowler, Galin, Juedes, Elfmann

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

The motion passed with six votes in favor, and none opposed.

Village Manager Brennan recognized employee John Rikje for his outstanding work in maintaining the Village's vehicles and equipment. He commended him not only for his exceptional repair skills but also for his proactive approach in identifying potential issues before they arise.

Resident and business owner Pam Papadatos requested that the drainage issues be investigated during the design of the Orchard Lane parking lot.

TRUSTEE LIAISON REPORTS

President Mendrek recognized Trustee Whittaker for being voted by his peers to serve another year as President of the Red Center. Trustee Whittaker emphasized that the Red Center provides top-notch service to the residents and the surrounding community. He highlighted the significant growth potential of the Red Center and noted that their budget was recently approved. Whittaker said that he had a constructive conversation with Anne Peterson on behalf of Go Green Northfield; their goal is to implement high-impact initiatives at the lowest possible expense.

Trustee Juedes expressed his gratitude to the Public Works Department for their hard work, especially for putting in overtime to keep the streets and sidewalks clear of snow. He noted he was thankful for the ice rink at Clarkson Park. He said that at New Trier High School, they are investigating renovations for the final portion of the building, which has not been redone in decades, including the pool. He remarked that New Trier had recently hired a new Chief Technology Officer. He remarked that Sunset Ridge School was recognized again on the state level.

Trustee Elfmann reported that the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) recently met and reviewed two agenda items: the installation of a generator at 423 Central and a proposed house renovation and expansion at 90 Meadowview; the latter was deferred to the next meeting due to issues related to variance setbacks. He said that the next ZBA meeting would be on February 4th. He said that the Happ Road Committee was moving closer to being able to present something to the Board and hoped to do this at the March 24th meeting. He noted that separate surveys on Happ Road for residents and businesses would be published soon and encouraged everyone to participate by the 3rd week of February. He thanked everyone who had been a part of the Happ Road Committee for their time and effort, noting there had been many fruitful meetings.

Trustee Galin said that the Northwest Municipal Conference had completed their staff compensation and was preparing for its legislative days in Springfield in April. He noted the Library Board had two meetings, reviewed their annual audit report, and received training for their Executive Director evaluations. He remarked that they approved an agreement with the architecture firm responsible for their portion of the Library Renovation Project.

Trustee Orth stated that the Architectural Commission would meet on February 23rd. He noted that the Illinois Report Card recognized Avoca School as one of the top 20 exemplary schools in Illinois. He noted that the Centennial Committee was continuing to work hard, and he thanked the staff for the Centennial lapel pins. He said that they had given a Centennial presentation to the Chamber of Commerce and the Northfield Senior Center and would be doing others for the Winnetka Rotary Club and Garden Club. He remarked that they were planning a celebration for the Village's 100th birthday, which is scheduled to take place during the October Committee of the Whole meeting. He mentioned that the big Centennial Celebration at Clarkson Park would be on August 22nd. President Mendrek thanked Executive Director Bill Byron at the Park District for his help and support with the Centennial.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Village Manager Brennan said there was nothing new to report on Mariano's vacancy. He noted that the landowner and grocer were still negotiating, and the Village had offered to help in any way possible. A trustee noted that Sunset Foods had expressed appreciation for the Village Manager and his team, describing them as excellent partners to work with.

Police Chief Hutensky stated that the Village would be swearing in a new officer, Mike McGarry the next day.

ADJOURN

There being no further business or issues to come before the Board, Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Galin, to adjourn the meeting. Upon a unanimous voice vote, President Mendrek declared the motion passed.

President Mendrek declared the meeting adjourned at 8:09 PM.