



Village of Westmont ADMINISTRATION

31 West Quincy Street, Westmont, Illinois 60559

administration@westmont.il.gov | 630-981-6210
westmont.illinois.gov | 630-981-6200

Administration & Finance Committee

Thursday, August 21, 2025

Minutes*

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. **ROLL CALL** - Trustees: Guzzo, Liddle, Nero, and Barker. Mayor Gunter & Clerk Szymiski. Staff: Manager May, Chief Gunther, Director Mielcarski, Assistant Parker, Director Altic, Director Hennerfeind, Director Ries, Deputy Chief Frank, Deputy Chief Fitzgerald, Director Brainerd, Director McIntyre, and

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

V. MINUTES

- A. The minutes from the special meeting on March 27th, 2025, and regular meetings on April 3rd and July 10th, 2025, were approved with a motion by Trustee Barker and a second by Trustee Scales

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- **Credit Card Fees for Permits** Finance director Alan Altic provided an update on credit card fees for permits, a topic continued from a previous meeting. The goal is to assess a credit card fee for permits, especially as the Village moves to an all-online permit application system, which could involve multi-million dollar projects and significant fees.
 - **Negotiations with Tyler Payments** The village's credit card processor, Tyler Payments, initially proposed a 3.65% fee for residents, which has been negotiated down to 3.25%. Alan Altic indicated that Tyler Payments is unwilling to reduce the fee further, noting that nearby Hensdale charges the same rate for all

transactions, including water billing, which is a major source of credit card transactions.

- **Exploring Alternative Fee Structures** Alan Altic inquired about the board's appetite for a different model, such as charging residents 3% and the village absorbing a 5-cent transaction fee to cover the remaining 0.25% spread. Currently, the village caps credit card payments for permits at \$5,000, requiring checks for higher amounts, but this will not be feasible with an all-online system.
- **Payment Options for Residents** Residents will still have the option to pay with cash or check in person, and a free online option for e-checks exists, with the village absorbing a \$1.95 transaction fee for e-checks regardless of the permit fee amount. The primary question is whether the 3.25% credit card fee for permits is acceptable, given that it aligns with other municipalities, or if the village should push for a 3% fee by absorbing more costs, similar to what customers might see at a restaurant.
- **Board's Direction on Credit Card Fees** The board approved the 3.25% credit card fee for permits, which Alan Altic will communicate to Tyler Payments to proceed. This decision aligns with the growing trend of retailers and restaurants passing on processing fees to customers.
- **Hotel Motel Tax Revenue Overview** The village has a 5% hotel motel tax rate, the maximum allowed by statute for a non-home rule community, which must be used to support tourism and promote overnight stays. In 2024, the village collected \$968,000 from this tax, with projections to reach \$1 million in 2025. The fund currently has a surplus of almost \$3 million, indicating healthy financial standing .
 - **Investment in Tourism and Economic Development** Moving to invest heavily in tourism and economic development, particularly with a new chamber president and economic development consultant, to generate more sales tax revenue. Ideas included marketing events like the October Natiatorum event to attract more visitors to restaurants, funding the chamber for similar initiatives, and promoting other local attractions like pickleball and SkyZone trampoline park as destinations.
 - **Current Use of Hotel Motel Tax Funds** Over the last three years, hotel motel tax funds have been used for various purposes, including \$313,000 for maintenance and upkeep of Westmont Center, \$346,000 for holiday lights and decorations, and \$472,000 for fire baskets and watering in downtown. Additionally, 50% of the communications staff's wages and a portion of PD staffing costs for event patrols are allocated to this tax.
 - **Grant Programs and Partnerships** The village utilizes hotel motel tax funds for grant programs to support events and organizations, including the Rotary Club, Reliance Club Foundation for Spring Fling, and the Westmont Parks District for

events like holidays and concerts. The village also sponsors the DuPage Convention and Visitors Bureau (\$140,000 over the last few years) and the Westmont Chamber, which helps with tourism and economic development.

- **Maximizing Hotel Motel Tax Utilization** Alan Altic proposed next steps for utilizing the nearly \$3 million in hotel motel tax money, including maximizing the 25% allocation for economic development and infrastructure, which is permissible until December 2026. Other recommendations include moving \$15,000 annually from the general fund to the hotel motel tax for tourism and economic development payments, and allocating salaries of facilities maintenance, public works, and fire department personnel involved in events to this fund.
- **Future Economic Development Initiatives** The board expressed strong support for using the hotel motel tax funds to promote economic development, attract more visitors, and support local businesses and events. The new Vision and Vibe event and the recently hired economic development consultant will also be funded through these tax dollars. Discussions included exploring the potential for increased hotel occupancy and how to make local hotels more attractive to guests.
- **Short-Term Rentals and Tax Implications** Short-term rentals like Airbnbs are not currently subject to the 5% hotel motel tax in Westmont. While it's a gray area, the village has historically deemed the potential revenue from taxing Airbnbs too small to justify the enforcement complexities.
- **FDIBC Program Update: Merit Program Overview** HR Director Renee Brainard and Assistant Village Manager Parker provided an update on the merit program for non-union employees, which went into effect on January 1st of the current year, with the first merit bonus issued on August 1st. The program emphasizes growth, development, and feedback through ongoing conversations, self-reflection, and continuum ratings based on work results and core values.
 - **Spot Bonus Program** The program includes a spot bonus system where non-union employees can award colleagues \$60 bonuses for positive impact, and departments have a pool of money for individual (\$200) or group (\$100 per person) awards. Spencer noted that 143 employee-to-employee bonuses have been given, and significant departmental bonuses were awarded following recent storms.
 - **Merit Bonus Distribution and Program Performance** The merit bonuses for August 1st were distributed based on a color continuum rating system (red to blue, with purple for new employees), which aims to be less judgmental than a number scale. The actual distribution of employees across the performance categories closely matched initial estimates, with the majority falling into the "green" (good, solid) or "teal" (above and beyond) categories.

- **Financial Sustainability and Hybrid Model** The board had allocated \$300,000 for merit bonuses, in addition to a 3% general wage adjustment. To ensure financial sustainability, Spencer explained that annual raises based solely on performance would compound at an unsustainable rate, suggesting a hybrid model that balances annual bonuses with incremental adjustments to base salaries.
- **Proposed Hybrid Compensation Model for 2026** For 2026, a hybrid model is proposed where \$35,000 of the annual bonus money would be integrated into raises, allowing for differentiation in wage adjustments based on performance, ranging from 2.5% for lower performers to nearly 4% for top performers, while keeping the overall compounding rate at a maximum of 3.25%. This approach aims to provide better long-term salary growth for higher-performing employees while ensuring all employees receive adjustments that generally keep pace with inflation.
- **Employee Performance and Compensation Meetings** Control discussed employee performance and compensation, noting that while revenue levels are not the primary metric, a subjective system based on supervisor expectations is in place, with some departments able to create more objective measures. Meetings Control clarified that employees in the "red" would not receive annual bonuses and would only get the minimum cost of living adjustment. They also emphasized that communication between supervisors, employees, and HR has improved, fostering opportunities for advancement and training, which is a key part of the current system.

VIII. REPORTS

- **Community Development Comprehensive Plan** Community development director Joe Hennerfeind presented an update on the community development comprehensive plan downtown plan review. They explained that the new zoning ordinance introduced new districts, and while the current comprehensive plan from 2013 is outdated, some rezonings for public and institutional (PI) properties can proceed without a new comprehensive plan. Joe Hennerfeind is seeking feedback on the extent of downtown rezonings, particularly concerning the boundaries of the B1A (downtown core) and downtown edge districts, and whether to proceed with rezonings to the north and south of the downtown core before the comprehensive plan is finalized.
- **Downtown Rezoning Strategies** The discussion continued regarding the extent of downtown rezoning. Joe Hennerfeind indicated that staff is comfortable with a phased approach, initially rezoning the first block to the north (to Irving) and the first block to the south (to Richmond), including the "restaurant row" area, as B1A (downtown core). Hennerfeind also proposed rezoning R5 (most intensive residential) areas to R7 (downtown residential), allowing for greater density, before the comprehensive plan is complete. The B1A district aims to promote walkability and allows for taller, five-story

buildings, while the downtown edge (similar to B1) permits three-story buildings and some breaks for parking lots.

- **Economic Development Considerations and Community Impact** Joe Hennerfeind fine acknowledged that from an economic development perspective, taking a "huge bite" by rezoning larger areas to higher density would be ideal. However, they emphasized the importance of balancing long-term economic development with the current businesses, recognizing that significant changes could make existing businesses non-conforming or upset homeowners with new five-story buildings behind their homes. Joe Hennerfeind fine committed to providing an analysis of the non-conformities and the pros and cons of "the big bite" versus "the little bite" for the Community Development Committee's (CDC) review. They also mentioned plans to integrate the public works downtown plan with the comprehensive plan and to meet with the downtown Westmont business community.

Summary

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 pm, on April 21st, 2025, where the minutes from previous meetings were approved. Finance Director Alan Altic provided an update on credit card fees for permits, with the board approving a 3.25% fee after negotiations with Tyler Payments. Alan Altic also discussed the utilization of the hotel motel tax revenue, proposing strategies to maximize its use for tourism and economic development, which Mayor Nero and the Board strongly supported. HR Director Renee Brainard and Assistant Village Manager Parker updated the board on the merit program and proposed a hybrid compensation model for 2026. Community Development Director Joe Hennerfeind feind presented an update on the Community Development Comprehensive Plan and discussed Downtown rezoning strategies.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS - none

X. ADJOURN Motion by Nero and second by Barker

(next meeting is scheduled for October 2, 2025)

**Please note that these minutes were created by Gemini and double checked.*