



Shields Township

906 W. Muir Avenue, Lake Bluff, IL 60044

Regular Meeting of the Shields Township Board of Trustees Thursday June 12th, 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 June 12th, 2025 at 5:00 pm.

PRESENT:

Kamila Urso	Supervisor
Vanessa Grum	Clerk
Michelle Parnell	Town Trustee
Catherine Oliver-Salbilla	Town Trustee
Christopher Prager	Town Trustee
Trent Swarthout	Town Trustee

ABSENT:

Lisette Rothing	Deputy Clerk
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- I. **Call to Order & Roll Call:** Supervisor Urso called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm. Clerk Grum took roll call; Trustee Parnell, Trustee Oliver-Salbilla, Trustee Swarthout, and Trustee Prager were present. Also in attendance was Administrator Counselman Kimzey, Clerk Grum.
- II. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Supervisor Urso opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. **Public Comment:** Three (3) minutes per speaker.
 - A. **Janice Schnobrich:** Janice commented that last month's meeting was recorded but not posted online. Mrs. Schnobrich states that lack of transparency in government leads to lack of public trust. She states that she was publicly harassed for asking questions and using FOIA requests to obtain records which were not publicly available as required by law. She states that this has persisted for the past 25 years. FOIA officers are required by law to be trained and she questions why Shields Township decided that the Deputy Clerk cannot handle these requests stating that it seems the Township has hired its legal counsel to do this work at a high expense rate.
 - B. **Kathy Blahunka:** Kathy explained the legal situation that transpired during the recent April 1st, 2025, election process. She stated that Dan Rogers' attorney was not required to follow the rules for document filings. Kathy stated that prior to the December 19th hearing, it became clear that the township attorneys were not

enforcing the rules either. It appears that the township attorney's participation in this process was very lucrative.

IV. Reports -

- A. Supervisor's Report:** Supervisor Urso states that since taking office as Supervisor for Shields Township, she has been into the office every day. She shares that the financial audit is on track and that she has had many calls and meetings with township supervisors around the area. The Road and Bridge committee meeting will be happening soon with the agenda being posted by Monday. She is working on setting up a crossing guard near Target. She hopes the board will approve her appointments. We are working on the most efficient way to access it. Passport service has been applied for. She has an open-door policy for trustees and wants them to please feel welcome to come in and meet with her at any time and ask questions. She has participated in training and education including the Newly elected officials training and the Illinois Township Attorneys Association. There will be more coming up that she plans to attend as well. We have a new truck to replace the 20-year-old truck for safety and new speed humps have been striped. Supervisor Urso thanks all for participating in our township meetings.
- B. Trustees report:** None.
- C. Assessor's Office Report:** Karl Kitzerow states that we are a week to two weeks away from closing our books and turning in the information into the county. We will have assessments sent out at the beginning of August.
- D. Attorney:** At the request of Supervisor Urso, Counselman Kimzey gave a report about his law firm (See separate slides presentation for more details): In summary, Kimzey states that Airdo Werwas (his law firm) has represented Shields since June of 2022. There has been a total legal spend of about \$ 320,000 for the past three years; these fees are driven by extraordinary circumstances and to implement reform rather than regular operating fees. There was a collapse of the board, many resignations, destroyed records, one trustee sued the township, no supervisor, no assessor, no employees. The case of sexual harassment was dismissed, and then was settled afterwards which cost \$60,000 for representation for this situation. The FOIA requests greatly increased and were filed by Ms. Blahunka and Ms. Schnobrich shortly after Dan Rogers was hired. The Deputy Clerk guesses about 3-7 per week which requires a review of thousands of papers. The Public Access Counselors were dismissed. There also was a tax objection lawsuit where they sued on the behalf of taxpayers. We inherited this case for the tax year of 2020, defended this case, and worked with the accountant and administrator to avoid this in the future. This case was dismissed after a few years. In April 2025, Shields Township learned that there was a 20-year lapse in appointment of the fire protection districts who were struggling financially so we had to get this back on track and worked with the board to talk about potential consolidation.

1. Trustee Prager asked questions regarding Arden Shores North and South - was this related to the Knollwood Fire Department? No - completely different boards. The village of Lake Bluff provides fire protection to both.
2. Trustee Oliver-Salbilla asked if there was a conflict of interest with Dan Rogers objecting to Kathy Blahunka's petition to run for office on the electoral board. Counselman Attorney Mark Kimzey explained that one does not lose one's legal rights to engage in political activity, they just cannot do it on Township time.
3. Trustee Prager asked about the "intentional" omission of information statement regarding Kathy's election paperwork. Kimzey explained that that was a finding of the board - not with malice, but with intent.
4. Trustee Oliver Salbilla suggests that the Township should not get involved with this case because of the possible "cross contamination" - Kimzey says that there is case law that this is not a conflict of interest. She states that she disagrees and thinks there is overlap and there should have been a separation with different attorneys representing the township and the electoral board. Kimzey says he is speaking emphatically because he does not take it lightly that he would be accused of unethical practices.
5. Trustee Prager asked for clarity on the "frivolous" statement, and Counselman Kimzey clarified that he was not referring to the sexual harassment and the falling apart of the board.
6. Kimzey continues by saying there have been lots of good things that the board has accomplished with the help of his law firm including Intergovernmental Agreements made to offer more services and less employees, outsourcing our assessor, capital funding to avoid tax issues, permitting ordinance, and shifting costs. All of the financial practices of the township are in line with Illinois Law. (Presentation finished at 5:50 pm).
7. Trustee Prager commented that there is a lot of information, and he needs this ahead of time to review this information. He states that he cannot just suddenly vote on this if he is just digesting it at this time. Trustee Oliver-Salbilla states that she called the attorney directly to learn more and did not receive a reply after leaving a message which bothered her.
8. Trustee Parnell says that anyone on the board could have called Mark Kimzey to give more information at any time. She did and she had a long conversation with him.

V. Approval of Bills - Clerk Grum states the Expenses.

- A. Town Fund:** Supervisor Urso moved to approve the Town Fund in the amount of \$66,181.32. Trustee Parnell motioned to approve and Trustee Swarhout seconded the motion. No discussion. Clerk Grum takes roll call, and all approve, motion carries.

B. General Assistance Fund: None

C. Road and Bridge Fund: Supervisor Urso moved to approve the Road and Bridge Fund in the amount of \$4,050.03. Trustee Parnell motioned to approve and Trustee Swarthout seconded the motion. Clerk Grum takes roll call, and all approve, motion carries.

1. Trustee Oliver-Salbilla inquired about a few line items including \$825 lug valve stems (line item 21218) for \$1,504 computer monitor (line item 21210). She would like more information as learning more about this would help her make sure she knows what she is approving payment for).

VI. Old Business -

A. Appointment of the Township Attorney: Supervisor Urso seeks a motion for the board to consent to the appointment of Airdo Werwas, LLC as the Shields Township Attorney. Trustee Parnell motions, Trustee Swarthout seconds the motion. Clerk Grum takes roll call. Trustees Oliver-Salbilla and Prager vote Nay and Trustees Parnell and Swarhout and Supervisor Urso vote Yea. There is a majority vote to consent to the appointment, so motion carries.

B. Approval of the Township Policies: Trustee Parnell motions to approve the Township Policies as written, Trustee Swarthout second the motion and there is no discussion. Trustee Prager comments that he was not able to review it and is voting without looking the policies over. Clerk Grum takes roll call. Trustee Oliver-Salbilla votes Nay and all other Trustees and Supervisor vote Yea. There is a majority vote to approve the policies, so motion carries.

VII. New Business -

A. Approval of Rescheduled Meeting Minutes of May 19, 2025: Trustee Prager comments that he would like to make a statement and confession to the board: He had a visit by Dan Rogers at his home uninvited and he was very uncomfortable. Prager states that Mr. Rogers said that he said he did not get 3 bids for the pick-up truck. But Prager, because of personal life, did not mention this to the board. He wants to clear his conscience. Counselman Kimzey clarified that there was not a requirement for 3 bids and Mr. Rogers went through the correct process. Supervisor Urso seeks a motion to approve the minutes from the May 19th, 2025, meeting. Trustee Oliver-Salbilla motions and Trustee Prager second the motion. Clerk Grum takes roll call. All approve and the motion carries.

VIII. Executive Session - None.

IX. Other Business - Supervisor Urso states that the Road and Bridge Committee was hoping to meet next Wednesday afternoon. Trustee Prager confirms that this date will work for him.

X. Adjournment - Supervisor Urso seeks a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Parnell motions to adjourn and Trustee Prager seconds the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 pm.

