

WINTER 2024

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**MAYOR**

Thomas B. Hood

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

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- Greg Garner
- Quin O'Brien
- Cheryl Ross
- Karen Thorstenson
- Kevin Woodside

**VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR**

Pat Muetz

**VILLAGE CLERK**

Andy Harris



**VILLAGE OF GURNEE**

325 N. O'PLAINE RD.

Village Hall: **847-599-7500**

Utility Billing: **847-599-7525**

Community Dev.: **847-599-7550**

Police Non-Emergency: **847-599-7000**

Public Works: **847-599-6800**

[www.gurnee.il.us](http://www.gurnee.il.us)



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## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Residents,

The holidays are upon us and so is shopping for your friends and loved ones. There is no question that living in the Village of Gurnee provides us with an amazing variety of opportunities to shop. However, one place that clearly leads the way is Gurnee Mills.

Gurnee Mills is located on 296 acres at the intersection of I-94 and Route 132. The mall was constructed in the early 1990s and is 2 million square feet with more than 200 shopping, entertainment and dining establishments housed under one roof. Gurnee Mills is quite the operation with more than 17 million visitors annually and an amazing occupancy rate of more than 95 percent. Not only is the mall tremendously successful, but so is the outer ring of businesses surrounding Gurnee Mills. Toys R Us has been vacant for years, but it now has an Ashley Furniture under construction. Right in front of Ashley Furniture and under construction is Texas Roadhouse. Also, the long vacant Saturn dealership has just been purchased by a car dealership and finally the Bakers Square building has been demolished and Bank of America is constructing a new banking facility on that site.

Over the last several years, I have been asked what I am going to do with the "failing" Gurnee Mills. It is commonly thought that online shopping has all but eliminated mall shopping, but Gurnee Mills has been more than equal to the task with fresh new offerings every month. The Gurnee Mills of today is not the Gurnee Mills of the 1990s. The entertainment mix continues to grow with Round1 (a 70,000 square foot arcade, bowling and kid's party complex), Top Shelf Ice Rink, Marcus Theater, Alpha Media radio station/show stage and more. Gurnee Mills is alive and well. As with any good business investment, Gurnee continues to wisely invest in Gurnee Mills through excellent Village services and financial incentives. Both have provided an excellent return on investment by providing an annual revenue of more than \$6M. Revenue is important but the safety of those that visit takes priority. A recent addition of a mall canine officer, additional Gurnee Police Officers and the installation of Flock cameras (cameras that inform the Police Department of vehicles arriving at Gurnee Mills that have a correlation with crime) bolsters the already safe experience that visitors receive.

I grew up across the street from the farm that was to become Gurnee Mills and never did imagine what was to come. The only businesses that opened when I was a young boy were the Holiday Inn and the Shell gas station. Other than those businesses, it was farmland from I-94 west. As I have said in the past, my father did not like the change of farmland to businesses, so he sold our family home to Bob Rohrman of Rohrman Auto Group and moved to McHenry. I stayed and have enjoyed all that Gurnee has to offer, as well as the growth of my business as an attorney as the business community grew.

We cannot discuss the growth of Gurnee without at least mentioning our talented former Mayor Dick Welton, who was the mayor of Gurnee from 1972 to 2000. As Mayor Welton has passed, you will see Mayor Welton's wife, Debby Welton mentioned in the community spotlight article on the next page.

I encourage you to get out and see all that Gurnee Mills has to offer. Additionally, please take advantage of the various events offered in Gurnee this holiday season. The Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving, Holiday Lights at Welton Plaza on December 5th and the Holiday Train on December 7th are just a few events. Please come out and enjoy your family, friends and neighbors.

I pray that this upcoming year we enjoy all that God has gifted us and to especially appreciate those that He has placed in our lives. May you have a great Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sincerely,

Mayor Tom Hood

# GURNEE NEWS

## ANNUAL CHAMBER BUSINESS LUNCHEON

On October 17th, Mayor Tom Hood, in partnership with the Village of Gurnee Chamber of Commerce, addressed a record crowd at the 2024 Annual Chamber Business Luncheon held at Brittane's Event Center in Saratoga Square. Mayor Hood highlighted the many new businesses and development projects that have progressed over the past year. Best of Gurnee Awards were presented to Gurnee Donuts ("Bringing Me Home"); Tacos El Norte ("Paying It Forward"); and Jewel-Osco Gurnee ("Special Needs Champion"). Congratulations to this year's award winners and heartfelt appreciation to the Chamber of Commerce and all local business leaders for their contributions to Gurnee's vibrant business community!



## VILLAGE BOARD RECOGNIZES VETERANS AND HOMETOWN HEROES

At the November 11th Village Board Meeting, Mayor Tom Hood, the Veterans Commission and the community, recognized all veterans and Gurnee's Hometown Heroes by presenting them their distinguished banners. This program was launched early this fall to honor and recognize veterans and service members from the Village of Gurnee who have served in the US Armed Forces or are currently serving, protecting our nation, preserving our democracy and defending the ideals we hold dear. The banners served as living tributes to honor 24 past and present members of the Armed Forces. While these banners do not recognize every service member from the Village of Gurnee, they do honor and preserve the memory of a few of Gurnee's Hometown Heroes. The program is expected to run again in the 2025 calendar year.



## COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: DEBBY WELTON

Debby Welton moved to Gurnee fifty-five years ago and was thrilled to live in a neighborhood with her friends and their children. Those were days of being involved by volunteering at school, church, and community activities. She has continued that involvement to this day, but prefers to stay active in the background without seeking recognition. It was hard to stay completely in the background while being married to former Gurnee mayor, Dick Welton. Dick was a visionary who was always working on new ideas. Debby was a willing and supportive partner as they were raising their five, blended family children. She credits the early Dixon and Welton families with championing education and modeling the family values that have made Gurnee the place that it is today. She treasures the close relationship she has with Dick's extended family. Gurnee has grown significantly since she first arrived, but it is still a great place to raise a family. Places like Gurnee Mills, Great America and many others contribute to the success of the local economy and provide clean and safe spaces for families. It makes her happy to see neighbors getting to know each other and residents participating in all that Gurnee has to offer. Currently, Debby loves helping her children and being involved in the lives of her grandchildren. She also is working as an aide at Prairie Trail School and appreciates the interaction with children from all areas of the community.



## NEW BUSINESSES

**AMG Surgical Specialists**  
20 Tower Ct.

**Advia Credit Union**  
5103 Washington St.

**C.E. Wurzer Construction, Divine Radiance, Truly Title (Relocation)**  
Bellewater Suites

**Christian Counseling, Reliable Technologies, Renew Medical Aesthetics, Creative Rehab (relocation), Landtrust National Title**  
Windsor Court

**Christmas Treasures, Aesthetic Aromatics, Brow Art 23, Revolver (relocation), JD Sports, Claire's (relocation)**  
Gurnee Mills

**Hometown Veterinary Partners Gurnee**  
1333 N Delany Rd.

**La Mariposa LLC**  
Hawkston Hall

**Product Resources Inc.**  
1300 N. Rte. 41

**Spraytech LLC**  
3601 Grand Ave.

**The Wing District**  
1810 N Delany Rd.

**Yolanda's Hair Studio**  
3567 Grand Ave.

### COMING SOON:

**AZ Polymers (Expansion)**  
740 Tri-State Pkwy.

**Bank of America**  
6340 Grand Ave.

**Blurry Blendz Barbershop**  
3701 Grand Ave.

**Buona Beef/ Rainbow Cone**  
7360 Grand Ave.

**CarWise Gurnee**  
6460 Gurnee Mills Cir.

**Dream Car Chicago**  
1351 Estes St.

**Edward Jones Investments**  
6071 Washington St.

**El Paisano LLC**  
3567 Grand Ave.

**Hey Dude, VBH Toys, Luna Lux Collection, 3D Night Lamps, Petal Scented Candles, Pretty Pretty Print Press, Miss A, ReClectic, white box finish for Boot Barn (relocation) & Primark**  
Gurnee Mills

**Johana's Beauty Salon**  
3608 Grand Ave.

**Kyoto Ramen**  
4949 Grand Ave.

**Muller Honda (Renovation/Addition)**  
7000 Grand Ave.

**Optimize Chiropractic**  
731 S Rte. 21

**Texas Roadhouse**  
6060 Gurnee Mills Cir.

**Trio Car Wash**  
3419 Grand Ave.

**The UPS Store**  
5250 Grand Ave.

**Verdure Health LLC, Primerica**  
Bellewater Suites

**Within Holistic Counseling, Berg & Schmidt, Guild Mortgage Company**  
Windsor Court

**Wordup Bible Bookstore**  
1333 N Delany Rd.

**XYip Acquisitions LLC**  
905 Lakeside Dr.

## VILLAGE MEETINGS

### Village Board

December 2  
December 16  
January 6  
January 27  
February 3  
February 17  
February 24

### Planning and Zoning Board

December 4  
December 18  
January 8  
January 22  
February 5  
February 19

All Village meetings are held at Village Hall (325 N. O'Plaine Road).

Village Board meetings begin at 7:00pm on Mondays. Planning and Zoning Board Meetings begin at 7:30pm on Wednesdays. Schedule subject to change.

## MORE COMMUNITY EVENTS



### COFFEE WITH THE MAYOR

Saturday, December 14  
11:00am - 1:00pm  
Einstein Bros. Bagels  
6641 Grand Ave.



### FROSTY FEST

Saturday, January 4  
10:30am - 1:30pm  
Viking Park  
4374 Old Grand Ave.

## Upcoming Events

### Holiday Lights at Welton Plaza

Thursday, December 5, 5:30pm to 7:30pm

It's that wonderful time of year once again, full of joy, warmth, and the spirit of giving! To celebrate the season, we invite you to join us for the 4th Annual Holiday Lights at Welton Plaza located on Old Grand Avenue. This enchanting event will feature an ice sculpting demonstration; fire pits and s'mores to keep you cozy; free pizza to satisfy your appetite; hot cocoa; souvenir mugs for the first 200 kids; craft stations; donut and cookie decorating; musical and dance performances; and plenty of festive photo opportunities with dazzling holiday lights! Special appearances will be made by Mr. and Mrs. Claus, Gurnee Mayor Tom Hood, and others. Please bring nonperishable food donations for the Warren Township Food Pantry.



### CPKC Holiday Train at Viking Park

Saturday, December 7, Estimated Arrival 5:00pm

Gather the family and kick off the holiday season with the return of the Holiday Train to Gurnee on Saturday, December 7th. This FREE event will take place from 4:00pm to 6:00pm. The train is estimated to arrive at 5:00pm, followed by a holiday concert starting at 5:15pm. Courtesy of the Gurnee Chamber of Commerce, enjoy a free petting zoo, photos with Santa, holiday music, and complimentary snacks.



The Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC) Holiday Train is nearly 1,000 feet long with 14 rail cars, each decorated with hundreds of thousands of technology-leading LED lights and holiday designs. The community's support of the Northern Illinois Food Bank keeps the Holiday Train coming back to Gurnee, one of only four stops in Illinois, each year; please bring nonperishable food items to donate at the event. Parking for this event is offered at Viking Park and Viking Middle School located at 4460 Old Grand Ave. and at Warren Township High School located at 500 N. O'Plaine Rd.

### Holiday Celebration at Viking Park Community Center

Tuesday, December 10, 11:30am to 1:00pm

Celebrate the holidays with a lunch of salad, pork loin, mashed potatoes, vegetables and dessert. The holiday mixer (ages 55+) will take place at Viking Park Community Center located at 4374 Old Grand Ave. Musical entertainment by the "Lake Shore Singers" who will entertain with some favorite tunes for the Holidays. Bring a \$6 or less wrapped gift for the gift exchange. The registration deadline is December 5th, and there is a \$10 fee. Doors open at 11:00am and lunch service begins at 11:30am. Save your seat and register at <https://www.gurneeparkdistrict.com>.

### 2025 GURNEE COMMUNITY SURVEY

In early 2025, the Village of Gurnee, in partnership with our survey consultant, the ETC Institute, will be conducting a survey of residents. The survey will be sent to a random sample of residents based on address. It is designed to be statistically valid through a random selection process. If you receive the survey, we encourage you to take part! The feedback gathered will be presented at an upcoming Village Board meeting and will be valuable in helping set priorities and inform budget planning.



# SENIOR SERVICES GUIDE



Warren Township  
Senior Services



## ElderCARE Lake County Services

### Transportation to Medical Appointments

At a typical visit to provide transportation, an ElderCARE volunteer escorts seniors to their vehicle, takes them to their medical appointment and returns them back home. ElderCARE also assists with drop-off and pick-up from lengthy appointments such as dialysis. Please provide at least 10 days notice when requesting. One ride per week may be scheduled.

### Grocery Shopping

Do you or a senior that you know need assistance getting groceries? Access to healthy food is important. Through ElderCARE grocery shopping service, volunteers take the grocery list and make the trip to the store. Seniors pay for the groceries and the service is free.

### Basic Technology Program

Whether it's a phone, tablet or computer, ElderCARE can help seniors with technology, so they can stay connected to family and doctors.

### Friendly Visits

Living alone can be challenging, especially when it's tough to get out and interact with others. ElderCARE's friendly visits services provide an opportunity for seniors to develop lasting friendships by phone or over a cup of tea or a game.

For more information on these services and to receive an application to sign up, visit <https://www.eldercarelakecounty.org/services> or call 847-406-4683. ElderCARE is a volunteer-driven non-profit. If you are an active senior and have the heart to help others, please call ElderCARE to volunteer!

## Warren Township Senior Services

### Activities: Games, Fitness Classes and Events

The Warren Township Center offers a wide variety of senior activities such as luncheons, fitness classes, trips and various games. These activities fill up fast, so please call the Senior Center at 847-244-1101 ext. \*501 for registration dates, class dates and additional information. Also, for anyone looking for support as they go through any life change, support group meets Wednesdays from 1:30pm to 3:00pm.

### Social and Financial Services

The Senior Center has a Social Service staff ready to assist residents. Information and help can be provided in applying for federal, state and local programs including Medicare and social security information and assistance. Their trained Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) counselors are available by appointment to provide information and assistance navigating the Medicare and Social Security process and what seniors need to know to avoid penalties as well as one-on-one assistance with Enrollment Advantage Plans Supplements/Medigap, Medicare Savings Program, and Prescription Drug Plans/Part D Insurance Claims.

### Utility and Financial Assistance Programs

Information, screening and assistance is provided for applying for and maintaining eligibility for different programs such as: LIHEAP (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program), a federal/state program for those eligible to receive yearly credit on gas and electric bills; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/Food; Medicaid; and Prescription Drug Assistance.

They also have additional information on housing, legal services, elder abuse, counseling services, transportation, caregiving resources, home services, repairs & improvements and Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP). For more information on these services, please visit <https://www.warrentownship.net/191/Senior-Services> or call 847-244-1101 ext. \*501.

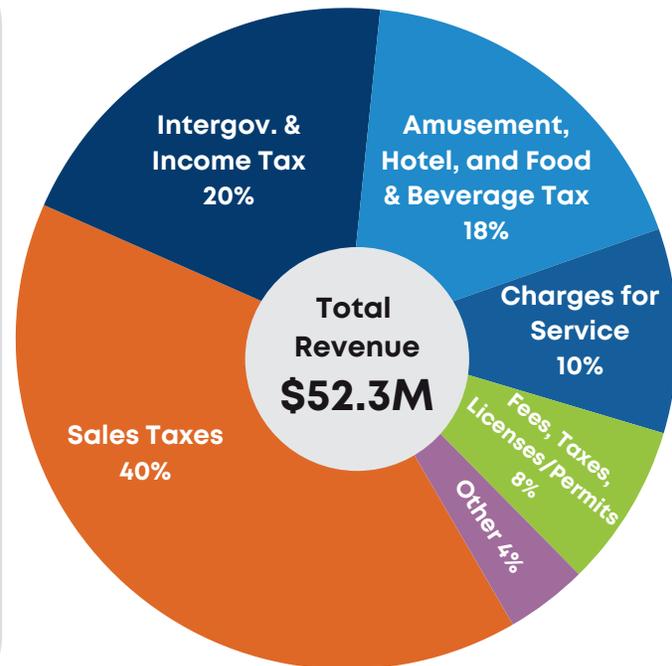
# GURNEE POPULAR ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

# 2024

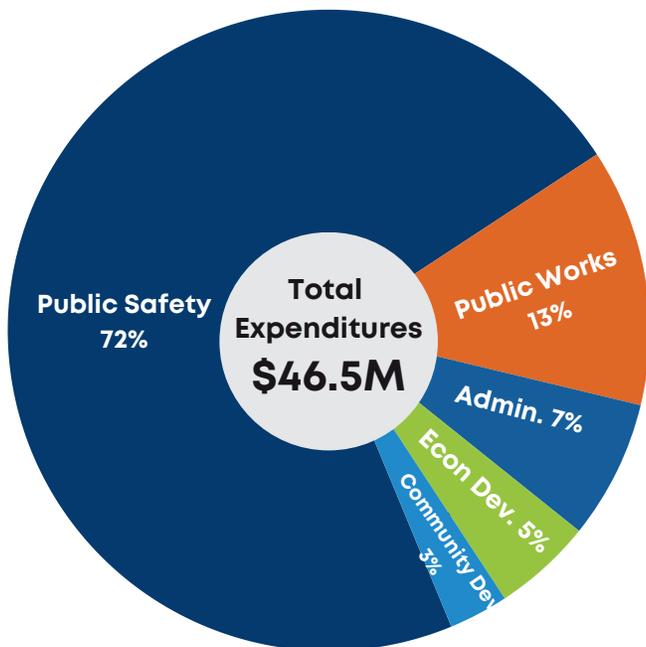
## 5 Key Takeaways

- **Balanced Budget and Minimized Debt:** Continued to pass a balanced budget and decrease debt.
- **Provided Value Back:** Through not levying a property tax or a utility tax, the Village saved approximately \$6,500 per homeowner over 10 years (Based on the average home value of \$330,000 and the property tax levy of neighboring communities). Gurnee also has the lowest water rate among CLCJAWA towns.
- **Maintained Business Relationships:** Strengthened relationships with Six Flags, Great Wolf Lodge and Gurnee Mills, which combined provides 33% of all General Fund revenues.
- **Small Business Grant Program:** Awarded over \$500k in grants over 3 yrs., spurring over \$4M in improvements.
- **Investing in Infrastructure:** 6.5 miles of roadway rehabilitated last year as part of the largest Capital Program in Gurnee's history.

## Where Does the Money Come from?



## How Is the Money Spent?



## Debt Per Capita of Lake County Communities with Over 25K Pop.



The above pie charts are a description of the General Fund, which is the main operating fund. Fund accounting is used as a mechanism in government finance to maintain compliance and create a system of checks and balances.

# SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SEASONAL REMINDERS

## GURNEE'S SNOW AND ICE CONTROL



With the onset of the winter season, the Gurnee Public Works Department would like to offer the following information to keep in mind as snow plowing operations begin.

Village plowing operations commence when the snow begins to accumulate and temperatures indicate that no melting will occur. The Village plows only municipally-owned streets. The Village of Gurnee is bisected by a number of State of Illinois and Lake County arterial highways which are not maintained/plowed by the Village. Routes 132, 120, 45, 41 and 21 are plowed and maintained by the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). Hunt Club, Washington, O'Plaine, Greenleaf (south of Washington), Dilley's (north of Rt. 132),

Gages Lake, Delany (north of Rt. 41), Sunset and Stearns School are plowed and maintained by the Lake County Division of Transportation (LCDOT).

### The following tips help ensure snow and ice control operations proceed smoothly:

1. When clearing sidewalks and driveways, do not shovel, blow or plow snow onto the roadway.
2. When it starts to snow, park your vehicle off of the street.
3. Please try to clear the snow around fire hydrants. This simple step could save precious time during an emergency.
4. Please remove portable basketball hoops, benches and decor from the street right-of-way. The Village is not responsible for damage to these items resulting from our snow removal operations.
5. To minimize snow deposits at the end of your driveway, try not to create large piles of snow in the parkway on the upstream side. While it's frustrating to shovel your driveway only to have the plow come by and push snow back at the base, it is not feasible to plow the street so that your driveway remains completely "snow free." Roadway design, the type of equipment that is utilized and the severity of snow events all factor into the size of the windrow left in the plow's wake.

If you have any questions regarding the Village's snow and ice control operations, please visit [www.gurnee.il.us/plowing](http://www.gurnee.il.us/plowing) or call the Gurnee Public Works Department at 847-599-6800.

## REUSE-A-SHOE COLLECTION BIN MOVED TO PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY

The Reuse-A-Shoe Collection Bin has been moved to the Gurnee Public Works Facility at 1151 Kilbourne Ave. Open daily for drop-off anytime, here are some important things to remember: All types, sizes and brands are accepted. If a pair, please keep shoes paired by tying, banding, or bagging them together. NOT ACCEPTED Items include but are not limited to ice skates, rollerblades, winter boots, moldy shoes or badly damaged shoes. By using this reuse bin, you're helping reduce waste and contributing to a greener Gurnee!

## CHRISTMAS TREE PICK UP BEGINS THURSDAY, JANUARY 2

Lakeshore Recycling Systems will be collecting Christmas trees on your regular service day throughout the month of January.

In order for a tree to be collected, it must be placed at the curb or the edge of the street by 6:00am on the pick-up day. All lights and decorations must be removed. Failure to remove decorations or placing the tree in a plastic bag will result in the tree not being collected that week and the resident will have to wait until the following week. Please note that only real trees are accepted.

**Trees placed out after your final collection for January will not be picked up.**



## HOLIDAY REMINDER: WASTE COLLECTION AND OFFICE CLOSURE

Due to the Christmas Holiday and New Year's Day, if your garbage and recycling falls on or after Wednesday, December 25th (Christmas Day) or Wednesday, January 1st (New Year's Day) then your collection will be delayed by one day for that week. Also, Village offices will be closed on December 24th and 25th (Christmas Eve and Christmas Day) as well as Wednesday, January 1st (New Year's Day).

## POSTAL PATRON

### WINTER WEATHER SAFETY TIPS

With the winter weather finally settling in, here are some tips to keep you and your loved ones safe:

- Limit time outdoors and dress warmly
- Take breaks while shoveling
- Listen for emergency alerts
- Only use generators outside
- Check on neighbors
- Brings pets inside

Stay off roads during hazardous weather. If you must travel, keep a flashlight, food and water in your vehicle in case of an emergency. The latest road conditions for Illinois can be found at [www.gettingaroundillinois.com](http://www.gettingaroundillinois.com).

Additionally, Gurnee's Warming Center is Gurnee Mills Mall located at 6170 W Grand Ave. The mall is open Monday through Saturday 10:00am to 8:00pm and Sunday from 11:00am to 7:00pm.



### WINTER HOME MAINTENANCE TIPS

Winter is on its way! It is important to protect the interior and exterior of your property from the cold weather. The following tips can help prepare your home for the winter season.

- 1. Protect Pipes:** Maintain a consistent temperature of at least 60°F in all areas of your home, and properly seal all possible entry points for outdoor air to prevent freezing of water pipes.
- 2. Furnace Maintenance:** Have an HVAC professional test and service your furnace annually to ensure all components are functioning properly.
- 3. Fireplace Maintenance:** Before using your fireplace for the first time this season, thoroughly clean it by removing soot and debris from the firebox and chimney.

**If your fireplace needs maintenance and/or repair, consult with a chimney sweeper or fireplace service technician.**



### SHOP LOCAL THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

As the holiday season approaches, you may already be seeking bargains on various items, from gifts to food. While shopping, remember that supporting local businesses is one of the best ways to contribute to our community. Every dollar spent in Gurnee not only supports local enterprises but also helps fund essential services that you rely on, such as police and fire protection. We encourage you to consider shopping in Gurnee this holiday season and throughout the year! Your support makes a significant difference, and we truly appreciate it. Happy shopping!

