

MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING OF THE GURNEE VILLAGE BOARD GURNEE VILLAGE HALL OCTOBER 27, 2025	
Call to Order	Mayor Hood called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
Other Officials in Attendance	Patrick Muetz, Village Administrator; Austin Pollack, Assistant to the Village Administrator; David Ziegler, Community Development Director; Heather Galan, Public Works Director; Brian Gosnell, Finance Director; Christine Palmieri, Director of Human Resources; Ellen Dean, Economic Development Director; Nick Leach, Village Engineer; Ryan Nelson, Assistant IT Director; David Douglass, Deputy Fire Chief; Brian Smith, Police Chief; Jeremy Gaughan, Deputy Police Chief; Jason Kalinowski, Police Commander.
Roll Call	PRESENT: 5- Balmes, Thorstenson, Woodside, Ross, Garner ABSENT: 1- O'Brien,
Pledge of Allegiance	Mayor Hood led the Pledge of Allegiance.
A. PUBLIC COMMENT	None.
B. DISCUSSION ITEMS	1. Presentation: 2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan: Progress Report #5. Administrator Muetz stated that tonight staff would review the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan Progress Report #5. He stated the Report was provided to the Board this afternoon. It will also be posted online and shared on social media. Using a PowerPoint presentation staff then reviewed each of the 24 Strategic Plan Initiatives, giving the Board information on progress to date and next steps. The 24 Strategic Initiatives reviewed included: Fiscal Sustainability 1.1 Develop fiscal growth and redevelopment strategy 1.2 Develop and implement a new Business Attraction Plan 1.3 Formalize a business retention program 1.4 Create a new strategy for operational effectiveness and efficiencies Well-Maintained Infrastructure 2.1 Develop annual Capital Plan for Pavement Improvements - COMPLETED 2.2 Develop Village Utility Reliability Plan 2.3 Update Pedestrian Improvement Plan 2.4 Perform a Comprehensive Standards and Mandate assessment Effective Communication 3.1 Conduct resident satisfaction survey - COMPLETED 3.2 Create interdepartmental communications team structure - COMPLETED 3.3 Develop data-driven communications program - COMPLETED 3.4 Develop constituent service program A Stable, well-trained workforce 4.1 Update and implement compensation and non-compensation plan - COMPLETED 4.2 Increase training opportunities for operational effectiveness 4.3 Implement professional development pathways for management positions - COMPLETED 4.4 Update recruiting and retention efforts with a focus on diversity to meet the needs of next generation workforce - COMPLETED A Safe Community 5.1 Create a Public Safety Recruitment and Retention Plan - COMPLETED

5.2 Develop a public safety community engagement program
5.3 Create stakeholder relationship strategy
5.4 Update Comprehensive Major Incident Training Plan -
COMPLETED

Lifestyle Vitality

6.1 Develop Village/small business partnership program -
COMPLETED
6.2 Establish and support events in partnership with community
and neighborhood organizations
6.3 Develop relationships with regional multi-cultural agencies
6.4 Create opportunities for community engagement around
strategic priorities - COMPLETED

Comments and Questions:

Trustee Garner stated that he continues to be impressed by the leader of each department because they have been able to manage, grow and innovate their departments. He added that the Village does this for the residents of this community, and they found the way to include them and diversify the workforce. Trustee Garner said that he was excited about the block parties, which make him happy to be a part of everybody is doing in the village.

Trustee Woodside recognized the effort that involves the strategic planning process, and there are times can be slogans and aspirational but not actionable. Then he added that everyone had engaged in, and the discipline they had to stay attached to the budgeted process, which is incredibly valuable. Trustee Woodside referred to the Deputy Chief Douglas statement about rethinking the way the village works together as public safety collaboration, which is an asset of our village. He closed saying that he was very impressed by the quality of results. He thanked the board of directors and the Village Administrator Muetz for leading the Strategic Plan because sometimes they do not pay enough attention to this.

Trustee Balmes thanked the presenters for his hard work because, in the end, their labor making the trustees look good in the eyes of the community. She mentioned that she always says to people just talk to every director and they will fix whatever needs to get fixed.

Trustee Thorstenson stated that she thanked and appreciated their labor. She mentioned that she asks Assistant to the Village Administrator Pollack to give her a lot of flyer to distribute them among the people who attend the recycling events, and she was so excited to know that how many people have signed up to the Emergency Communication System. She recognized that it is very important to stay connected with the community. Then Trustee Thorstenson asked Director of Economic Development Dean what the timeline is to incentivize business to select a vacant property.

Director Dean answered that any property that has significant size or visibility, they have to do a better job consistently of leaning in, making sure that business owner know they are going through economic difficulties, talk with them because is in the best interest of the village to incentivize them or help them to invest so they can stay. She recognized that there are times it is not possible. Director Dean added that if there is a big property and they think it might change use, we have conversation with the Village Board to see if they want to incentivize the proposed use, and also have conversations with the neighbors to find out if such project is compatible with their neighborhoods.

Trustee Thorstenson asked if there are timelines where they have to decide if it has been down for long enough.

Mayor Hood answered that when the dead of a business is imminent, the village starts incentivizing them; it is not when they are in the market for a year or two. Mayor Hood explained that they saw TJ's Friday went out right away. They needed to talk with three people months before. He said that sometimes that is impossible.

Trustee Ross thanked the board of directors for their collaboration in working together because working with different entities, the library, Park District, and schools, it says a lot about our community that others do not have. She added that other communities tell them that the success of the Village of Gurnee is the result of good work and good intentions.

Mayor Hood stated that he likes the Strategic Plan. He also expressed his appreciation to Village Administrator Muetz for his approach to this matter because he is encouraging them to stick to the plan. He recognized that it is not easy to do because they have more things to do during the day.

Administrator Muetz stated that none of this happened without the support from the trustees, from the mayor, with the resources they are bringing from their constituents, so they can implement that into the plan. He added that staff do a great job with it. Administrator Muetz suggested that this meeting should be done two times a year to show the accomplishments and progress made. He thanked the Village Board for its continued support carrying out the village mission.

Adjournment

It was moved by Trustee Balmes, seconded by Trustee Garner to adjourn the meeting.

Voice Vote: ALL AYE: Motion Carried.

Mayor Hood adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

**Selene Beltran,
Deputy Village Clerk**