

**MINUTES
OF THE
REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
TUESDAY, February 24, 2026**

As provided by public notice, the Village Board of the Village of Northfield met in the Boardroom of the Village Hall on Tuesday, February 24, 2026 for the Regular Board meeting. The meeting was called to order by President Tracey Mendrek at 7:03 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
 Community Development Director Steve Gutierrez
 Director of Administrative Services Melissa Jewett
 Deputy Clerk Holly Fabbri

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

President Mendrek commended Public Works employee Luke Albrecht, who was unable to attend the meeting, for receiving his Arborist Certification.

Police Chief Hutensky introduced the newest police officer, Michael McGarry.

VILLAGE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Village President Mendrek said that about a year ago, it was announced that Mariano's would vacate the property at 1822 Willow Road. She mentioned that at that time, the owners had been working hard to secure a grocery store and were in serious talks with Sunset Foods. She noted that as of this week, the two parties had not been able to reach an agreement, and both sides had stepped away from the negotiations. She emphasized that the Village was disappointed

by this outcome, but after 8 months of a vacant storefront, the Board must turn its attention to a new solution for the location.

Village President Mendrek stated that the Village's 2040 Comprehensive Plan provides clear guidance on the residents' hopes for the Village Center, and the Board reaffirmed this direction during a recent workshop. Mendrek asked the Board to take a step forward to carefully manage the future of the Village by placing a temporary moratorium on any new office-related uses in the Village Center Zoning District. She explained that, pending approval of this resolution, the Board will direct the Plan and Zoning Commission to conduct a public hearing on the proposed temporary moratorium, allow time for a review of the Zoning Code, and then return the matter to the Village Board for final action. She noted that the Village has also engaged a consultant to conduct an eligibility study to determine whether any locations within the business district qualify as a redevelopment area, which could open the door to tax-increment financing. If the area is deemed eligible, this would provide the Village with a valuable tool to take a more proactive role in shaping local land use. She remarked that these two initiatives will follow a parallel path over the next 6-8 months, and by announcing them here this evening, would inform the development community of the Village's intent. She noted that Northfield has watched from the sidelines as many of its neighboring communities, including Northbrook, Glenview, Deerfield, and Highland Park, utilized similar redevelopment plans to enhance their downtown areas. She said she believes that it is Northfield's time to take decisive steps to strengthen its community.

Village President Mendrek stated that in staying true to the Village's Comprehensive Plan and residents' requests for a more vibrant Village Center, the Board will continue to seek innovative ways to advance economic development in the community. She thanked Patrick Brennan, Steve Gutierrez, and Amina Awad, for their hard work and dedication.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Chaya Rubenstein stated she was speaking on behalf of the League of Women Voters Winnetka-Northfield-Kenilworth. She noted that early voting had started and recommended visiting their website at LWVWNK for recordings, voting news, candidate information, and upcoming events. She said they would be hosting a spring luncheon on April 30 from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the North Shore Senior Center, Northfield, featuring Arne Duncan and Chicago CRED participants.

APPROVAL OF BILLS AND DISBURSEMENTS – January 2026

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Fowler, to approve the bills and disbursements from January 1, 2026 through January 31, 2026.

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:

1. Approval of Minutes – January 27, 2026
2. Approval of a Resolution Authorizing the Release of Certain Executive Session Meeting Minutes and Authorizing Destruction of Certain Recordings of Executive Session Meetings
3. Adoption of an Ordinance Granting Approval for a Final Plat of Subdivision at 119-123 Happ Road

Trustee Fowler made a motion, seconded by Trustee Whittaker, to approve Consent Agenda items 1 through 3.

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

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.

**APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION DIRECTING CONSIDERATION OF A
TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON NEW OFFICE USES IN THE VILLAGE CENTER
ZONING DISTRICT**

Trustee Orth made a motion, seconded by Trustee Juedes, to approve a resolution directing consideration of a temporary moratorium on new office uses in the Village Center Zoning District.

President Mendrek reiterated that Northfield's 2040 Comprehensive Plan provides guidance for the direction that the residents hope for the Village Center. She noted that the Board had met at an off-site meeting and discussed in detail the various zoning districts and what they wanted to see and not see. She said that while the Village has parameters for small office uses, nothing was in place to address larger office spaces. She stated that she, along with Village Manager Brennan and the legal counsel, believed it was appropriate to institute a temporary moratorium to allow the Plan and Zoning Commission adequate time to review the zoning code to ensure that it aligns with the vision and objectives contained in Comprehensive Plan.

President Mendrek opened the floor to questions and comments from the Trustees. It was recommended that the materials from the Board's spring review of the Comprehensive Plan were shared with the Plan and Zoning Commission.

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

TRUSTEE LIAISON REPORTS

Trustee Elfmann said that the Happ Road Committee had met and noted there was considerable discussion surrounding the surveys. He noted the response rate was high, with about 900 responses to the residential survey and nearly 50 to the business survey. He stated that the Happ Road Committee would be giving a presentation at the March 24th Committee of the Whole meeting. He remarked that the Zoning Board of Appeals had approved both items that were presented. He thanked the Northfield Park District for hosting a wonderful Daddy Daughter dance event.

President Mendrek noted that the staff effort to increase the email database likely contributed to the higher survey response rate. She said she asked Cook County Commissioner Scott Britton, as well as all the Department Heads, to attend and hear the committee's comments and concerns.

Trustee Galin stated on February 9th, the Library, the Village, and the project architect met to discuss design concepts for the library. He believed it was a good meeting, an exciting project, and that initial concepts would be available in the next month or so. He commented that the Northwest Municipal Conference did not have a meeting due to a lack of quorum.

Trustee Orth stated that the Architectural Commission meeting for February was canceled. He said the next Northfield Park District meeting would be held on February 26th. He said the Centennial Committee would be meeting on February 27th and recommended everyone to view the wonderful information on Centennial website. He remarked that the Committee was brainstorming additional ideas, such as a potential Centennial block party, and the Centennial Celebration on August 22nd. President Mendrek commented that they would soon be announcing their musical acts for the Centennial Celebration.

Trustee Juedes said that Sunset Ridge School has been busy preparing for the arrival of the new Superintendent, hosting facility tours in support of the proposed referendum, completing registration for the 8th graders who will be joining New Trier next year, and recently held its annual spelling bee. He said Sunset Ridge School was enhancing its creative arts curriculum across grades and analyzing data to improve its math placement policy. He remarked that at

New Trier, they are undertaking changes to design flexible student experiences that offer innovative ways to progress through high school beyond the standard protocol of classes as they continue to create a culture of belonging. He noted that on the preceding Friday, there had been an Institute Day and that the Board is increasing AP opportunities for sophomore students.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Police Chief Hutensky stated that the Board of Police Commissioners would meet the following day to interview candidates and hopefully make a conditional offer to fill the final vacancy.

President Mendrek stated that a Special Committee of the Whole meeting would be held on March 10th at 5:30 PM to discuss the proposed FY2026-2027 Budget.

ADJOURN

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

President Mendrek declared the meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.