

**VILLAGE OF GURNEE  
GURNEE CARES COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE:** Tuesday, December 9, 2025  
**TIME:** 7:00 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Conference Room A at Village Hall  
located at 325 N. O'Plaine Road, Gurnee, IL

**1. Call to Order**

- A** The meeting was called to order at 7:03pm
- B** In Attendance: Patrick French, Rachel Chenier, Beth Pope, Susan Squires, Mark Froseth, Brooke Hagstrom, Liz Nelson, Candy Reimholz, Roger Moreano, Gale Graves, Kevin Woodside, Matt Trujillo
- C** Absent: Malcom Kelly, Bryson King

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Public Comment**

- A** There was no public comment.

**4. Approval of the Meeting Minutes**

**A October 14, 2025**

- Beth made a motion to approve the minutes, and Gale made a motion to second it. The group approved the minutes.

**5. New Business**

**A Review of Grant Applicants**

- Kevin began with the goal of identifying 1-2 applications to present to the board. The objective is to finalize which applications to bring to the Village Board in February.
- We have sufficient budget to award additional grants. The focus is on bringing quick, impactful wins to the board that will be well received. The aim is to identify the best of the best without eliminating any applications today.
- Each group member selected their top three applications they believe are the strongest and most suitable to move forward. The top applicants that received top consideration at this first meeting were:
  - Blue Devil Pantry – IIII
  - A Safe Place – II
  - Prairie State Legal -II
  - Keeping Families Covered – II
  - Mothers Trust Foundation – IIII
  - Erie Family Health – I
  - Center for Immigrant Progress – II
  - Joselyn Center
  - Boys & Girls Club
  - Big Brother's Big Sisters
  - Youth & Family Counseling

- Our Shining Stars
  - Caring for Kids
  - Community Youth Network
  - Kindred Life
  - NICASA Behavioral Health
  - Zacharias Center
- The group highlighted the top applications chosen with multiple tallies.
  - Before the group focused on the ones with multiple votes, Kevin asked the group if there were any organizations with one vote that should be highlighted. Liz mentioned the Joselyn Center which provides psychiatric support and medicine management. The group noted that many applicants strongly supported mental health initiatives, there was just a small impact with this application that specifically helped Gurnee.
  - Some applications addressed how they would serve communities where they currently do not operate. Several applications were effective in demonstrating the impact they would have in Gurnee.
  - Rachel discussed the Boys and Girls Club, noting that they currently serve 150 students in Gurnee and are looking to expand into other communities.
  - The group talked about after the first round of awardees, the group could suggest possible ways for the organizations to improve for future applications.
  - The group then moved onto the highlighted applications starting with Mother's Trust and the Warren Blue Devils Food Pantry.
  - Candy noted that the organization made it onto her list. She highlighted needs identified through Gurnee Moms' Facebook pages, such as formula, diapers, and other necessities for mothers. Candy emphasized the needs of single mothers in the area. Mark expressed support for housing initiatives. The group agreed that Mother's Trust is well vetted, involved with schools, and clearly outlined their plans to support Gurnee students. The organization is well established, deeply connected to the Gurnee community, and ensures that funds stay local and make an immediate impact.
  - The next application that was discussed was the Warren Blue Devils Food Pantry. Beth, Candy, and Susan did not participate in discussion due to conflicts. Mark highlighted

the program's strong fundraising plan and expressed enthusiasm to move it forward. This program does not rely on SNAP benefits and is run by students. Patrick and Kevin noted multiple reasons for enthusiasm about the application and the need. There was discussion about whether it might overlap with the Warren Township Food Pantry, but the need for food support was emphasized, especially after SNAP benefits were reduced. Ultimately, it's about ensuring access to food for the youth.

- Mark pointed out that while the program serves Gurnee schools, some students may not live within the village. This could be seen as a criticism, but overall, the program benefits the youth in our community. The situation is not black and white.
- The group then talked about Keeping Families Covered. Gale commented on Keeping Families Covered, which provides essential needs such as diapers and hygiene products to the community. She highlighted the details of their grant and the impact they have on the Gurnee community. They currently serve at the Warren-Newport Public Library.
- Beth shifted the conversation to Prairie State Legal, which has a wide range of services in our community.
- Patrick circled back to Keeping Families Covered about it supporting basic needs for the community. He strongly supports this grant application.
- Kevin mentioned that some of these organizations are already collaborating and suggested exploring opportunities for these organizations to partner on grant applications. He encouraged further collaboration among the applicants since they have similar goals.
- Gale then talked about A Safe Place, allowing people to get hotel vouchers and find a place to live when dealing with hard times.
- Rachel noted that both Keeping Families Covered and Mother's Trust have programs in Gurnee where the impact will be immediately visible. She mentioned that funding for these organizations will go farther in Gurnee.
- The group mentioned that funding for A Safe Place and Prairie State Legal might make more funds available to serve Gurnee residents. Kevin mentioned these two being paired together since they have similar causes.

- Roger noted that immigration is having a noticeable impact on our community. Brooke commented that they are seeing it in the schools as well.
- Beth discussed Erie Health Care, emphasizing the need for transportation and healthcare services. Addressing these needs can have a significant impact on the community by helping senior residents. They are already established in our community, and it shows good expansion into the Gurnee community.
- The group finalized six applications to focus on and move to the next step: Blue Devil Food Pantry, A Safe Place, Prairie State Legal, Keeping Families Covered, Mothers Trust Foundation, and Erie Family Health.
- The group voted on the six applications, and all were approved by the Gurnee Cares Commission to move forward with.
- No application submitted, whether specifically discussed during the meeting or not, has been disqualified. Each submission remains open to future consideration.

- **Blue Devil Pantry (\$15K)**

- Brooke First / Mark Second
- Candy - Abstain
- Mark - Aye
- Brooke - Aye
- Beth - Abstain
- Liz - Aye
- Rachel - Aye
- Susan - Abstain
- Patrick - Aye
- Gale - Aye
- Kevin - Aye
- Roger - Aye

- **A Safe Place (\$30K)**

- Beth First / Candy Second
- Candy - Aye
- Mark - Abstain
- Brooke - Aye
- Beth - Aye
- Liz - Aye
- Rachel - Aye
- Susan - Aye
- Patrick - Aye
- Gale - Aye
- Kevin - Aye

- Roger - Aye
- **Prairie State Legal (\$30K)**
  - Beth First /Brooke Second
  - Candy - Aye
  - Mark - Abstain
  - Brooke - Aye
  - Beth - Aye
  - Liz - Aye
  - Rachel - Aye
  - Susan - Aye
  - Patrick - Aye
  - Gale - Aye
  - Kevin - Aye
  - Roger - Aye
- **Keeping Families Covered (\$20K)**
  - Liz First / Brooke Second
  - Candy - Aye
  - Mark - Aye
  - Brooke - Aye
  - Beth - Aye
  - Liz - Aye
  - Rachel - Aye
  - Susan - Aye
  - Patrick - Aye
  - Gale - Aye
  - Kevin - Aye
  - Roger - Aye
- **Mothers Trust Foundation (\$30K)**
  - Gale First / Candy Second
  - Candy - Aye
  - Mark - Aye
  - Brooke - Aye
  - Beth - Aye
  - Liz - Aye
  - Rachel - Aye
  - Susan - Aye
  - Patrick - Aye
  - Gale - Aye
  - Kevin - Aye
  - Roger - Aye
- **Erie Family Health (\$23,207)**
  - Beth First / Liz Second
  - Candy - Aye
  - Mark - Aye
  - Brooke - Aye
  - Beth - Aye
  - Liz - Aye

- Rachel - Aye
- Susan - Aye
- Patrick - Aye
- Gale - Aye
- Kevin - Aye
- Roger - Aye

• **Total - \$148,207**

**B Next Step: Application**

- Gale, Rachel, and Liz will gather information from 6 potential awardees by the 13th, with a final review scheduled for January 21.
- The group discussed how and when to notify applicants about their status. They decided that applications would not be denied at this time.

**6. Next Meetings**

**A January 13, Cares Commission Meeting**

**B January 21, Final Grant Review**

**7. Public Comment**

**A** There was no public comment.

**8. Adjournment**

**A** Candy made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Rachel made a motion to second it. The meeting was adjourned at 9:12pm.

Individuals with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who require certain accommodations in order to allow them to observe and/or participate in this meeting, or who have questions regarding the accessibility of the meeting or the facilities are required to contact Austin Pollack, Assistant to Village Administrator, at (847) 599-7500 promptly to allow the Village to make reasonable accommodations for those persons. [www.gurnee.il.us](http://www.gurnee.il.us)