



Shields Township

906 W. Muir Avenue, Lake Bluff, IL 60044

**Regular Meeting of the Shields Township Board of Trustees
Thursday, November 20th, 2025, at 5:00pm**

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
LAKE COUNTY) ss.
TOWN OF SHIELDS)

THE TOWN BOARD OF SHIELDS TOWNSHIP held its Regular Monthly Meeting on Thursday November 20th, 2025, at 5:00 pm.

PRESENT:

Kamila Urso	Supervisor
Vanessa Grum	Township Clerk
Michelle Parnell	Town Trustee
Catherine Oliver-Salbilla	Town Trustee
Christopher Prager	Town Trustee
Trent Swarthout	Town Trustee
Mark Kimzey	Township Attorney (arrived at 5:20)
Lisette Rothing	Deputy Clerk
Carl Kitzerow	Township Administrator

ABSENT: None

- i. **Call to Order & Roll Call:** Supervisor Urso called the meeting to order at 5:10 pm and Clerk Grum took roll call. All trustees and Supervisor Urso present.
- ii. **Pledge of Allegiance:** 5:10 pm

iii. **Presentation: George Roach, C.P.A., George Roach & Associates, Review of 2025 Levy:** Kathrine Andrus spoke and presented the information on this year's levy. She stated that we haven't changed much, we are going to levy for the same three accounts/areas that we always have. It will be officially filed next month. Trustee Oliver Salbilla asked what the current fund balance is and Kathryn responded that she can email this information. The total taxes levied amount to \$1,588,022.00 and the amount levied for each object and purpose are as follows:

- i. Total General Township/Corporate Fund: \$1,083,022.00
- ii. Total IMRF Fund: \$5,000.00
- iii. Total General Road & Bridge Fund: \$500,000.00

iv. **Public Comment: Three (3) Minutes per Speaker:**

- a. **Janice Schnobrich:** 5:13 Mrs. Schnobrich described a 2023 Stormwater Management Grant project approved by Shields Township to install an eco-friendly drainage system along Foster Avenue in Knollwood. The project, which included community involvement and the planting of native vegetation, was initially successful. However, repeated mowing by a township-hired roadside maintenance vendor—despite multiple notifications—destroyed newly planted vegetation multiple times. Mrs. Schnobrich raised concerns about lack of supervision and accountability, questioned who is responsible for the ongoing damage, and called for transparency on behalf of taxpayers.
- b. **Mike Pierret:** Mr. Pierret reminded the board at the last month's meeting, the Foss Park district board member stated that shifting the meeting time would be helpful. It seemed like that would happen but here we are at 5:00. Road fund allocation - He presented graphs that showed the allocation of funds from the last three years. We have lost \$600,000 to the road fund for the last 6 years. He has reviewed the notes from the previous year's minutes and read statements made at those meetings regarding Road & Bridge funds. If the current board continues the practice of starving the road fund, I believe you owe us an explanation.

- c. Kathy Blahunka:** Mrs. Blahunka referenced campaign promises related to restoring funding for road maintenance and raised concerns ahead of approval of the upcoming levy. She stated that road funds have been underfunded in recent years and argued that restoring lost funding would require a larger allocation to the Road Fund. She expressed concern that a disproportionate share of funds is being allocated to the Corporate/Town Fund for unincorporated areas, which they believe is inequitable given that all taxpayers pay the same rate. Mrs. Blahunka also questioned the need for large township reserves, citing a lack of published goals or plans, and asked who will uphold campaign promises and how additional levy funds will be used.
- d. Ed Duffy** - As a 28-year resident of Shields Township, he expressed concern of the shift in funds from the road fund. Cumulatively the defunding will amount to 850,000 since the year 2022. We had a fund dedicated to roads and was automatically reduced by \$130,000. It is going into a dark space - A general fund which no one knows where the funds are going. The perception is that it is a “do as you see” fund. We ask the board last month about why the reduction happened and where is the money going? If it should come back to the taxpayers than it needs to. Answers are due to the people that are asking. Hopefully we can have answers at the next meeting.
- e. Emily Machnicki** - Mrs. Machnicki introduced herself as a mother of two who is NOT here to talk about the levy! She has gratitude for the things the board has been doing. She states that her daughter has been riding her bike to softball and she is grateful for the speed bumps and for the increase in safety. She trusts the board and this group of people who know what's best and knows what they are doing.
- f. Janice Aull** – Mrs. Aull stated that on November 13th, the Township once again cut down the funding for the roads. She asked a few questions of the Township including:

- i. Why is the township trying to destroy a natural eco-friendly drainage system?
 - ii. Why did they leave debris in the channel? That will cause flooding.
- g. **Jennifer Chang** - Mrs. Chang states that she is a mom of 2 young kids who are playing outside and riding bikes talking to neighbors. In the absence of sidewalks, speed humps are why she feels comfortable allowing her kids to do this. They are helpful. Changing the funding affects what type of community we want to be. Please support these safety mechanisms.
- h. **Jeff Urso** - Mr. Urso stated that taxpayers deserve transparency, accountability and responsible use of their money and recent FOIA productions and Attorney General's findings show a pattern that many of the Township legal expenses are being driven by repetitive politically motivated and unfounded complaints, not by community needs or legitimate public concerns. A small group of individuals are requesting FOIA reviews repeatedly and show multiple versions of the same speeches which show orchestrated political campaigning. The attorney general's findings in the PAC determination (2025 PAC 86353) confirmed these findings that these constant challenges impose a huge cost burden on the taxpayers. He strongly urges the board to track and publicly report the legal costs associated with the FOIA disputes and complaints because taxpayers deserve to know how much of their money is being spent responding to political accusations and also protect elected officials and staff from harassment disguised as FOIA or ethics complaints.

v. **Reports:**

- a. **Supervisor: 5:34** - Supervisor Urso stated that she attended the Township Officials of Illinois Conference in Springfield with Clerk Grum and Deputy Clerk Rothing. She also met with Alderman Carl Evans and Mayor Rockingham to maintain alignment. Lake County highway roads committee meeting coordinated on regional plans. Steps have been taken towards maintaining the Township vehicle fleet. Supervisor Urso

anticipates that in 2026 we will be able to do more paving and ditch improvement in Knollwood. Supervisor Urso spent time reviewing and understanding the township levy and budget. She reminds everyone that under the code, they can use township funds to purchase new assets to reduce long term expenses and improve performance.

- b. Administrator: 5:36** - Administrator Carl Kitzerow stated that the proposed tax levy follows proper procedures and is fully compliant with professional guidance from the township's auditor, accountant, and attorney. He explained that the goal is to ensure the township has sufficient funds to meet its obligations and that the levy reflects previously approved amounts, including allowable cost-of-living adjustments. He noted that trustees have been informed about the levy and that it is being presented as fair and equitable. He also addressed public interest and misinformation surrounding the levy, explaining that changes to township and road fund structures were made for efficiency, that no statute requires maintaining a specific road fund balance, and that the board's responsibility is to levy responsibly to meet township needs rather than preserve separate revenue streams.

 - i.** *Township Attorney Mark Kimzey* commented on the levy stating that there have been repeated false statements regarding the levy and the record needs to reflect the correct information. In 2021, the road district was abolished for efficiency reasons and then the Township was sued claiming there was an access accumulation of money in the road fund. This litigation required us to look at the road fund. The town fund has been playing for GA as well. There was an amendment to PTELL allowing townships to vary funds to even the balances out. No statute requires the township to maintain any level of road funds; the duty of this Township Board is to levy responsibly, to make sure there are sufficient funds, not to protect municipal revenue streams. Attorney Mark Kimzey advised that the Township's levy decisions are within its statutory authority and

comply with state law and PTELL requirements. He stated that the Township is not legally required to maintain historical road fund levy levels or specific municipal distribution amounts, and that distributions adjust automatically based on the lawful levy adopted. He emphasized that the Board's duty is to levy responsibly, avoid excess fund accumulations, and minimize legal risk. He noted that criticisms of the levy are political rather than legal, affirmed that the Board has acted prudently and lawfully in the best interest of taxpayers, and cautioned that increasing the Road Fund solely to boost municipal distributions could create legal exposure.

ii. *Trustee Prager* asks: Whatever money that goes into roads cannot be taken out of roads, but if it were to be put into the town fund, we can move it wherever it needs to go. Is this correct? Yes, Carl and Kimzey confirm. This is why we have a "capital expense fund" so that we can use it for what the town needs instead of having too much in one fund and not being able to move it.

c. **Assessors report** - Administrator Carl Kitzerow reported that the township is in appeals season and noted that 515 property tax appeals were filed last year, which he described as a low number, including 78 commercial and 437 residential appeals. He credited the assessor's experience with accurate valuations and noted that many cases are resolved before formal appeals through meetings with property owners. He stated that residential appeal rates remain low, that commercial assessments are producing appropriate value, and that increases in property values and taxes are driven by limited housing supply rather than assessment errors.

d. **Road and Bridge Report** - Dan Rogers reported addressing drainage issues and noted that auctioning township vehicles generated approximately \$7,000 more than a trade-in would have. He stated that additional aging trucks and equipment will need replacement due to past underfunding. Regarding the drainage ditch project, he explained that

although he opposed the original grant proposal, the work proceeded with plants temporarily removed, replanted, and reseeded. He stated that vegetation was later cut as part of maintenance, that seed was harvested with assistance from LFOL, debris remains but will be removed, and that the ditch is being properly maintained to serve its primary purpose of water conveyance. Trustee Prager commented that he lives in front of this area being discussed and he has noticed that something is working. He suggested having Jan Aull be a part of the decision making because she was part of the grant. Dan Rogers continued stating that he has been falsely accused of misconduct but could not discuss the matter. He clarified that he is on call for the township at all times and addressed concerns about his presence at the county clerk's office, noting a circulated photo was taken at a recount event. He discussed permitting for oversized trucks, explaining that permits are handled efficiently through a third-party service. He noted his work with multiple trustees and praised township staff for their responsiveness to residents. He emphasized efforts to assist residents by directing them to appropriate agencies when needed, expressed appreciation for trustee engagement, affirmed his personal commitment to township operations—including use of his own vehicle when necessary—and reported that speed humps have been effective. He invited residents to contact him directly with questions. Trustee Parnell commented that she would like to address the photo; It was said by Kathy Blahunka that she can photograph me wherever and whenever she wants which is not true but there are some people who think they are above the law.

vi. **Approval of Bills:** Supervisor Urso moved to approve all bills as listed below.

Trustee Prager motioned and Trustee Parnell seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and all agreed. Motion carries.

a. **Town Fund:** In the amount of \$41,322.20 which includes \$3,200 worth of GA funds handled by Waukegan.

b. General Assistance: This amount is included in the Town Fund. See note above.

c. Road & Bridge: In the amount of \$24,646.60.

vii. Old Business: 6:23 pm.

a. Moving start time - Trustee Oliver Salbilla asked to add this to the agenda; Trustee Prager adds that he doesn't have a problem with 5:30. It will be discussed at the December meeting and voted upon for the next year.

viii. New Business:

a. Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 16, 2025:

Supervisor Urso moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from the October 2025 Meeting. Trustee Oliver-Salbilla motioned, and Trustee Prager seconded the motion. There was no discussion, and all agreed. Motion carries.

b. Estimate of the 2025 Tax Levy for Shields Township: Supervisor Urso states that at the end of the year, the trustees need to consider the estimate of this meeting. She moves to estimate the 2025 Tax Levy as listed below. Trustee Parnell motions to approve the estimate and Trustee Swarhout second the motion. There is no discussion, and all agreed. Motion carries.

i. The total taxes levied amount to \$1,588,022.00 and the amount levied for each object and purpose are as follows:

1. Total General Township/Corporate Fund: \$1,083,022.00
2. Total IMRF Fund: \$5,000.00
3. Total General Road & Bridge Fund: \$500,000.00

ix. Executive Session: None.

x. Other Business:

a. Trustee Prager - Thanks Lisette and Carl for helping him with a resident who had a tragic fire in The Hamptons; she lost everything except her wallet. The other two residents can also not live in those buildings. Lisette and Carl made it clear that The Hamptons are not part of Shields

Township, but they helped him find where to go which was Libertyville Township. They called over there to help and they were able to stop her taxes for the year so she doesn't have to pay on a house she can't live in. He suggests that we have a set amount of money to help people in case of emergencies like this. Let's put something together like this here. Carl Kitzerow commented that we have done the same thing here for our residents. The least we can do is have a benevolent fund.

- b. Clerk Vanessa Grum** - State that she has received reports from teachers at the school that they are concerned about the safety of the Bus Stop at the Trailer Park off 41 in Lake Bluff. The stop is dangerously close to the busy highway. Mr. Dan Rogers explains that this is a County Road, not a Township road, but said that he can put her in contact with someone there to express concerns. Clerk Grum will follow up.
 - c. Attorney Mark Kimzey** - The township received a request for FOIA - initial cost was \$20,458.88. The township remains in full compliance with the act. The redactions are proper. For the remaining 10 percent there was not enough information to determine. They could be not disclosable. We are under no obligation to do this. The supervisor wanted to bring this to the board to see if the board would like to have the attorney review the 25-82 at the cost of possibly \$10,000. They are going to think about it, and she would like everyone's input.
 - d. Trustee Oliver-Salbilla** - She received a notice about someone wanting to pave a green space to do a Taco Bell. Lake County rejected the idea of even considering it. Dan Rogers stated that he met with Supervisor Urso about this and they objected in writing and the land owner decided to cancel his project. The application to have a franchise and the application to use the land has been withdrawn.
 - e. Dan Rogers** - He stated that Scooters Restaurant is set to open in April.
- xi. Adjournment:** Supervisor Urso moved to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Parnell motioned and Trustee Oliver-Salbilla seconded the motion. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 6:47 pm.

