

Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of the  
Village of Jerome Board

**CALL TO ORDER:** The President and the Board of Trustees held a regular meeting on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at the Jerome Civic Center, 2901 Leonard Street, Jerome, Illinois. The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm by President Lopez, followed by Roll call and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL:** The following were present:  
Mike Lopez, Village President  
Katrina Christofilakos, Trustee of Public Property  
Kathy DeHart, Trustee Public Health  
Leigh Irons, Trustee of Public Safety  
Dale Lael, Trustee of Building & Zoning  
Phil Raftis, Trustee of Public Works

Also Present:  
Jason Brokaw, Attorney, Giffin, Winning, Cohen & Bodewes, PC  
Lisa Cave, Village Clerk  
Emily Snow, Village Treasurer

Absent:  
Ralph Irons, Trustee of Water Department  
Steve Roth, Executive Assistant

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**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:** President Lopez asked whether the Board had reviewed the April 3, 2025, Meeting Minutes and if they found need for any changes, corrections, or amendments. President Lopez asked the April 3, 2025, minutes would stand approved as presented.

Motion to approve the April 3, 2025, Meeting Minutes as presented by:  
Trustee Leigh Irons and 2nd by Trustee DeHart  
Upon roll call vote, all voted AYE; except Trustee Christofilakos voted present  
**MOTION PASSES.**

President Lopez asked whether the Board had reviewed the March 20, 2025, Executive Meeting Minutes and if they found need for any changes, corrections, or amendments. President Lopez asked the March 20, 2025, executive minutes would stand approved as presented.

Motion to approve the March 20, 2025, Executive Meeting Minutes as presented by: Trustee Leigh Irons and 2nd by Trustee DeHart  
Upon roll call vote, all voted AYE; Trustee Christofilakos voted present  
**MOTION PASSES.**

**APPROVAL TO PAY BILLS:** President Lopez asked whether the board had reviewed Warrant List 25-23 dated April 17, 2025, totaling \$54,448.78. Treasurer Snow stated the breakdown of the amount that \$15,965.37 will be paid from the General Revenue Fund, \$635.14 will be paid out of the 1% Fund and \$37,868.10 will be paid from the Water Account. President Lopez asked for a motion to approve Warrant List 25-23 as presented.

Motion to Approve the Warrant List 25-23 totaling \$54,448.78 as presented  
by: Trustee Leigh Irons and 2nd by Trustee DeHart  
Upon roll call vote, all voted AYE;  
**MOTION PASSES.**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** President Lopez opened the Visitors Acknowledgement portion of the meeting at 6:35 pm.

President Lopez thanked the residents that were in attendance and stated that the Village will go into executive session for interviews around 7:00 pm. President Lopez stated that the Village has cancelled the Public Hearing that was scheduled for tonight and will reschedule soon. All residents will receive another letter in the mail of when the meeting will be scheduled. President Lopez stated for any residents that are present, you will have 5 minutes to address the Board. President Lopez stated the May 1, 2025, meeting we will be swearing in Trustees and himself and will have treats and drinks. President Lopez reminded the Board members to dress accordingly as he would like a picture of the Board for the website. At the May 1, 2025, meeting, the Board will reappoint the Clerk, Treasurer and Executive Assistant.

Bill Beaty addressed the Board to state he has not received a bulletin and would like them delivered to his address at 1287 Wabash. Bill also stated that the garbage coming from the West Grand Plaza and Sonic is an ongoing concern. Trustee DeHart stated she would investigate.

Shawn Stillman asked about the vehicle still on Macarthur, Trustee Leigh Irons stated that has been addressed and should be removed soon. Shawn also stated that the speeding on Iles has increased in the afternoons. Trustee Leigh Irons stated that the Village has 2 part time officers starting and a full time officer graduating next week, there will be more police presence soon. Shawn asked when the meeting would be about chickens and President Lopez stated that April 23, 2025 from 6 pm to 7 pm there is scheduled an informational meeting regarding allowing chickens in the Village. No board action would be done that night, it is for discussion purposes.

Roxie Laswell, resident on Iles, wanted to address the TIF Public Hearing and how that will affect her home. Roxie asked if this is something that the resident could ask for funding? Attorney Brokaw broke down the reasoning for creating a TIF district and that the Village will if the TIF is approved an application for residents and businesses to apply for TIF funds.

Mark & Errolyn Trapanese, residents on Welch, just moved into the Village prior to receiving the TIF meeting notice and addressed how worried they both are purchasing their home and receiving a letter stating their home is blighted. Attorney Brokaw stated the letter is unfortunately a standard letter per the statute. Errolyn asked if funding would be available to do some of the items they are wanting to do on their home. Attorney Brokaw stated that funds could be depending on the project and Board approval of a TIF request but that funding can not be reimbursed so if they were wanting to apply for TIF funds they would need to wait to start the project until the TIF fund has been created and board approval is obtained.

President Lopez announced he will be conducting Listening Moment Sessions starting May 21, 2025 from 6 pm to 7 pm at the Jerome Civic Center to have a transparent conversation on any issues that matter to the residents. Residents are encouraged to attend if they would like to speak with President Lopez on various issues. President Lopez will begin the session with a short presentation followed by an open forum where residents can ask questions, raise concerns and offer feedback. This is a space for real dialogue. Session 2 will be June 25, 2025 from 6 pm – 7 pm.

Clerk Cave received an email prior to the meeting that was read into the minutes. On April 17, 2025 at 5:02 pm Nikki Jones sent the following email and was read into the minutes. *Hello, Can you please read the below at tonight's Board meeting that I am unable to attend in person? Thank you. I would like to inquire about the disparity in which the Board investigates and holds accountable the citizens of Jerome when they receive complaints. It appears that the Board largely only investigates complaints submitted and voiced by Mr. Shawn Stillman as he regularly attends Board meetings in person and consistently complains about miniscule things that quite literally have nothing to do with him or affect him in any way. However, both Kathy DeHart and Dale Lael have been made aware of Mr. Stillman being in constant violation of the no parking on lawns ordinance. Please see attached pictures which are date and time stamped from today and earlier this month, and were previously submitted to Trustee DeHart. She was also informed of this violation via email last year and said she was forwarding the concerns to Trustee Lael, but clearly Mr. Stillman continues to violate this ordinance and the Trustees continue to do nothing about it. I look forward to hearing from the Board to understand this disparate treatment and continued harassment of other Jerome citizens by him and other members of the Board. Finally, I wanted to voice my support for his wife's motion to allow chickens in the village. Perhaps having a hobby would ease the burden on Mr. Stillman as the unofficial neighborhood watch he has instilled upon himself. Thanks!*

President Lopez closed the Visitors Acknowledgement portion of the meeting at 7:01 pm.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

A motion was made by Trustee Lael to go into Executive Session to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of a specific employee or legal counsel of the public body (5 ILCS 120/2 (c)(1)); minutes of meetings lawfully closed under the Open Meetings Act for purposes of approval by the Body (5ILCS 120/2(c)(21); Trustee DeHart seconded the motion.

The Board went into Executive Session at 7:02 pm.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 8:18 pm.

**OLD BUSINESS:** President Lopez stated that the Animal Ordinance is tabled until the next meeting. Trustee DeHart stated she has picked up the Animal Ordinance from Sangamon County today and will start the review.

**NEW BUSINESS:** President Lopez opened discussion and approval of the hiring of Police Officer(s).

Motion to Approve the Hiring of Jayden Braner as a full-time police officer at \$26.00 per hour pending background check by Trustee Leigh Irons and 2nd by Trustee Christofilakos

Upon roll call vote, all voted AYE;  
**MOTION PASSES.**

President Lopez opened up discussion and approval of Hiring a Public Works Employee.

Motion to Approve Hiring Michael Otken @ \$24.00 per hour full time pending background check by Trustee Raftis and 2nd by Trustee Lael  
Upon roll call vote, all voted AYE;  
**MOTION PASSES.**

President Lopez opened up discussion and approval of the Fiscal Year 2026 Budget.

Motion to Approve Fiscal Year 2026 Budget by Trustee Raftis and 2nd by Trustee Lael  
Upon roll call vote, all voted AYE;  
**MOTION PASSES.**

**REPORTS:**

Trustee DeHart stated she investigated the complaint at 1345 Iles, and the resident is following their requirement of having signage large enough to read from a distance of 10 feet. The annual Village Easter Egg Hunt was held on 4/13, and 57 children collected eggs in the park and was attended by 70 or so residents. The weather was wonderful for the hunt and time spent playing in the park. Thanks to all for your contributions to making the event a success. Thank you for candy donations, and time donated by volunteers, village staff and trustees that helped fill eggs, provide face painting, and set up and clean up. Trustee DeHart is working on fire pit permits and easement issues.

Trustee Raftis had nothing to report.

Trustee Christofilakos had nothing to report.

Trustee Lael had nothing to report.

Trustee Leigh Irons had nothing to report.

Trustee Ralph Irons was absent.

Treasurer Snow had nothing to report.

Clerk Cave had nothing to report.

Attorney Brokaw had nothing to report.

Discussion took place on a variety of items for the next fiscal year budget.

**ADJOURNMENT:** With no further business, President Lopez asked for a motion to close the meeting at 8:33 pm. Motion was made by Trustee Raftis and 2nd by Trustee Christofilakos.

**PREPARED BY:** Lisa Cave, Clerk

**DATE APPROVED:** May 1, 2025

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Village Clerk

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Date