

**MINUTES OF THE
SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
VILLAGE OF NORTHFIELD
March 10, 2026**

The Special Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order by Village President Tracey Mendrek on March 10, 2026, at 5:31 PM.

The Village Clerk called the roll as follows:

Committee Members Present:

Trustee Charlie Orth
Trustee Tom Whittaker
Trustee Todd Fowler
Trustee Matt Galin
Trustee Ed Elfmann
President Tracey Mendrek

Absent:

Trustee Andrew Juedes

Others Present:

Village Manager Patrick Brennan
Director of Administrative Services Melissa Jewett
Community Development Director Steve Guterrez
Fire-Rescue Chief Alan Berkowsky
Police Chief Mike Hutensky
Finance Director Kathleen Morley
Deputy Fire Chief Tom Burke

Public Comment

No members of the public expressed a desire to address the Committee.

Discussion Concerning the Proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget

Village Manager Brennan utilized a PowerPoint presentation to guide the presentation of the proposed fiscal year budget. He provided a short overview of the budgeting process for the current fiscal year projections. The current projection was for revenues to exceed the budget by over \$880,000. He stated that the overage was primarily in the sales tax and home rule sales tax categories. The projections were in contradiction to the anticipated \$350,000 reduction in the same categories. Staff determined that the positive results were likely due to healthy sales from several of the larger sales tax generators in the Village, and it appeared that the increase may continue into future years.

Expenditures for the current fiscal year have exceeded the budget by nearly \$400,000. This increase was attributed to new positions added during the budget year, as well as the related employment expenses such as pension obligations.

Brennan provided the group with an overview of his approach toward budget development. He explained the differences between elastic and inelastic revenues and his efforts to manage any

end of year surplus. Next, Brennan provided an overview of the Proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget. Revenues were projected at a year over year increase of \$883,087 and \$71,871 more than the current year projection. The sales tax, home rule sales tax, and building permit activity were projected to have continued strength. Expenditures were up \$867,074 year over year and \$469,426 from the projected fiscal year end. The increases were due to a combination of wage and employment expenses, of which \$296,045 was attributed to increased police pension expenses. The projected surplus was \$28,027 in the General Fund, with the fund balance near the bottom of the 55-70% target range.

Brennan explained the notable changes in the proposed budget for all the Village funds, and after completing his presentation, President Mendrek opened the floor to questions and comments from the Trustees. Trustee Fowler commented on the increased expenditures and resulting impact on property taxes. He expressed his support for the steps being taken, but wanted to ensure that the current and future Boards maintained an eye on expenditure growth. A question was raised about the dependability of projected revenue growth and the best way to monitor actual revenue versus the budget going forward. Brennan stated that data will be added to the monthly financial report that is distributed in the Village Board packet.

The Trustees discussed the proposed increase in the water and sewer rates of 2.2%. Brennan explained that it was a pass-through of the increase from the Village's water supplier, the Village of Winnetka. The group discussed a desire to trend the water/sewer rates with a benchmark such as the Consumer Price Index. A consensus was reached to increase the water and sewer rates by 3.0% for FY27. The urgency of painting fire hydrants was also discussed. The group asked Manager Brennan to consider pushing out the proposed work if staff determined that doing so would not deteriorate the hydrants.

The Trustees also discussed the list of items submitted by individual Trustees. As a result of the discussion, the group asked that a portable speed display trailer be included in the capital budget. Other items on the list were not supported with a consensus. Trustee Orth reiterated his support for the Village to begin live-streaming commission meetings. He also requested that further consideration be given to improving the crosswalk lighting on Happ Road in the areas of Orchard and Walnut. It was the consensus of the group to await the findings of the Happ Road Committee, which were expected to be presented on March 24th, prior to making any decisions.

There being no further business for the Committee, President Mendrek opened the floor to a motion to adjourn.

Adjourn

Trustee Elfmann 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 6:42 PM.