



Minutes
Village of Arlington Heights
Board of Health
Buechner Room
33 S. Arlington Heights Rd., AH 60005
January 27, 2025
6:30 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Meservey called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. ROLL CALL

Present

Jerome Meservey, M.D.
Chairperson
Karen VanLandeghem, MPH
Kristen Brown, M.D.
William Moran, M.D.
Joseph Novak, Psy.D.

Also Present

James McCalister, Commission Liaison
Darren Brown, Social Services Coordinator
Kimberly Witt, Administrative Assistant

Not Present

Ashley Bae, LCSW
Shalu Gugnani, M.D.
Lindsay Dohse, Nursing Supervisor

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MS. VANLANDEGHEM, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 23, 2024 MEETING, SECONDED BY DR. MORAN AND APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

IV. REPORTS

A. Health & Human Services Director Update

Mr. McCalister reported that since the last meeting, the annual village budget meeting was held with the Village Board. A general overview of the Health & Human Services 2025 budget was provided.

The Senior Citizens' Commission continues to focus on its Age-Friendly Initiative, which prioritizes three key areas: housing, affordable transportation, and improved communication. Recently, efforts have concentrated on enhancing communication, leading to significant updates to the Senior Center's website. Additionally, in January, the Senior Center launched its own Facebook page, which has already gained 214 followers. This platform is expected to enhance engagement, as many seniors actively use Facebook.

Since the last meeting, the Senior Center has also finalized its five-year strategic action plan in collaboration with all tenant agencies and the Northern Illinois Center for Governmental Studies. This plan provides a clear roadmap for future growth.

The Senior Center participation numbers have steadily increased since the pandemic, returning to pre-pandemic levels. All programs have resumed normal operations. For example, tonight the Senior Center is hosting a performance by a duo known for their Carpenters tribute act, attracting an audience of 100 people.

The Youth Commission has been actively promoting its snow shoveling initiative, working to recruit students for the program. Although there has been no snowfall yet this season, the program's highest participation in previous years was 35 students.

This year, the Commission took a new approach by emphasizing the volunteer aspect of the program. Traditionally, teens are matched with seniors or individuals with disabilities and can set their own rates, with a suggested guideline of \$15 per hour. However, this year, the Commission encouraged participation through high school volunteer groups that require service hours. As a result, the number of registered students has increased significantly from 35 to 85.

The new Household Hazardous Waste At-Home program, launched through SWANCC, began its first round in November. The program requires a \$75 fee, but initial participation was low, with only one person signing up. The second round began in February, with increased promotion on social media to boost awareness. As of now, five participants have signed up. The program provides a convenient disposal option for hazardous waste, allowing residents to manage it at home instead of traveling to designated facilities in Rockford or Naperville.

The Environmental Commission's leaf blower report was submitted to the Village Board this past weekend. Village Manager Recklaus presented several options for consideration, and feedback is expected throughout the week. The Village Board will determine how to proceed after reviewing the report, which was included in the board's meeting packets.

Grace Terrace, a housing development for individuals with disabilities and veterans, received approval this past week following a highly debated three-year process. The building, to be located on the south end of town along S. Arlington Heights Rd., was initially designed as a three-story structure but was scaled back to two stories and repositioned on the property to meet all zoning requirements. The development will include 25 apartments.

In other developments, the proposed neuroscience building near the hospital has submitted the necessary paperwork, and construction is expected to begin in the spring, possibly as early as late February.

At the county level, a new online dashboard was recently introduced to track opioid-related, gun-related, and weather-related deaths. The dashboard allows users to filter data by municipality and cause of death. Over the past year, Black and Latino individuals accounted for 72% of the 1,821 opioid-related deaths in Cook County and 86% of the 942 gun-related deaths.

At the state level, bird flu has become an increasing concern. Although it has received limited local coverage, a recent siren notice reported 120 wild bird die-offs, three poultry farm outbreaks, and several human exposures within the past 60 days in Illinois. Additionally, concerns have been raised about the state's upcoming funding allocations, which remain uncertain.

At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services was directed to halt all external communications, including social media activity, until February 1st. The impact of this directive remains unclear.

Meanwhile, at the Illinois Public Health Association conference, the director of the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) discussed ongoing uncertainties regarding how CDC funding will be distributed to state and county health departments in the coming year.

B. Nursing Services Update

In Ms. Dohse's absence, Mr. McCallister reported that Ms. Dohse has completed her coursework and earned a master's degree in public health, making her the second person in the department to hold two master's degrees.

Regarding Nursing Services, all influenza vaccinations have been administered since the last meeting. A total of 153 employees and 50 employee family members received flu vaccines, while 27 high-dose flu vaccines were provided to homebound individuals. Additionally, 12 flu vaccinations were administered at Northwest Central Dispatch. The department also provided 30 COVID-19 vaccines for homebound patients.

Hemoglobin A1C screenings have continued, with 38 screenings conducted at Village Hall, 20 at the Senior Center, one for a homebound individual, and 27 for employees. The screening equipment is being utilized regularly.

The New Parents Meet-Up group experienced strong participation in October and November. Following a brief hiatus in December and January due to flu season, the next session is scheduled for February. This decision was influenced by previous recommendations from the Board of Health.

The upcoming February session will feature guest speaker Lynne Golden, a pediatric occupational therapist. In October, the group incorporated a Halloween-themed activity where participants created a keepsake by using their baby's footprint to make a bat, complete with the date and wording to commemorate their first Halloween. Ms. Finn has been developing unique activities for each meet-up.

The most recent session had approximately a dozen parents in attendance, with significant participation from fathers.

The nursing staff continues to conduct hearing and vision screenings, remaining busy with these efforts. Recently, they completed screenings at Our Lady of the Wayside, where 256 children were assessed, and last week, they screened over 300 children at Saint James.

Additionally, Ms. Dohse has maintained her collaboration with the Cook County Department of Public Health, assisting in the development of their strategic priorities. This partnership has been valuable, as it allows her to engage with other professionals in the healthcare community. The relationship with Cook County has been beneficial over the years, as their department has provided support when needed, particularly in areas such as vaccinations.

C. Social Services Update

Mr. Brown provided several general updates, beginning with the CAP program, the before and after school program run by the Park District. The division had previously received financial assistance for this program, but upon review, it was found that expenses had exceeded the budget over the past year.

A series of meetings were held in the fall with the Park District, Village administration, and the school district to address the issue. As a result, the program's budget received an additional \$10,000 with the support of the Village Manager, bringing the total budget from \$30,000 to \$40,000. Additionally, through these discussions, the Park District agreed to adjust its billing structure by eliminating indirect costs and charging only direct costs, which provided further financial relief.

At the beginning of this year, discussions continued to develop a sustainable plan moving forward. In a positive outcome, the Park District announced that it was able to secure a 40% reduction in its rates. These financial adjustments will allow for potential enrollment growth of up to 50%, shifting the program from a position of possibly needing to cut participants to being able to accommodate more families. The changes represent a significant improvement for the program and its future sustainability.

A student from District 214's Hersey High School will be completing an internship with the department this spring. The student, who has an interest in psychology, will complete a total of 30 hours between now and early May, providing exposure to public social work.

Additionally, Erin Mercado, the Senior and Disability Social Worker, left the Village at the beginning of last fall. A new hire is expected to start in the role within the next two weeks. Since Ms. Mercado's departure in November, the division has been operating with only one social worker, which has been challenging, particularly through the holiday season.

Program updates include the grief support group, which was initially launched in the summer as part of the senior services initiative. Following a successful first

session, a new group began recently, and two sessions have already been held. The program, hosted at the Senior Center on Thursday mornings, remains in high demand, with a full roster of eight participants and a waiting list. Participants include individuals who have lost spouses, children, or other loved ones, ranging from recent losses to those that occurred years ago. The discussions have been positive and beneficial, and the program is expected to continue.

The division has also established regular office hours at the library, which began recently. These sessions, held every other week for two-hour blocks, have been well-attended, averaging four to five visitors per session. The "Social Worker at the Library" initiative provides assistance with various needs, including referrals for senior services, mental health support, and counseling for individuals. Additionally, library staff have referred patrons, including homeless individuals, who require help connecting to services. This program aligns with the division's strategic goal of expanding outreach to underserved populations.

Food pantry outreach efforts have also been formalized. The division now makes visits to a pantry at Lutheran Church of the Cross twice a month, which serves approximately 150 people per session. To reach both rotation cycles of visitors, staff attend consecutive weeks. The outreach has been particularly impactful, with Ms. Dohse providing blood pressure checks and general health advice. The majority of patrons at this pantry are Eastern European and Latino, populations with whom the division has had limited engagement in the past. Efforts are also being made to establish outreach with a mobile pantry that operates on the north side of Arlington Heights, though logistics remain a challenge due to the pantry's transient setup.

In addition to these outreach programs, in-service training sessions have been conducted at the Public Works Department at the request of Human Resources. These sessions, titled "Dealing with Stress and Stressful People," were well-attended and highly interactive. The training provided strategies for managing stress in the workplace and was positively received.

An update was provided regarding emergency assistance efforts, including the Arlington Cares program. Previously, Arlington Cares operated as a fundraising entity for emergency assistance but dissolved approximately two years ago. As part of a strategic goal to replace this function, the program has now been brought in-house. Since the last meeting, an online donation portal has been established on the Village website, allowing individuals to contribute directly. Additionally, following discussions about outreach, postcards with a QR code linking to the donation page were printed and distributed to local restaurants and Village Hall during the holiday season. Despite staffing constraints due to holiday programs, volunteers assisted in distributing the materials. The initial fundraising efforts have generated approximately \$11,125 in donations by the end of last year.

A new partnership has also been established with the Brother Louie Foundation; a community assistance initiative affiliated with Alexian Brothers. This partnership enables the Village to submit funding requests, and several requests have already been successfully fulfilled, providing additional financial support for emergency assistance programs.

Holiday programs remained a major focus in the fall. For Thanksgiving, 45 dinner packages were distributed to families in need, with contributions from the Rotary

Club and Keller Williams, each providing 20 to 25 meals. The holiday program, an adopt-a-family initiative, matched 75 families with sponsors from the community. Sponsors provided gifts valued at approximately \$75 to \$100 per family member, based on collected wish lists. Family sizes ranged from two to seven individuals. Additionally, the Fire Department donated several boxes of coats, which were distributed alongside holiday gifts and to homeless individuals in need.

Regarding emergency assistance, a year-end review revealed that over 50 families were able to avoid eviction in the past year through the housing assistance program. This program requires individuals to demonstrate an emergency need and present a self-sufficiency plan for continued stability. The assistance is reserved for cases in which sustainability can be ensured.

Lastly, the Department coordinated with the Police Department on involuntary hospitalizations through the court system. In Arlington Heights, police and fire services do not transport individuals involuntarily based on petitions or certifications. Instead, when necessary, the department facilitates court-ordered writs to authorize transport. In the fall, two such cases were processed at the request of the Police Department following community incidents.

V. OLD BUSINESS

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion for 2026-2027 Strategic Priorities

The Board reviewed and offered feedback for the 2026-2027 Strategic Priorities. Mr. Novak shared details on Chicago's participation in the Shine Hope Company's Network of Hopeful Cities, which strengthens mental health resources through an evidenced-based approach to cultivating hope. He hopes to involve Arlington Heights in the program.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

IX. ADJOURNMENT

DR. MORAN, SECONDED BY MS. VANLANDEGHEM TO ADJOURN AT 7:48 P.M., ALL CONCURRED AND THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The next meeting will be held on April 28, 2025.