

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
Report for the Village Council Meeting

SUBJECT:	9/2/2025	SUBMITTED BY:
Mayor Pro Tem		Dave Fieldman Village Manager

SYNOPSIS

At the request of Commissioner Gilmartin, the following proposal has been placed on the New Business Agenda.

I would like to discuss amending [Section 2.17](#), the portion of our code that establishes the process by which Mayor Pro Tem is appointed.

Pursuant to Village Council policy, this topic shall be a discussion item only to allow the Village Council to direct staff to prepare an action for consideration at a later date.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The Strategic Goals include *Exceptional Municipal Services*.

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A

UPDATE & RECOMMENDATION

This item was discussed at the August 12, 2025 and July 15, 2025 Village Council meetings and staff was directed to prepare an ordinance as proposed. As currently drafted the proposed amendment would apply prospectively since the timelines contained in the ordinance have already passed. As drafted it would not apply until the next municipal election. Also, attached is a Mayor Pro Tem survey of DuPage County Municipalities.

Staff recommends approval at the discretion of the Village Council.

BACKGROUND

Commissioner Gilmartin submitted the following request for consideration by the Village Council as New Business:

Fellow Council Members,

At our upcoming Council meeting, I plan to introduce a New Business item proposing an amendment to Section 2.17 of the Municipal Code to address a serious gap in the Mayor Pro Tem appointment process.

It has now been nearly two months since the Council rejected the Mayor's initial nomination for Mayor Pro Tem. Since then, despite emphasizing the importance of having someone in that role, the Mayor has not submitted a new nominee. As written, our current code does not require the Mayor to offer a second appointment—effectively allowing the seat to remain vacant indefinitely.

That's not just a procedural concern. The absence of a confirmed Mayor Pro Tem means we lack a clear line of executive continuity should the Mayor be unavailable. That is an unnecessary risk to the Village and, in my opinion, a structural weakness in our code that leaves our community exposed.

To address this, I'm proposing we create a clear and formalized line of executive continuity that does not rely on the Mayor's discretion or allow for arbitrary re-selection for each absence or unavailability. This is a principle already reflected in our emergency succession ordinance, which designates the most senior Council member to assume leadership in an emergency. My proposal applies that same logic to the Mayor Pro Tem appointment process:

- 1. After each general municipal election, the Mayor shall nominate a Mayor Pro Tem from among current Council members, subject to confirmation by the Council (no change to the current process here).*
- 2. If the Council does not confirm the initial nominee, the Mayor must nominate a different Council member within twenty-one (21) calendar days.*
- 3. If the second nominee is also not confirmed, the role of Mayor Pro Tem shall automatically go to the Council member with the longest continuous tenure.*
- 4. In the event of a tie in tenure:*
 - The role shall go to the Council member with the greatest number of consecutive years in current office, and if still tied,*
 - To the Council member who received the highest number of votes in the most recent election in which they were elected.*
 - This mirrors our existing emergency chain of command protocol and ensures consistency across governance.*

This amendment maintains the Mayor's authority to nominate but ensures that, if nominations fail, the Village has a predetermined and non-political fallback that guarantees continuity. It is a practical, principled safeguard that reflects how serious the role of Mayor Pro Tem truly is.

I welcome your feedback ahead of the meeting and am happy to discuss further if helpful.

VILLAGE OF DOWNERS GROVE
COUNCIL ACTION SUMMARY

INITIATED: Village Attorney **DATE:** September 2, 2025
(Name)

RECOMMENDATION FROM: _____ **FILE REF:** _____
(Board or Department)

NATURE OF ACTION:

- ☒ Ordinance
☐ Resolution
☐ Motion
☐ Other

STEPS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT ACTION:

Motion to Adopt "AN ORDINANCE AMENDING
THE PROVISIONS OF MAYOR PRO TEM", as
presented.



SUMMARY OF ITEM:

Adoption of this ordinance shall amend the provisions of Mayor Pro Tem.

RECORD OF ACTION TAKEN:

ORDINANCE NO. _____

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE
PROVISIONS OF MAYOR PRO TEM**

BE IT ORDAINED by the Village Council of the Village of Downers Grove in DuPage County, Illinois, as follows: (Additions are indicated by redline/underline; deletions by ~~strikeout~~):

Section 1. That Section 2.17 is hereby amended to read as follows:**Sec 2.17 Mayor Pro Tem**

(a) Within sixty (60) days following any general municipal election at which members of the Council are elected, the Mayor shall appoint from the members of the Council a Mayor pro tem, subject to confirmation by the Village Council. If the appointment fails to receive the confirmation by the Village Council within twenty-one (21) days, the Mayor shall appoint a second member of the Council as Mayor Pro Tem. If the appointment of the second member also fails to receive the confirmation by the Village Council, then the Council member with the longest continuous service shall be the Mayor Pro Tem. In the event two (2) or more Council Members have equivalent tenure, the Mayor Pro Tem shall be the Council Member in such group who received the highest number of votes for the current office at the most recent election at which such Council Member was elected.

~~(a)~~(b) The Mayor pro tem shall serve until any of the following occur:

- (1) Such person resigns as Mayor pro tem, or
- (2) Such person is no longer a member of the Council, or
- (3) A successor is chosen following the next general municipal election, or
- (4) Such person is removed as Mayor pro tem by the Mayor or an affirmative vote of not less than five (5) members of the Council.

~~(b)~~(c) In the absence of the Mayor, the Mayor pro tem shall have the duty to exercise any power vested in the Mayor and to perform such acts or executive functions as are required of the Mayor, unless otherwise expressly provided in this Code.

~~(c)~~(d) The Mayor pro tem shall assist the Mayor as requested in the performance of such duties and activities as the Mayor may designate. This may include, but is not necessarily limited to, the following:

- (1) Acting as presiding officer of the Council during a temporary absence or disability of the Mayor, or when requested to do so by the Mayor.
- (2) Assisting the Village Manager in evaluating and preparing agendas for future Council meetings. This may include meeting informally with the Manager in addition to or in lieu of the Mayor to discuss pending or likely agenda items as well as matters related to Council functions.
- (3) Facilitating the exchange of communication and information between members of the Council. Council members will, where practical, consult with the Mayor pro tem

regarding the appropriate timing and efficient presentation of items desired by the Council members before the Village Council.

(4) Such other duties as the Mayor shall direct.

Section 2. That all ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with the provisions of this ordinance are hereby repealed.

Section 3. That this ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication in the manner provided by law.

Mayor

Passed:

Published:

Attest:_____
Village Clerk

Mayor Pro Tem Survey of DuPage County Municipalities

Addison	Deputy Mayor; appointed by Mayor subject to advice and consent of board; May assist in administrative duties as assigned by the Mayor
Bartlett	Same as State law
Bensenville	Same as State law; but code section provides that if unable to fill a vacancy or elect a temporary chairperson defaults to longest serving Trustees - in case of a tie defaults to Trustee with a surname lowest in alphabetical order
Bloomington	Same as State law
Carol Stream	Same as State law
Clarendon Hills	Same as State law
Darien	Same as State law
Elmhurst	Follows State law (no code section)
Glen Ellyn	Follows State law (no code section)
Glendale Heights	Deputy Village President appointed by Village President subject to advice and consent of board of trustees; Shall assist Village President in performance of his duties as assigned by Village President; provides for appointment of alternate Deputy Village President appointed by Deputy Village President subject to advice and consent of board in the absence of Village President
Hinsdale	Same as State law
Itasca	Same as State law
Lisle	No reference in Code defaults to State law
Lombard	President Pro Tem selected based upon length of continuous uninterrupted service on the board. In the case of a tie, first ask if both are interested - if so, then by lottery. Distinguishes between President Pro Tem and Temporary Chairperson - same process.
Naperville	Each Council member shall serve as Mayor Pro Tem on a rotating basis for a three (3) month period beginning with the first meeting in May of each odd numbered year. The rotation shall be done on an alphabetical basis. The rotation of Council members serving as Mayor Pro Tem shall occur without formal action of the City Council. In the absence of the Mayor and the Mayor Pro Tem, the next Council member in the rotation shall act as Mayor Pro Tem.

Oak Brook	Same as State law
Oak Brook Terrace	Same as State law
Roselle	Same as State law
Villa Park	Follows State law (no code section)
Warrenville	Mayor Pro Tem appointed by Mayor during temporary absence or disability; when absence of Mayor is expected to be very short and Mayor will not be out of the City, then the Council shall elect one of its members to be a temporary chairperson; distinguishes between Mayor Pro Tem and Temporary Chairperson
West Chicago	Upon election the Mayor shall appoint subject to advice and consent of city council an emergency line of succession among the aldermen
Westmont	Distinguishes between presiding officer at meeting and Mayor Pro Tem: Presiding Officer: If the mayor shall be absent from a regular or special meeting of the board of trustees, each trustee in order of rotation shall be the presiding officer. A trustee may pass at his option to the next trustee in the rotation order. The Village Clerk shall keep a record of the rotation order. Mayor Pro Tem: If Mayor is temporarily absent due to incapacity then trustee who has served the most consecutive time shall be Mayor Pro Tem
Wheaton	Follows State law (no code section)
Willowbrook	Same as State law
Winfield	President Pro Tem nominated in open session by the President or any Trustee - provided that President shall have the right to make first nomination - subject to majority vote of Trustees; President Pro Tem serves 1 year terms; may be removed by four affirmative votes of president and trustees.
Woodridge	If Mayor is temporarily absent due to incapacity then trustee who has served the most consecutive time shall be Mayor Pro Tem