

Village of Forest Park
Village Council Meeting February 9, 2026
Meeting minutes

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Hoskins led all assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance at 7:01 p.m

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Maxham, Commissioner Nero, Commissioner Melin-Rogovin, Commissioner Voogd, Mayor Hoskins

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 26, 2026 REGULAR MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Motion to approve the minutes from January 26, 2026, regular meeting was made by Commissioner Maxham, seconded by Commissioner Nero, and approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were received.

COMMUNICATIONS

No formal communications were before the Council.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Fire Department Annual Report - 2025

Commissioner Maxham thanked Chief Hankus for the comprehensive annual report. She highlighted several key points from the report, including:

- A record-breaking year with 4,742 calls for service, approximately 250 more calls than the previous year
- Ongoing staffing challenges, noting the difficulty in recruitment compared to past decades
- The importance of continued training
- Facility needs requiring ongoing attention
- Fleet issues, including an engine that needed a full motor replacement and another taken out of service

Commissioner Melin-Rogovin added that the department is the second busiest single-house department in the State of Illinois, emphasizing the dedication of the personnel and her commitment to continue advocating for the fire department's needs with her colleagues.

Commissioner Voogd expressed appreciation for all village departments that provide regular reports, noting how they provide valuable information for both council members and the community.

Fire Department – January 2026

No specific discussion

Community Center – January 2026

No specific discussion

BILLS BY RESOLUTION

Deputy Clerk Roach read the bills by resolution for the various departments, with a total amount of \$927,493.74.

Motion to adopt the resolution on the bills was made by Commissioner Maxham, seconded by Commissioner Nero, and approved unanimously. This was recorded as **Resolution 11-26**.

NEW BUSINESS

1 Presentation: Lauterbach and Amen, LLC

Mr. Joe Laudont from Lauterbach and Amen presented the 2025 annual financial report to the Council. He provided three required pieces of communication:

- SaaS 114 Letter - Confirmed there were no disagreements with management during the audit process
- Annual Financial Report - Highlighted key sections including:
- Unmodified opinion (cleanest form of assurance)
- Management's discussion and analysis starting on page 5
- General fund showing a decrease in fund balance of approximately \$1,300,000, with ending balance of \$252,000
- Water fund showing an increase of approximately \$7,700,000, ending with \$39,000,000
- Management Letter - Listed best practice recommendations and upcoming GASB standards

Commissioner Maxham raised concerns about the village's credit rating changing from stable to no outlook and questioned what a BA1 rating meant, noting her research indicated it suggested "substantial credit risk." She also discussed the net position analysis, highlighting that while it showed improvement, Director Olmsted had clarified this did not indicate improved financial stability for several reasons:

- The unrestricted net position still has a \$115 million deficit
- Revenue was flat or from one-time sources
- Expenditures are budgeted to increase by 11.5% in 2026
- The village is not meeting actuarially determined pension contributions
- Significant new long-term debt is expected

Commissioner Melin-Rogovin requested additional context on how the long-term financial picture relates to the operating funds, and Mr. Laudont explained that governmental activities include both operating fund balances and long-term liabilities like pensions.

2 Presentation: Board of Health

Board of Health Chairperson Mishawn Purnell-O'Neal and board members Susan Buss and Lindsey Baish-Flynn presented findings from their community assessment on mental health services in Forest Park. The assessment included:

- A community survey with 158 household responses (2.2% of households)
- 80% felt Forest Park was a safe and healthy place to live
- 83% felt it was inclusive and welcoming
- 69% reported experiencing anxiety in the past year (3x the national average)
- 56% reported experiencing depression (7x the national average)
- Roundtable discussions with 7 community providers including police, fire, library, community center, ProCare Center, and District 91

Based on their findings, the Board made five recommendations:

- Create a comprehensive, clear, and regularly updated directory of mental health resources
- Hire a licensed clinical social worker to facilitate mental health resourcing
- Form strategic partnerships with neighboring communities
- Conduct the mental health survey and roundtables every two years
- Provide more training and support services for frontline civic employees

Commissioners expressed appreciation for the Board's thorough work and expressed interest in further discussions to implement recommendations where feasible.

3 Ordinance authorizing a loan from Forest Park National Bank

Motion to approve the ordinance authorizing a loan from Forest Park National Bank was made by Commissioner Maxham, seconded by Commissioner Nero, and approved unanimously **Ordinance 05-26**.

4 Ordinance waiving the bidding process and authorizing the purchase of one Pierce Enforcer Pierce Ultimate Configuration (PUC) 100' Ascendant Tower Ladder Truck by the Village

Commissioner Maxham emphasized the critical need for this purchase, reading from Chief Hankus' letter that described a recent structure fire where firefighters had to rescue a resident from a third-story window using a ground ladder that was too short and had to be operated at an unsafe angle due to the lack of a tower ladder truck.

Motion to approve the ordinance waiving the bidding process and authorizing the purchase of one Pierce Enforcer Pierce Ultimate Configuration (PUC) 100' Ascendant Tower Ladder Truck was made by Commissioner Maxham, seconded by Commissioner Nero, and approved unanimously **Ordinance 06-26**.

5 Resolution approving Amendment No. 1 to the IGA between the Village and the County of Cook, acting through its Bureau of Asset Management, for the design, construction, installation, operation and maintenance of two (2) electric vehicle charging stations

Commissioner Maxham asked if this would involve additional expense to the village. Administrator Entler clarified that there would be no immediate cost, as this amendment would simply allow the county to consider Forest Park for a second charger using ARPA funds. Any future expenses would come before the Council for approval first.

Motion to approve the resolution approving Amendment No. 1 to the IGA between the Village and the County of Cook was made by Commissioner Voogd, seconded by Commissioner Melin-Rogovin, and approved unanimously **Resolution 12-26**.

6 Resolution authorizing the approval of Pay Request #11 for the AMI Water Meters Replacement Project to Veregy Central, LLC

Motion to approve the resolution authorizing the approval of Pay Request #11 for the AMI Water Meters Replacement Project to Veregy Central, LLC was made by Commissioner Melin-Rogovin, seconded by Commissioner Voogd, and approved unanimously **Resolution 13-26**.

7 Approval: Motion to Direct the Board of Fire and Police to offer employment to the next two (2) eligible Probationary Firefighters

Motion to direct the Board of Fire and Police to offer employment to the next two (2) eligible Probationary Firefighters was made by Commissioner Maxham, seconded by Commissioner Nero, and approved unanimously.

8 Approval: Application for Use of Public Way – Food Aid 2026: Robert's Westside

Motion to approve the application for Use of Public Way for Food Aid 2026 by Robert's Westside was made by Commissioner Voogd, seconded by Commissioner Melin-Rogovin, and approved unanimously.

9 Approval: Community Center Senior Trip Agreement – The Barrel Run

Motion to approve the Community Center Senior Trip Agreement for The Barrel Run was made by Commissioner Maxham, seconded by Commissioner Nero, and approved unanimously.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Entler reported on several items:

- She acknowledged Forest Park Bank for quickly processing the loan for the fire truck, noting the value of working with a local community bank.
- She shared that WESCOM, the village's dispatch center, had been chosen as part of the first cohort to participate in the Community Emergency Services and Supports Act. This will allow emergency operators to refer calls seeking mental health support to a service that can dispatch mental health professionals instead of police.
- She noted that a new style of minutes was being tested using software that helps compile meeting information through video.
- She announced that vehicle stickers are now on sale and residents can come to Village Hall to purchase them.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Maxham discussed the village's financial challenges, noting that at the previous budget meeting, she had requested support for a new places of eating tax, which was not supported. She explained that the alternative revenue sources identified (off-street parking and amnesty/booting program) would likely not generate significant revenue.

She emphasized that property taxes, while a major source of revenue, see 80% directed to pension obligations, and according to the audit report, the levy is below the actuarially determined contribution for both police and fire pension funds. She urged her fellow commissioners to consider the places of eating tax or suggest other viable revenue sources before the upcoming budget meetings.

Commissioner Nero - No report

Commissioner Melin-Rogovin shared positive feedback from a resident about the Public Works Department's quick response to a water main break. She announced an upcoming Traffic and Safety Town Hall on February 18th at 7 PM and promoted an Earth Day recycled material art exhibition being organized in partnership with the Arts Alliance, Environmental Commission, and Chicago Conservation Corps. She also mentioned her attendance at the WCMC legislative breakfast.

Commissioner Voogd expressed support for exploring revenue sources that don't place the entire burden on residents, such as the places of eating tax, which would also capture revenue from visitors. She also suggested that additional charging stations could help bring visitors to shop and dine in Forest Park.

Mayor Hoskins reported on his attendance at a community dinner celebrating Proviso East High School's elevation to "commendable status." He noted that Superintendent Mohip was invited to join the village at the West Central Conference legislative breakfast, along with President Preckwinkle's legislative director. The mayor also discussed ongoing work to implement provisions in the Northern Illinois Transit Authority legislation that would allow Forest Park to seek reimbursement for first responder costs related to transit, potentially worth close to \$1 million annually.

ADJOURN INTO CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2) – COLLECTIVE NEGOTIATING MATTERS

Motion to adjourn into closed session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2) regarding collective negotiation was made by Commissioner Nero, seconded by Commissioner Maxham, and approved unanimously at 8:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Deputy Village Clerk Megan Roach