

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PRESIDENT
AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF MORTON GROVE
RICHARD T. FLICKINGER MUNICIPAL CENTER COUNCIL CHAMBERS
MARCH 10, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER

- I. Village President Janine Witko convened the Regular Meeting of the Village Board at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Village Hall and led the assemblage in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- II. Village Clerk Eileen Scanlon Harford called the roll. Trustees Saba Khan, Rita Minx, Ashur Shiba, John Thill, Connie Travis, and Keith White were present.

III.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mayor Witko asked for a motion to approve the Minutes of the February 24, 2026 Regular Village Board Meeting as presented. Trustee Minx so moved, seconded by Trustee Khan.

Motion passed unanimously via voice vote.

IV.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Mayor Witko introduced Mike Simkins, Chairman of the Police and Fire Commission, to conduct the swearing in of three of Morton Grove's newest Police Officers and one new Fire Fighter.

1. Mr. Simkins invited Mayor Witko and Chief Weitzel to the podium. He then invited Senaid Dzeko to come to the podium with his family for his swearing in. First, though, he provided some background on Senaid.
 - a. Senaid was raised in the Albany Park neighborhood of Chicago, where he developed an early interest in public service and community safety. He began his law enforcement career with the Morton Grove Police Department in 2025, after graduating from the Illinois State Police Academy.
 - b. Senaid currently serves as a Patrol Officer with the MGPD, where he continues to develop his skills in law enforcement and community engagement. He values teamwork, professionalism, and building positive relationships with the residents he serves. Outside of his law enforcement duties, Senaid enjoys cycling and spending time with family and friends.
 - c. Mr. Simkins performed the swearing-in and the Board and assemblage welcomed Officer Dzeko warmly.

IV. SPECIAL REPORTS (continued)

2. Next, Mr. Simkins invited Connor Solms and his family to the podium. Connor shared that he had brought his wife Molly, his dad Carl, and his godfather with him tonight.
 - a. Mr. Simkins gave some background on Connor. Connor was raised on the south side of Chicago and graduated from Walter Payton College Preparatory High School in 2013. Following graduation, he joined the U.S. Forest Service where he served as a wildland firefighter. During his eight-year tenure, he worked on engine crews, handcrews, a short-haul rescue helicopter team, and an interagency hotshot crew. Throughout his career, he responded to wildland fires in 26 states and led an initiative to train, equip, and credential EMS providers across multiple federal and local government agencies. In 2020, Connor joined the Illinois Air National Guard, where he served for two years with the 168th Air Support Operations Squadron.
 - b. Connor began his law enforcement career in 2022 with the Park Forest Police Department and joined the Morton Grove Police Department in 2025. He currently serves the department as a Tactical Medicine Instructor, CPR Instructor, Drone Operator, and Peer Support Officer. In his free time, Connor enjoys hiking, paddleboarding, and continuing his education as he works toward completing his bachelor's degree in Political Science at Northern Illinois University.
 - c. Mr. Simkins administered the Oath of Office to Connor. Molly the pinned on Connor's badge and the Board and assemblage enthusiastically welcomed Officer Solms.
3. Mr. Simkins then introduced Cyla Dunican, who had with her tonight her parents and sister. He provided some background on Cyla. She was raised in the sought suburbs of Chicago and graduated from Lincoln-Way East High School in 2017. She went on to attend Northern Illinois University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and Sociology in 2021.
 - a. In 2023, Cyla began her law enforcement career as an Investigator with the Cook County State's Attorney's office. In this role, she served as a task force officer assigned to the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Unit. Through this assignment, she also worked with the Illinois Department of Corrections Sex Offender Unit, where she specialized in investigations involving violent crimes against children and child pornography.
 - b. In 2025, Cyla joined the Morton Grove Police Department, currently serving as a Patrol Officer.
 - c. Mr. Simkins swore Cyla in and her dad pinned on her badge. The Board and assemblage heartily welcomed Officer Dunican to the MGPD.
4. Next, Mr. Simkins, joined now by Chief Kennedy, introduced Eugene In, the newest addition to the Morton Grove Fire Department. Eugene was accompanied by his mom, a sister, and a brother-in-law. Mr. Simkins gave some background on Eugene.
 - a. Eugene officially began his service with the Morton Grove Fire Department on March 2. He earned his Paramedic Certification from the Advocate Luther General Paramedic Program in June of 2024. Eugene graduated from the Romeoville Fire Academy in July of 2025.

IV. **SPECIAL REPORTS** (continued)

- b. Eugene was born and raised in Northbrook. He attended Glenbrook North High School before continuing his education at Loyola University Chicago, where he earned his bachelor's degree in Computer Science in May of 2021. Before joining the Morton Grove Fire Department, he proudly served as a Firefighter/Paramedic with the Norwood Park Fire Protection District, beginning in April of 2025.
- c. Following the passing of his father in 2025, Eugene moved back home to support his mother during that difficult time. Family means everything to him, and that sense of commitment and responsibility is what he brings to this profession. Eugene is honored to begin this chapter with the Morton Grove Fire Department and he looks forward to serving the Morton Grove community for many years to come.
- d. Mr. Simkins administered the Oath of Office and Eugene's mom pinned on his badge. Firefighter In was welcomed warmly by the Board and the assemblage.

That concluded Mr. Simkins report. Mayor Witko thanked him for all his efforts.

V. **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

NONE

VI. **PLAN COMMISSION REPORTS**

NONE

VII. **RESIDENTS' COMMENTS (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)**

NONE

VIII. **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

- 1. Mayor Witko gave a report on 5935 Lincoln Ave. She said that, this past weekend, the residents at 5935 Lincoln experienced a very scary event in which a support column failed. The Village's Police, Fire, and Building Departments immediately responded to assess the situation and helped evacuate of the 28 unity within building, including rescue via their balconies due to doors being unable to open for some units following the support beam collapse. Thankfully and most importantly, there were no injuries and all of the several dozen people in the building at the time escaped safely along with their pets, who were then housed with Wright Way Rescue.
- a. Mayor Witko continued, saying that the building was temporarily stabilized and assessed by structural engineers to determine the damage caused by this failure.

VIII.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (continued)

- b. The structural engineers also reviewed all the other support beams to assess the safety of the building. The Village is actively engaging the residents impacted by this situation to make them aware of resources available through the community, including Niles Township and other non-profits and religious organizations who have committed to supporting these displaced residents.
 - c. Mayor Witko said, "As our community knows, we have the best public safety in the country. Tonight I would ask that the audience join me in thanking our Firefighters, Police personnel, Building Department and Public Works staff who responded that night. I hope the audience will join me in thanking our staff for their incredible professionalism during the response efforts."
 - d. The mayor said we are fortunate to be surrounded by amazing communities. On the night of the collapse, Morton Grove had police and fire representatives from almost three dozen jurisdictions who helped to secure the street and provide traffic control, and to make sure that the residents were safely evacuated. She also thanked all of the organizations and elected officials who have reached out to offer assistance to us. She specifically thanked:
 - Wright Way Rescue (Mayor Witko said they were wonderful)
 - State Senator Ram Villivalam
 - State Representative Mike Kelly
 - Cook County Commissioner Josina Morita
 - Niles Township
 - MCC
 - American Red Cross
 - Morton Grove Foundation (who provided \$20,000 to help the displaced residents)
 - e. Mayor Witko said she is committed to ensuring that this type of emergency doesn't happen again. To the end, she said staff will be inspecting similar buildings throughout the Village to determine if there are any signs of deterioration or damage to support columns, and work with property owners to address any issues or concerns.
 - f. Lastly, Mayor Witko said, residents have been asking about how they can help. She said anyone interested in donating money to support these resident can make a donation to the American Red Cross, and mark your donation as going towards the Morton Grove Building on Lincoln Avenue.
2. Mayor Witko said the Village will be hosting its first Senior Expo on Friday, March 13, from 9am to noon at the Civic Center. This free event will feature complementary refreshments for residents, and will provide an opportunity for residents to connect with local service providers and obtain educational materials on health, wellness, transportation, housing, and more.
 3. Mayor Witko invited all interested persons to attend a presentation regarding the Dempster Street Plan at the Civic Center starting at 6:00 pm. Recommendations for the Corridor will be presented and discussed. Refreshments will be served, and attendees will have the opportunity to win a \$100 gift card. For more information, please visit plandempster.org.

VIII.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (continued)

4. Mayor Witko gave special thanks to the Muslim Community Center who provided lunch to Village staff and first responders this week from Pita Inn in celebration of Ramadan. She thanked the MCC for their kindness and sense of community, and wished them Ramadan Mubarak!
5. Mayor Witko congratulated Jerika Gill, who is a special education teacher at Julia S. Molly school in Morton Grove. Ms. Gill was a finalist who received a 2026 Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching. She is one of 30 Illinois finalists who teach 4th through 8th grade out of 600 finalists. Mayor Witko thanked Ms. Gill and all the teachers in Morton Grove for all that they do for this community.

IX.

CLERK'S REPORT

1. Clerk Scanlon Harford presented **Resolution 26-22, Approving Destruction of Verbatim Records of Closed Session Meetings of the Village Board of Trustees.**
 - a. She explained that, pursuant to the Illinois Open Meetings Act, the Village has approved written minutes and maintains audiotaped recordings of all meeting of the Village Board of Trustees that are closed to the public (collectively, "Closed Meetings"). The Act allows the Village to destroy audio recordings of meetings which have been approved in written minutes and are over 18 months old. The Village President and Board of Trustees have reviewed all written minutes of Closed Meetings minutes and have determined that all Closed Meetings not previously released to the public should remain confidential, and it is in the best interests of the Village to destroy the audiotaped recordings of those Closed Meetings occurring prior to September 10, 2024.
 - b. This Resolution authorizes the destruction of all recordings of Closed Meetings prior to September 10, 2024.

Clerk Scanlon Harford asked for a motion and second for Resolution 26-22.

Trustee Travis moved to approve Resolution 26-22, seconded by Trustee White.

Motion passes: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Tr. Khan	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Minx	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Shiba	<u>aye</u>
Tr. Thill	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Travis	<u>aye</u>	Tr. White	<u>aye</u>

2. Clerk Scanlon Harford announced that early voting has begun. Morton Grove is once again hosting an early voting site at the American Legion Memorial Civic Center at 6140 Dempster Street. The last day for early voting is Monday, March 16. Early voting hours are 9:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Saturday, and from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm on Sundays.

X. **STAFF REPORTS**

A. Village Administrator:

Mr. Meyer had no formal report this evening.

B. Corporation Counsel:

Corporation Counsel Liston had no formal report this evening.

XI. **TRUSTEES' REPORTS**

A. Trustee Khan:

Trustee Khan had no formal report this evening.

B. Trustee Minx:

1. Trustee Minx presented **Resolution 26-16, Authorization to Execute a Repair Agreement with Midwest Air Pro, Inc. of Chicago, Illinois.**

- a. She explained that the Morton Grove Fire Department has identified the need to refurbish the exhaust extraction systems at both fire stations. The exhaust extraction systems limit the harmful effects of diesel exhaust inside the buildings. The current systems have been in constant use since 2004, with no upgrades. The refurbishment will provide modifications for future operations and apparatus changes, as well as upgrade the systems to modern specifications and prevent costly repairs. The fiscal impact of this Resolution is \$100,000.00.

Trustee Minx moved to approve Resolution 26-16, seconded by Trustee Travis.

Motion passes: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Tr. Khan	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Minx	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Shiba	<u>aye</u>
Tr. Thill	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Travis	<u>aye</u>	Tr. White	<u>aye</u>

2. Trustee Minx reminded the assemblage, "If you're curious about what Morton Grove Police Officers and Firefighters do, please join us for the Citizens Police and Fire Academy. The Academy runs every Wednesday from 6:30pm to 8:30pm. The Academy begins on March 18 and will end on May 20, 2026. To sign up, please visit www.mortongroveil.org."

XI. TRUSTEES' REPORTS (continued)

C. Trustee Shiba:

Trustee Shiba had no formal report this evening.

D. Trustee Thill:

Trustee Thill had five (5) resolutions to present this evening:

1. **Resolution 26-17, Authorizing the Sale of Surplus Village Vehicles and Equipment.**

- a. This Resolution will authorize the sale of five (5) Village-owned surplus vehicles on March 17 at a Joint Municipal Auction organized by the Northwest Municipal Conference (NWMC).
- b. Ordinance 05-27 authorizes the Village to sell, by Resolution of the Village Board, obsolete or surplus vehicles and personal property with an estimated value over one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00), which, in the opinion of the Finance Director and the Village Administrator, are no longer necessary or useful to the Village. The Public Works Department has done its annual review of all Village vehicles and equipment, and the Director of Public Works has identified five items that are no longer useful due to reasons such as age, maintenance costs, parts availability, and obsolescence. These items are considered surplus vehicles and equipment. The Finance Director and the Village Administrator concur with this assessment.
- c. The NWMC represents municipalities and townships within Cook, Lake, McHenry, Kane, and DuPage Counties and regularly organizes joint municipal auctions of surplus municipal vehicles and equipment. The Village has sold surplus vehicles and equipment through the NWMC's joint municipal surplus vehicle auctions in the past and has found this process cost-effective. The Village Administrator has recommended that the above-referenced Village vehicles and equipment be sold at the joint municipal auction of surplus vehicles conducted by the NWMC in conjunction with America's Auto Auction Chicago, which is scheduled to take place in Crestwood, IL on March 17. This Resolution approves the sale of these surplus vehicles and equipment at the joint municipal auction organized by the NWMC.

Trustee Thill moved to approve Resolution 26-17, seconded by Trustee Minx.

Motion passes: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Tr. Khan	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Minx	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Shiba	<u>aye</u>
Tr. Thill	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Travis	<u>aye</u>	Tr. White	<u>aye</u>

2. **Resolution 26-18, Authorizing a Contract with Dale, Inc. of New Lenox, IL for the 2026 Concrete Sawcutting Program.**

XI. TRUSTEES' REPORTS (continued)

D. Trustee Thill: (continued)

- a. As part of the Village’s annual Concrete Sawcutting Program, the Village hires a contractor to saw cut uneven sidewalk joints in the Village rights-of-way to eliminate trip hazards, improve public safety, and reduce liability. This contract was bid through a public process in accordance with the Village Code. Three bids were received. Dale, Inc. of New Lenox, IL was the lowest qualified bidder with a bid amount of \$52,000.00, which is \$8,000.00 less than the budgeted funding. Since the bid is based on unit pricing, the final contract price will depend on the number of units the Village determines are necessary. This Resolution will authorize a contract with Dale, Inc. for the 2026 Concrete Sawcutting Program in an amount not to exceed \$54,600.00 to capture anticipated needs and provide for a 5% contingency for potential needs of the Village. This contract must conform to the requirements of the Prevailing Wage Act. The fiscal impact of this Resolution is \$60,000.00.

Trustee Thill moved, seconded by Trustee White, to approve Resolution 26-18.

Motion passes: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Tr. Khan	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Minx	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Shiba	<u>aye</u>
Tr. Thill	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Travis	<u>aye</u>	Tr. White	<u>aye</u>

3. **Resolution 26-19, Authorizing a Professional Services Agreement with Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc. of Kansas City, Missouri for the 2026 Analysis of Water Utility Costs and Water Rate Analysis for the Village of Morton Grove.**

- a. This Resolution will authorize a comprehensive water utility cost of service and water rate analysis to ensure full cost recovery, maintain reserve levels, support implementation of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and establish a multi-year rate structure.
- b. The Village of Morton Grove owns and operates a municipal water utility (“Utility”). The Utility is responsible for all operational, maintenance, debt service, and capital improvement costs associated with providing potable water service to Village residents and businesses.
- c. Given evolving operational costs, regional wholesale water considerations, infrastructure investment needs, and long-term capital planning requirements, Village staff determined that an updated 2026 analysis is necessary to:
 - Ensure full cost recovery within the Enterprise Fund
 - Evaluate reserve policies and financial sustainability
 - Align projected revenues with the Capital Improvement Program
 - Develop a multi-year rate structure to promote predictability and stability
 - Capture any changes that have occurred since the last water rate analysis in 2008
- d. On January 15, 2026 the Village issued a Request for Qualifications and Request for Proposals (RFQ/RFP) seeking professional consulting services for a comprehensive cost-of-service and rate analysis.

XI. TRUSTEES’ REPORTS (continued)

D. Trustee Thill: (continued)

Twenty-three (23) firms downloaded the solicitation, and six (6) complete proposals were received by the February 5th deadline. Proposals were evaluated in accordance with the published criteria, including the proposed technical approach, project team, and overall qualifications. Following the evaluation, Village staff determined that Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc. of Kansas City, MO (dba Raftelis) was the most qualified firm to perform the analysis for a total cost of \$39,978.00.

- e. Approval of this Resolution authorizes the Village Administrator to negotiate and execute a Professional Services Agreement with Raftelis to complete the 2026 Water Utility Cost of Service and Water Rate Analysis.
- f. The 2026 Budget included \$35,000 for this study. The total cost is expected to be \$39,978.00, but it is anticipated that the water enterprise fund will be able to absorb this expense.

Trustee Thill moved to approve Resolution 26-19, seconded by Trustee Minx.

Motion passes: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Tr. Khan	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Minx	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Shiba	<u>aye</u>
Tr. Thill	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Travis	<u>aye</u>	Tr. White	<u>aye</u>

4. **Resolution 26-20, Authorizing an Amendment to a Contract with Ciorba Group Inc. for Design Services for Lehigh Avenue Street Lighting Project.**

- a. The Village intends to install street lighting along Lehigh Avenue. Resolution 24-69 (approved in November of 2024) authorized design engineering services by Ciorba Group for the Lehigh Avenue Street Lighting Project. During project development, there was a desire to expand the scope, which required additional engineering effort. Cook County's "Invest in Cook" funding program will cover a portion of the construction costs related to the additional work that necessitated extra design efforts. The fiscal impact of this Resolution is \$63,512.80, which will be comprised of \$22,685.80 from the original contract and \$40,827.00 from this supplemental work.

Trustee Thill moved, seconded by Trustee Travis, to approve Resolution 26-20.

Motion passes: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Tr. Khan	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Minx	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Shiba	<u>aye</u>
Tr. Thill	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Travis	<u>aye</u>	Tr. White	<u>aye</u>

5. **Resolution 26-21, Appointing a Director and Alternate Director to the Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANCC).**

XI.

TRUSTEES' REPORTS (continued)

D. Trustee Thill: (continued)

- a. SWANCC is an intergovernmental agency serving 23 municipalities, including Morton Grove. It was established in 1988 to facilitate effective, competitive, and environmentally sound collection, transportation, transfer, processing, treatment, storage, disposal, recover, and reuse of municipal waste for its members.
- b. The Board of Directors approves the yearly budget for the Agency and sets policy for the region’s long-term plan to manage the area’s solid waste. Every two years, the Village appoints a Director and Alternate Director(s) to serve on SWANCC’s Board of Directors to represent the Village’s interests. This Resolution will appoint Trustee John Thill as the Village’s Director and Village Administrator Charles L. Meyer as its Alternate Director.

Trustee Thill moved to approve Resolution 26-21, seconded by Trustee White.

Motion passes: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Tr. Khan	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Minx	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Shiba	<u>aye</u>
Tr. Thill	<u>aye</u>	Tr. Travis	<u>aye</u>	Tr. White	<u>aye</u>

- 6. Trustee Thill announced that the Village is now accepting applications for the 50/50 Tree Planting Program. Participating residents with an open public parkway adjacent to their property can sign up to have a tree planted for a cost of only \$60 to the resident. To learn more, please visit the Village’s website.

E. Trustee Travis:

- 1. Trustee Travis announced that the Morton Grove Police Department is adopting the “Blue Envelope Program.” This is a free, voluntary initiative designed to improve interactions between law enforcement and drivers with autism, dementia, anxiety, or other communication challenges.
- 2. Trustee Travis reminded residents that the Village is offering FREE evergreen trees for residents to plant in their yards! The 2025 Winter Adopt-a-Planter Program evergreen trees are now available for residents to adopt. Sign up to receive one of these beautiful evergreen trees to plant on your property. Public Works staff will deliver the tree to your residence in April 2026. She noted that the trees must be planted on private property. They may not be planted in the public parkway or close to public walkways. With proper care, these trees can grow to 40 feet tall at full maturity, so plan accordingly. Trees will be given out on a first-come, first-served basis until all are claimed. To participate, please visit the Village’s Facebook page.

XI. TRUSTEES’ REPORTS (continued)

PASSED this 24th day of March 2026.

Trustee Khan	<u>aye</u>
Trustee Minx	<u>aye</u>
Trustee Shiba	<u>aye</u>
Trustee Thill	<u>aye</u>
Trustee Travis	<u>aye</u>
Trustee White	<u>aye</u>

APPROVED by me this 24th day of March 2026.

Janine Witko

Janine Witko, Village President
Board of Trustees, Morton Grove, Illinois

APPROVED and FILED in my office this 25th day of March 2026.

Eileen Scanlon Harford

Eileen Scanlon Harford, Village Clerk
Village of Morton Grove, Cook County, Illinois

Minutes by Teresa Cousar

F. Trustee White:

Trustee White thanked the Village's first-responders again, and related that he and his family had lost their home due to a major fire, and it was 15 months before they could move back in. He cautioned the residents of the 5935 Lincoln Avenue building to make sure they carefully review their insurance policies.

XII.

WARRANTS

Trustee Khan presented the Warrant Register for March 10, 2026 in the amount of \$990,055.21. She moved to approve the Warrants as presented, seconded by Trustee Shiba.

Motion passes: 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Tr. Khan aye
Tr. Thill aye

Tr. Minx aye
Tr. Travis aye

Tr. Shiba aye
Tr. White aye

XIII.

OTHER BUSINESS

NONE

XIV.

RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

NONE

XV.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, Trustee Minx moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Trustee Khan.

Motion passes unanimously via voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.