



# Meeting Minutes

Village of Downers Grove - Council Meeting

Council Chambers

July 16, 2024

07:00 PM

## 1. Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

## 2. Roll Call

**Council Attendance (Present):** Commissioner Hosé, Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt, Commissioner Gilmartin, Commissioner Glover, Commissioner Tully, Commissioner Davenport

**Council Attendance (Not Present):** Mayor Barnett

**Non-Voting:** Village Manager Dave Fieldman, Village Attorney Enza Petrarca, and Village Clerk Rosa Berardi

## 3. Minutes of Council Meetings

**MIN 2024-10209** — A. Minutes: Village Council Meeting Minutes – July 09, 2024

**MOTION:** To adopt **The Meeting Minutes of the July 09, 2024, Village Council Meeting**, as presented.

**RESULT:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

**MOTIONED TO APPROVE:** Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt

**SECONDED BY:** Commissioner Gilmartin,

**AYES:** Sadowski-Fugitt, Gilmartin, Davenport, Tully, Glover, Mayor Pro Tem Hosé

**NAYES:** None

**MIN 2024-10429** — B. Minutes: Executive Session Meeting Minutes for Approval Only – July 09, 2024

**MOTION:** To adopt **The Executive Session Meeting Minutes of the July 09, 2024, Village Council Meeting**, as presented.

**RESULT:** Motion carried unanimously by roll call.

**MOTIONED TO APPROVE:** Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt

**SECONDED BY:** Commissioner Gilmartin,

**AYES:** Sadowski-Fugitt, Gilmartin, Davenport, Tully, Glover, Mayor Pro Tem Hosé

**NAYES:** None

## 4. Public Comments

Mayor Pro Tem Hosé spoke of the attempted assassination of Donald Trump. He requested all to do what they can to try and dial down tempers when speaking during public comment.

Clorinda Greco, business owner, spoke of photos that included in the Guiding DG packet that reflect there would not any parking available on Main Street (as a result of future outdoor dining plans), and this is why the public came to the conclusion that parking would eventually be eliminated on Main Street. She also spoke of current issues with insufficient parking in the downtown.

Mayor Pro Tem José said consultants are just that, “consultants”. He said the Council was not provided with the materials showing the photos mentioned. He reminded all that the photos were one of many suggestions from the consultants and decisions would be made by the Council during Village Council meetings.

Janet Whittingham, resident, referenced the resident surveys that were a part of the Guiding DG Existing Conditions report, stating that the surveys indicate residents are content with the Village as it is and further enhancements are not necessary. She said because of this, the Village’s efforts should be put toward addressing insufficient parking.

Carrissa Dougherty, Trustee on the Library Board of Trustees, spoke of her term nearing completion and offered some comments for the Council to take into consideration when deliberating over candidates to fill the position of Trustee. She also opined that the appointment process for Trustees should remain in place and thanked the Council for their work on this.

Mayor Pro Tem José thanked her for her service and comments.

David Rose, resident, spoke of concerns with the Council’s time limitations on Public Comment, the process of the Village’s rRemarks system, and with the Village Council meeting minutes posted to the Village website. He further expressed his disappointment in the Village’s response to concerns about environmental sustainability.

## 5. Consent Agenda

**COR 2024-10235** — A. Claims Ordinance: No. 6561, Payroll - June 28, 2024

**BIL 2024-10236** — B. Bills Payable: No. 6814 - July 16, 2024

**MOTION:** To adopt **The Consent Agenda of the July 16, 2024 meeting**, as presented.

**RESULT:** Motion carried 6-0 by roll call vote.

**MOTIONED TO APPROVE:** Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt

**SECONDED BY:** Commissioner Gilmartin

**AYES:** Sadowski-Fugitt, Gilmartin, Davenport, Tully, Glover, Mayor Pro Tem José

**NAYES:** None

## 6. Active Agenda

**MOT 2024-10413** — A. Motion: Approve a Contract with Swallow Corp of West Chicago, Illinois, for the Washington Street Drainage Improvements

**MOTION:** To Approve a Contract with Swallow Corp of West Chicago, Illinois, for the Washington Street Drainage Improvements, as presented.

**RESULT:** Motion carried 6-0 by roll call vote.

**MOTIONED TO APPROVE:** Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt

**SECONDED BY:** Commissioner Gilmartin

**AYES:** Sadowski-Fugitt, Gilmartin, Davenport, Tully, Glover, Mayor Pro Tem José

**NAYES:** None

## 7. Council Member Reports

Commissioner Gilmartin reminded all about the Guiding DG visioning workshops scheduled on July 22nd at 6:30 p.m. at Downers Grove South, July 25th at 2:00 p.m. at Village Hall and at 6:30 p.m. at the Downers Grove Recreation Center. He said the workshops are a part of the Guiding DG initiative and resident input is welcome and important.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt thanked the Public Works and Fire Departments for their efforts with the recent extreme weather.

Mayor Pro Tem José spoke of a press release that was posted on the Village website about the MERIT (SWAT team) and their response to a domestic violence incident. He asked anyone that needs assistance, or knows anyone who may need assistance, to call the hotline at (800) 799-7233. He shared that Family Shelter Service offers a wide

variety of domestic abuse services, including assistance with Orders of Protection - for more information call (630) 469-5650 or visit <https://www.metrofamily.org/fssofmsfd/> . He reminded all that the Village also has a Social Worker, who can be reached at (630) 434-6894. Mayor Pro Tem José reiterated that anyone suffering from domestic violence should reach out for help.

At 7:33 p.m., Mayor Pro Tem José called for a five minute recess. He invited all to join the Council in the Committee Room for the Manager's Report.

## **8. Manager's Report**

**INF 2024-10428** — A. Information: Long Range Planning Report #2

**REP 2024-10431** — B. Guiding DG: Comprehensive Plan and Related Projects – Environmental Sustainability Existing Conditions Report

The meeting reconvened in the Committee Room at 7:40 p.m. Village Manager Fieldman explained that this portion of the meeting would include two discussions, one with regard to Guiding DG and the other regarding the Village's Long Range Plan. He said the items would be taken out of agenda order due to the public interest in Guiding DG. He reviewed the Guiding DG schedule of events and introduced Jason Michnick, the Village's Environmental Sustainability Coordinator and Jay Womack with GZA (a sub consultant of Guiding DG).

Mr. Michnick explained that he and Mr. Womack would both be presenting during this portion of the meeting. Mr. Michnick explained that GZA was brought on to the Guiding DG team a little later than the other consultants and that GZA was almost caught up with the rest of the Guiding DG team. He said that he and Jay would be presenting the sustainability portion of the Guiding DG Existing Conditions Report - really focusing on the Key Takeaways and also the Issues and Opportunities. He explained that the Council's input on the information in the report was important and that this document would be used as a foundational document as the Village's sustainability planning efforts moved forward.

Mr. Womack then presented the agenda for the evening. He explained that he personally took all of the photos that were on the front cover of the report. He further expressed that he was very impressed with some the conditions within the Village, but also said that there are some things that can be improved upon. Mr. Womack explained that Mr. Michnick started some outreach efforts (meeting with people, including kids) before Mr. Womack joined the Guiding DG team. He then provided an explanation of what the discussion of the evening would include.

Mr. Michnick explained that the purpose of the Existing Conditions Report would be discussed the during this meeting. He spoke about the community outreach portion of the report, explaining that the data represented a mix of things that were done across all Guiding DG plans, including community surveys and public workshops. He shared the following from the public feed back: with regard to top weaknesses - the response was sustainability initiatives, and with regard to priorities - the response was clean air, clean water, natural resources, the environment/nature.

Mr. Michnick explained that the top priorities response had a natural resources type theme, that is really the core of environmental sustainability in the community. He said though climate and clean energy were very important to the middle and high school students that he met with, when looking at the Community Survey, it was not as important to the general population - there seemed to be a generational difference in terms of the importance of clean energy and renewable energy as a priority in the Sustainability Plan. He spoke of the results of his meetings with organizations in the community such as Greener Grove and Pierce Heritage Alliance, including the idea that there was a lack of culture of environmental stewardship and the importance of developing that over time. Next, Mr. Michnick reviewed the Climate Risk Assessment section, stating that it was added to the report to outline what the impacts of climate change have been and what they may look like in the future. He reviewed data made available through the Chicago Metropolitan Region Climate Action Plan and the DuPage County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, and then reviewed projections that included an increase in precipitation and risk for flooding – which when put together, could lead to higher insurance premiums, higher infrastructure costs and could ultimately lead to potentially higher costs for the Village and residents alike. Mr. Michnick then moved on to the Greenest Region Compact framework. He said this conversation started in May and reminded all that it is intended to be a flexible, qualitative tool. He explained he wanted to build off of the Staff Report that was completed in 2023 and identify where there are gaps in the functions of the Village and where there are strengths. He said the Key Takeaways show that the actions of the Village align well

with what is listed in the framework, and in terms of operational alignment, a huge portion of the framework itself really focuses on public relations and external collaboration/partnerships. Mr. Michnick shared that one of the weaknesses observed had to do with tracking and evaluations - actually taking data and reporting it out. Next, Mr. Michnick and Mr. Womack reviewed the Key Takeaways of the following sections of the report: Community Outreach, Climate Risk Assessment, Downers Grove Actions and Greenest Regions Compact Framework Analysis, Existing Conditions Analysis, and the Green House Gas Inventory for Downers Grove. Lastly, the Issues and Opportunities section was reviewed and Mr. Michnick shared that this section ties a thread through all of the sections and included the following themes: natural resources, open spaces and natural areas, private property, enhancing resilience and preparedness, energy efficiency and energy sources, contracted services, outreach and public engagement, consumption and waste reduction, and reduce light pollution and emissions. Mr. Michnick then asked the Council if they thought the Key Takeaways presented were appropriate and if they could be taken to the Environmental Concerns Commission, to continue working on the next phases of the Environmental Sustainability Plan. He opened the conversation to the Council for any comments or questions they had.

Mayor Pro Tem José thanked Mr. Michnick and Mr. Womack for all of the work that went into the report. He said he liked that they had identified and reached out to the most important community groups, including the high schools.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt said it would be interesting to know what the difference in concerns about the climate and its impacts are among the different age groups - she said she does not want to minimize the views of the youth of the community. She said she is also interested in seeing how Downers Grove compares with surrounding communities with regard to flooding - if it is in the same areas and if there could be some sort of collaboration effort. She further stated that she appreciated the need for collaboration being listed in the report. With regard to policy, the Commissioner said that is lacking in the GRC and in the Municipal Code - she did not have a specific statement to put into the Issues and Opportunities section, but thinks this needs to be a heavy focus because the Village has control over the GRC and the Municipal Code. With regard to open space, green space, and naturalized areas - she appreciated that the map broke this down by the governing bodies (Village, Park District, Forest Preserve, Sanitary District). She said on page 44 there is a statement that the Village has 4,000 acres of impermeable cover and she asked if that could be calculated in terms of a percentage. She spoke of page 49 showing that the Village is lacking in green infrastructure, and she said that she thinks there is more the Village can talk about here. On page 50, the Commissioner said she is heartened that it shows a drop in refuse and recyclables, and she thinks there can be an opportunity for the Village here. Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt spoke about water quality and run-off, stating that she wanted more information on this with regard to what is problematic. With regard to greenhouse gasses, the Commissioner said she wanted more context to see if there is something the Village could do to reduce the emissions of gasses. Then, the Commissioner spoke about electricity consumption - with regard to residential, she spoke about Downers Grove being a little higher than median and wants more information about the municipalities that are lower (including demographic differences). She then spoke about street lights and wanted to know more about ComEd versus Downers Grove light poles - she requested a breakdown of this and the Village's take on this.

Mr. Michnick said the Village is looking into this and doing a test case with the new fixtures that will provide information on cost, etc.

Manager Fieldman said that conversation would continue during budget discussions.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt said she assumed it would be the same thing with regard to the lights in the parking garage. Mr. Michnick concurred.

Mayor Pro Tem José spoke about the flood rating in Downers Grove and asked Manager Fieldman to expand.

Manager Fieldman said that the Village just learned that the community scale through FEMA moved from a 6 to a 5. He said the benefit of this is that residents can see an increase in savings for flood insurance (there was already a 25% savings) on their insurance premiums.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt pointed out the value of having biodiversity. She said she is interested in learning more about how things, like the milder winters, can impact it.

Commissioner Gilmartin said he thinks generally the Existing Conditions document gave him clarity about what the Village can, and cannot control, in terms of the resident feedback, and air and water quality. He said there are other

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government bodies that can control that in ways the Village cannot. He shared that he wants to make sure that the Village has plans that are actionable, for both the Village and its residents. The Commissioner said this really hit home after having the inclement weather that came through just the day before the meeting. He said Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt mentioned policy, which is also important to him, along with how the Village can use policy to meet some of its goals and action items. He said a lot of the things seemed tactical. He spoke of the Village using some ideas that came from conversations with other organizations to better the Village. The Commissioner commented that the words "bike and pedestrian" were not mentioned, and he wants to make sure that both biking and walking are addressed after water and air quality. He expressed that it is important to look at feedback from middle school and high school students, and he wants to incorporate their concerns and ideas. He spoke of excessive heat being a concern and wants the Village to address this. He asked if there was a way to find out how much solar is used by residents and what the impact is - or any other ways that residents are improving things on an individual basis. He found the report interesting and said he is glad that Mr. Michnick is a part of the Village team.

Commissioner Davenport said he remembers the debate, when joining the Council, about having Mr. Michnick join the team. He said having this report is making the Village a better place. He questioned what ground failure meant. Mr. Michnick said sinkholes. He spoke of temperatures and how those are projected to rise, and also asked about the impact of the number of people working from home in Downers Grove - in particular if this could cause higher energy usage by residents (that do not have efficient equipment in their homes). The Commissioner spoke about the resiliency of the electrical grid, and asked if there was a way to quantify it. He spoke of residents that were without power due to the storms that came through the day prior, and asked when power was expected to be restored.

Communications Director Doug Kozlowski said that ComEd was estimating anytime between Wednesday and Friday.

Commissioner Davenport spoke of the number of overhead versus buried electrical lines located in Downers Grove. He then asked what a bioswale is.

Mr. Womack said a bioswale is a depression in the landscape that accepts water runoff from adjacent areas and that it usually includes native plants. He said a bioswale is a good way to help ameliorate stormwater pollution.

Manager Fieldman said the Village operates a Bioswale Program and that information can be found on the Village website regarding bioswales. He shared that the Village's Stormwater Administrator Julie Lomax recently received the honor of winning Stormwater Administrator of the Year.

Commissioner Davenport spoke about the three waterways in Downers Grove that were mentioned, pointing out that Prentiss Creek was not included. Mr. Womack explained that by EPA standards, Prentiss Creek is not identified as impaired, instead it is identified as a watch (for the Village to be watching). Regarding floodplains and waterways - the Village has flood plains that are being affected because they are downstream of adjacent communities. The Commissioner said there should be cooperative efforts with adjacent communities on this. Manager Fieldman spoke of improvements that the Village was working on with the Village of Westmont and DuPage County. Commissioner Davenport then spoke of impermeable areas, asking to what extent the Village was impacted by adjacent communities. With regard to waste, he said he was happy to see that waste and recycling was down, but asked why there was no documentation with regard to businesses. Mr. Michnick said the Village does not have that data (the data was provided by Republic Services). With regard to Green House Gas Emissions, the Commissioner said he guessed that the Village had higher numbers than surrounding communities because so many people work in Downers Grove. Mr. Michnick explained that Downers Grove has a one-to-one ratio in terms of the number of people that work in Downers Grove to those that live in Downers Grove. Commissioner Davenport said regarding emissions of natural gas, the Public Works building was listed as the 2nd biggest user of natural gas - he wanted to review those issues. He said the positive side to having warmer winters is that not as much heat is needed. Commissioner Davenport then spoke of the parking deck using a lot of electricity and asked if there was ever any consideration to installing solar panels. Manager Fieldman said that was looked at preliminarily several years ago and that he would look into this again with the team. Mr. Michnick explained that the solar panels were included in the grant application, through the GRC, for possible funding.

Commissioner Tully shared observations and takeaways of his own. He shared he was content with the positive comments in this report about the high marks that were received on the 2023 GRC Report (that staff completed). He thought that the Key Takeaways and Issues and Observations were done well; he said the Village has not done enough to recognize and celebrate its accomplishments. The Commissioner said that he was pleased with the

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positive responses from the participants, and he appreciated the conflicting viewpoints with regard to priorities. He said this is the basis for future policy, and things need to be teased out by the ECC and the Council moving forward. The Commissioner shared he likes the way the report is structured and portrayed, and he said one thing that was very well highlighted was the importance of building community support for major initiatives, particularly ones that require trade-offs. He said to be actionable and successful, the Village has to bring the community along - i.e. the stormwater utility and how it has addressed flooding issues, water quality issues and the financial stability of the community. Commissioner Tully spoke of contracted services and having more vendors participate in the Village's efforts -i.e. the Republic Services Waste Contract in the past. He said that the commuting patterns in the graphic on page 60 were from 2019 and he said he would be curious about what they would be today.

Mr. Michnick said that one of the Comprehensive Plan census survey results showed that approximately 21% of survey takers said they were teleworking, but he did not know how many days a week that was.

Commissioner Tully said that the Village's Historic Preservation Program is not normally thought of as a sustainability effort, but it actually is, because the Village benefits by repurposing older buildings and keeping them out of landfills. He said he would like to know if staff can touch on that. He opined that the more collaboration the Village has with other groups, even private groups, the better. Commissioner Tully asked if the reports the Council have been looking at are drafts.

Manager Fieldman confirmed they are drafts. He noted that they could have been marked as drafts better. He said the final reports will address all that was discussed and the final copies will be marked as FINAL documents.

Commissioner Tully said it is important that they be marked as final, so people can look back at the right reports.

Commissioner Gilmartin said that the other reports were marked draft but this one was not.

Commissioner Glover said with regard to energy sources and efficiencies, external funding and education could be listed as opportunities. He spoke of his personal experience not knowing that he could update his systems to a renewable source without spending a lot of money. He said being educated, with regard to the money offered by ComEd, made it worth updating them. The Commissioner said this was mentioned at an EDC meeting he was at, and thinks that education on this is important. He said that commercial buildings are a major producer of green house gasses and asked for confirmation that the Village is the third highest producer of greenhouse gasses in the County (since the Village is also the third highest with regard to concentration of commercial buildings). Mr. Michnick concurred. Commissioner Glover spoke about areas of green infrastructures, such as the paver roads by Prince Pond, that were not listed on the map.

Mr. Womack shared that much of the information in the report was found while he was driving around. He mentioned solar panels and spoke of residential use.

Community Development Director Stan Popovich said he can provide some data on the number of solar panel permits the Village has gotten over the past few years.

Commissioner Glover said the Village should highlight what it is doing and provide best practices opportunities.

Mayor Pro Tem José said that the Village should be leading by example.

Manager Fieldman spoke of how many of the sustainable actions the Village had taken were never communicated to the public – in the most part because they were just baked into how the Village functioned. He said those efforts were never highlighted and communicated to Village staff, particularly the Village's Communications team, and after the GRC exercise, and realizing that even some of the Village's own staff was not aware of the Village's sustainability efforts, there has been a better effort to put the Village's sustainability efforts on display (by the Communications team). Manager Fieldman highlighted that the Village's Communications team has produced award winning videos about sustainability in recent years.

Mayor Pro Tem José said he was shocked to see protecting water quality and reducing waste as #1. He questioned if this could possibly be something the younger population is talking about because it is something that will be handed off to them as they age, or if it simply because it is happening at this time in their lives. He spoke of

stormwater and flooding, and the dollars that can be saved through different efforts - but mentioned that thinking about it only in dollars and cents would be missing its actual value. Mayor Pro Tem José then spoke of the list of trade-offs, on page 13, and opined how the Village deals with them is going to be key. He said overall he is pleased with the report and said it provides a good road map moving forward.

Commissioner Gilmartin explained that SHRM (a Human Resource organization) collects data on work from home to help with knowing where the trends are headed to.

### **Public Comment**

Clorinda Greco, business owner, expressed concerns about commercial refuse, stating that she thinks their numbers have gone up even though residential has gone down. She spoke about rainwater affecting her business and home - caused by trees being cut down or not enough trees being planted with new construction.

Janet Whittingham, resident, asked if solar panels added to the parking deck would take away parking spaces.

Mr. Michnick spoke about the possibility of canoping the panels over the infrastructure.

Scott Richards, resident, expressed concerns about trees being knocked down by storms, and about larger homes taking up more property. He said there should be more of a balance, and that he thinks the Parkway Tree Program is a good thing.

Phillip Bolton, resident, said he thinks whatever direction the Village plans to go in, they should proceed. He spoke of a bioswale on his property helping with runoff. He commented on the Stormwater Program and that it was incidental and should be made more meaningful. He spoke of handing the planet off to the next generation and that it is everyone's responsibility to bring the kids in and have them be a part of the conversation.

David Rose, resident, spoke about the definition of sustainability in the report, calling it inadequate, and expressed concerns about a lack of education on sustainability. He said he disagrees with how the Council considers their conversations on how to reduce negative impacts on the environment as successes. He expressed concerns about the sustainability features of the new Civic Center, and opined that the Village's sale of the Lot 2 property (to develop multi-family housing) contradicted sustainability.

Commissioner Davenport, asked, with regard to the tree canopy, if the forest preserve areas are considered to be located in Downers Grove. In particular, he asked if Maple Grove is considered to be a part of Downers Grove.

Manager Fieldman explained that for certain applications, i.e. Annexation Law, it is, but for other applications it is not.

Mr. Michnick said he will look into this.

Commissioner Davenport said that if the forest preserves are pulled out of the count, he wanted to know how Downers Grove compared to other communities.

Mr. Michnick thanked everyone for their comments. He said the next step is to take the report to the Environmental Concerns Commission. He reminded everyone of the upcoming visioning workshops that were mentioned earlier in the meeting.

Manager Fieldman then transitioned to the second Manager's Report item - Long Range Planning. He explained that the Long Range Plan (LRP) is a combination of the Strategic Plan and Financial Plan, including strategic goals, key trends and issues, strategies and solutions, and priority action items (the work plan). He shared that the LRP was prepared in the summer of 2023 and is being discussed at this meeting, and two more meetings this summer, for any updates. Manager Fieldman then spoke about the Levy & Pensions Five-Year Plan, explaining the following:

- Public Safety Pensions (financial retirement program for sworn police officers and firefighters) are regulated by the State and are funded by the employees themselves and by the Village of Downers Grove. He provided the history of the public safety pensions, the stabilization of the tax levy, and then provided the 7-Year Plan.

- All municipalities are required to make an annual required contribution (ARC), putting funds into pension funds to make sure they are financially sustainable and meeting the State's regulations.
- For many years the Village has made the required contributions almost exclusively from the Property Tax Levy.
- During Long Range Planning a multi-year look is taken at the future costs of continuing to make the required contributions.
- The ARC is expected to increase from \$10 million (in 2024) up to \$20 million per year by 2040.
- The Village of Downers Grove employs a stabilization program called the Pension Stabilization Assignment - using other sources of funds to lessen the burden on taxes (aka Property Tax Levy) and to smooth the anticipated and planned future contributions or increases in the Property Tax Levy.
- Annual required contributions vary from year to year and as a whole are increasing.
- In 2023: There was an unexpected reduction in the ARC by \$415,000 - per the Council's direction the funds were collected and put aside to use to offset future increases, thus creating the stabilization program.
- In 2024: The stabilization program continued and with a \$600,000 increase in the required contribution, the Village will pay for the increase without raising the total property tax levy for the year.
- From 2025-2029: Projections are that over these five years the Village will make \$59.6 million in total of annual required contributions - \$59 million of the payments will come from the Tax Levy and \$622,000 will come from the stabilization fund, that will then be retired in 2029.

Manager Fieldman presented the five-year plan (2025-2029). He explained that it is projected that there will be an increase in the total levy that exceeds the increase of the ARC in the years 2025, 2026, and 2029 and in the years 2027 and 2028 there will be an increase in the ARC that exceeds the total levy increase. Manager Fieldman explained the plan was Village staff's recommendation to the Council of how to best use the \$622,000 accumulated funds that have remained in stabilization. He opened the floor to the Council for comments and questions.

Mayor Pro Tem José explained that the 2023 drop in the ARC was driven by factors that were out of the Village's control. He said it was most likely a one time opportunity during this period. He explained that the Village knows that the contributions are going up and he thinks that staff did a good job with a plan that will lessen the impact on the residents in future years. He said he is in full support of it.

Many of the Council members agreed.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt said she was in full support and agreed with the plan, further stating that this was good for the residents, so they could have more consistent step-ups in the levy, which made it better to manage their budgeting.

Commissioner Gilmartin asked, with regard to keeping this smooth for the residents, if that means everything else needs to stay the same.

Manager Fieldman confirmed, He said there was a run for several years prior to this, that has kept everything else where it needs to be. He shared that this is not a guarantee and can change from year to year.

Commissioner Gilmartin questioned what would happen if something were to change dramatically in the wrong direction. He also stated that this is an obligation that must be filled by the Village, and asked if these dollars would be

committed if using the model shown by Manager Fieldman.

Manager Fieldman said this is just a plan and the stabilization assignment allows the Village to assign the use of the money and also allows the Council to make budgetary decisions along the way. He explained they are General Fund dollars that are labeled, or assigned, with the balance, but that there is all the flexibility to use them in any way needed.

Commissioner Davenport said people watching from home can be asking what the impact to them is going to be moving forward. Manager Fieldman said this information is in the budget every year. He said the next time it is discussed he will have that information (in dollars).

Manager Fieldman said much like the Existing Conditions Memorandums, staff will have an updated plan and it will be presented at the end of the summer.

Manager Fieldman then went on to talk about Water Fund Sustainability. He explained that the Village owns and operates large complex systems, and the systems must be operated sustainably. He said the revenue comes from customers in the form of water bills, but that there are issues that have affected expenses including: the IEPA previously providing the Village funds through a loan program that is no longer being offered, and the Lead Service Line Replacement Act. He said the Village worked with a consultant to do a multi-year study and there were recommended increases of 9% for 2025-26, 6% in 2027 and 5% in 2028. He then reviewed the estimated typical household's water bill and explained that the rates are the middle of the pack when compared to other municipalities in DuPage County. He said that it is safe to assume that the Village may need to pay for lead service line replacements. He reviewed staff's recommendation of water rates that should be implemented in 2025-2027.

Mayor Pro Tem José commented that he thinks that private lead service water lines should be paid for by the Village, further stating that residents that purchase homes with lead service lines should not have to pay to fix them. .

Commissioner Glover said he agreed with Mayor Pro Tem José, and also asked about situations where people are buying new homes and do not there are lead service water lines. He asked if they have the option to opt out of the replacements.

Manager Fieldman said that under State law they have the option to opt out with certain paperwork.

Commissioner Davenport spoke about the Village having requirements and asked if a resident is doing a project and it involves plumbing work, should the Village require the replacement of the line and make the resident pay for a portion of it.

Manager Fieldman explained that based on the Council's comments, there may be interest in having a further conversation about the policy surrounding this. He explained that many different scenarios were discussed during the last conversation about this policy and they would discuss them again at a future time. This is because some changes could require changes to the Village code.

Commissioner Davenport asked if there is a connection between the Environmental Sustainability Plan moving forward, and the way that the Village charges for water. He asked if there would be things that could be incentivized.

Manager Fieldman explained how water changes are currently implemented, and that staff suggests keeping the same structure. However, if that is something that the Council is interested in, then Mr. Michnick can look into tying this to the Environmental Sustainability Plan.

Commissioner Davenport suggested that it may be the right time to rethink this.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt said that overall water usage is going down.

Manager Fieldman said yes, 1% a year.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt said she is on board with this plan and with paying for the lead line replacements.

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Commissioner Gilmartin asked about the IEPA loans that the Village no longer receives and if that is permanent.

Manager Fieldman said that they are low interest loans that he does not think the Village will receive in future years.

Commissioner Gilmartin asked (with regard to the amount of cash previously received through the loans), of the overall amount the Village pays, what percentage of it came from the loans.

Mr. Michnick explained that the loans have been based off on Capital Improvement Plan, and that there is a five-year work plan put together. The amount requested is for the five years of projects - so is not just a percentage, it is tied to the capital projects.

Commissioner Gilmartin said his understanding is that there would be no funding and that is why the public would be affected. However, he said he also heard that there may also be other funding opportunities.

Manager Fieldman explained that the existing low interest loan proceeds are becoming more need based, and the Village would not qualify. He said there may be grant funding and low interest funding available under the Lead Service Line Replacement Program, but that the funding the Village used to receive is no longer available to the Village.

Commissioner Gilmartin said he is trying to figure out where the funding is going to come from, what the impact would be of the loans, what the potential on grants is - all to better understand the situation before making a decision on this.

Manager Fieldman said when switching debt financing from IDA low interest loans, to General Obligation loans, the interest rate will increase. He said he thinks the Village is paying around 2% and the GO Bond, for the triple A rated community is going to be higher than 2%.

Mr. Michnick said that this information was shared earlier in the year with the Lead Service Line discussion that took place.

Commissioner Gilmartin asked if the amount was in the hundreds of dollars or thousands of dollars.

Manager Fieldman said that staff would get that info to him.

Commissioner Gilmartin said that is a driver to him - if a vast majority is going to the public side of it, as opposed to the private side, than it would make sense to move ahead.

Manager Fieldman said that when discussing this earlier in the year, staff saw that the number one driver was the overall cost of the public improvements and the issues related to the cost.

Commissioner Gilmartin noted that it is not just a cash flow thing, and that if there is not an increase in the rate paid, than there is the risk of having to borrow more expensively. He said there is a system that needs to be maintained, there is uncertainty in the funding, but the metrics around maintaining affordability makes him feel more comfortable.

Commissioner Davenport asked who does the work on private property lead service lines.

Manager Fieldman said that Village crews or contracted crews would be doing the work.

Commissioner Davenport asked about the costs being estimated.

Manager Fieldman said there would be many municipalities going to market for this and there is a need to understand what this will mean about the costs increasing, and whether in-house crews should do the work or not.

Commissioner Gilmartin asked if the main driver of the increase of water rates is the lead service line replacement?

Manager Fieldman explained that yes it is a big part, and that the capital improvement projects are another part of it.

Commissioner Gilmartin asked if the next step would be determining the policy on the rate increase.

Manager Fieldman said he would like the opportunity to see where it all fits in and what the timeline is. He said he may speak to the Council individually with regard to their expectations and when they want to bring this forward (as it relates to this year's budget).

**Public Comment and Village Council Comments**

Mr. Bolton asked for clarification on the water rate affordability calculations, with regard to the number of years.

Mr. Michnick said this will take place over the next ten years and the study looks at the years with the highest increase.

Mr. Bolton asked about new homes and their effect on this.

Manager Fieldman said the thing most closely tied to it would be the tap size.

Mr. Bolton asked if there are opportunities to use his own rain water for purposes like toilet water. He asked if there could be a combined system.

Commissioner Davenport said that cannot happen due to the State Plumbing Code.

Mayor Pro Tem José said this can only be done by commercial buildings.

Mr. Bolton asked, with regard to the ARC funding, if it would be serviced by other revenues.

Manager Fieldman said in 2023-2024 some of that came from non property tax revenues. He said for all the other years, it has been property tax revenues.

Mayor Pro Tem José said per conversation he had previously with the Mayor, Mayor Barnett expressed that he would like to have conversations about additional and alternative revenue sources for pension funding.

Manager Fieldman explained that traditionally this Council (and previous Councils) have depended on the predictability and control of the property tax levy. He said other revenue sources can vary based on economic cycles, and depending on them could put the Village at risk of not being able to make the required contributions. .

Mr. Rose questioned the factors affecting the numbers. He asked if that included return on investment.

Manager Fieldman explained that there are many factors that go into the actuarial models. He said the numbers in the ARC, are numbers in the actuarial models and are a good road map for planning.

Mr. Rose asked if the projections go all the way out to 2040.

Manager Fieldman said the Village asked an actuarial company to update a model that goes through 2040.

Mr. Rose asked if those numbers are available for the public to view.

Manager Fieldman said they are located in the Budget every year via a link.

Commissioner Davenport asked if there was history on this - to be sure that past projections line up with these projections.

Manager Fieldman said it has served the Village well for planning purposes.

Mr. Rose asked if the models include any variable market testing.

Mayor Pro Tem José said that is something that typically the Pension Boards do.

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Commissioner Gilmartin said he thinks that it should be backed into the numbers.

Mr. Rose asked, in terms of the discussion about federal and state involvement with the new approach, if there is an effect in terms of prioritizing with using a need based program (is need based an approach the state and federal governments are going to take moving forward).

Manager Fieldman said he does not know for sure yet.

Mr. Rose said, in terms of the market, he does not know if there is a gauge of where Downers Grove stands compared to other communities, with the number of lines being replaced and other details.

Manager Fieldman said to do a read of the Lead Line Replacement Plan that is linked to the LRP Report, with the agenda materials online. He said the Council could make changes moving forward, as the Village gets more information.

Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt asked, with regard to water, is there a way to analyze what the quality of water in Downers Grove is compared to their communities.

Manager Fieldman said it would be the same as all other municipalities in DuPage County, because they all get their water in the same way.

Manager Fieldman then went on to provide an update of the 2023-2025 Priority Action Items. He explained that most everything was in the green, meaning they are ongoing and on schedule. He said two projects are in the yellow and are related to schedules: 1- Meadowbrook TIF & RDA - He explained that the Village is working with the owner to provide all of their submittals; and 2- Civic Center Project - This is due to scheduling, but Village Hall staff started to move in earlier that day and the move will continue with the Police Department. He said the move is expected to be completed by Monday, July 29. He said then the efforts to demolish the existing buildings will begin, and that the time frame has been pushed back a month to around Thanksgiving. A video was shared of the new Civic Center and the transition from the old Village Hall and Police Department into the new building.

Commissioner Tully asked when District 58 will move into the new building.

Deputy Village Manager Mike Baker said they move in at the end of September.

Manager Fieldman said there will be a change to service hours to accommodate the public. He said operating hours will be from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

## 9. Adjournment

Mayor Pro Tem José asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**MOTION: To adjourn the July 16, 2024 Village Council Meeting.**

**RESULT:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

**MOTIONED TO APPROVE:** Commissioner Sadowski-Fugitt

**SECONDED BY:** Commissioner Gilmartin

**AYES:** Sadowski-Fugitt, Gilmartin, Davenport, Tully, Glover, Mayor Pro Tem José

**NAYES:** None

Mayor Pro Tem José declared the motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rosa Berardi  
Village Clerk