



MINUTES  
Committee of the Whole  
Village of Arlington Heights

Arlington Heights Village Hall  
33 S. Arlington Heights Road  
Arlington Heights, IL 60005  
March 9, 2026  
7:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

President Tinaglia and the following Trustees responded to roll: James Bertucci, Wendy Dunnington, Colin Gilbert, Robin LaBedz, Bill Manganaro, Carina Santa Maria, Tom Schwingbeck, Greg Zyck.

Also present were: Randy Recklaus, Diana Mikula, Melissa Gallagher, Mila Tsagalis, Emily Rodman, Chief Nick Pecora, Kelley Gandurski, and Maggie Mattio.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. 2/9/26 COW Minutes

Trustee LaBedz moved to Approve. Trustee Dunnington Seconded the Motion.

The Motion: Passed

Ayes: Trustee Bertucci, Trustee Dunnington, Trustee Gilbert, Trustee LaBedz, Trustee Manganaro, Trustee Santa Maria, President Tinaglia, Trustee Zyck

Nays: None

Abstain: Trustee Tom Schwingbeck

B. 2/17/26 COW Minutes

Trustee LaBedz moved to Approve. Trustee Zyck Seconded the Motion.

The Motion: Passed

Ayes: Trustee Bertucci, Trustee Dunnington, Trustee Gilbert, Trustee LaBedz, Trustee Manganaro, Trustee Santa Maria, President Tinaglia, Trustee Zyck

Nays: None

Abstain: Trustee Tom Schwingbeck

V. NEW BUSINESS

## A. Video Gaming Discussion

At the direction of the Board, staff conducted research on the potential advantages and disadvantages of legalizing video gaming terminals (VGTs) in Village establishments. Mr. Recklaus presented a summary of the findings for the Board's review and consideration. The research focused on health issues, enforcement, zoning/location regulations, liquor license compliance issues, and financial issues. For each topic, the Board would have to consider key decisions and if additional research was needed. If there was a consensus amongst the Board to continue the discussion, staff requested a general outline of possible components for a future ordinance to be formally considered. However, if there was not a consensus amongst the Board, they could discontinue the discussion.

### **Health Issues**

Research suggests that ease of access to gambling such as VGTs, normalized gambling and increased participation. This could lead to problematic gambling behaviors which are strongly associated with mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, mood disturbances and alcohol abuse. Slot-style VGTs pose a higher risk of becoming addictive due to their design to keep individuals engaged. Those who pose a high risk of developing problematic gambling behaviors include older adults, financially stressed individuals, and low-income residents. The Board of Health emphasized the potential mental health and social service impacts and recommended delaying legalization until further research was completed and reviewed. It was mentioned that while research clearly indicated potential negative effects as a result of VGTs, gambling is easily available through electronic devices, IL lottery, casinos, and VGTs in neighboring communities.

### **Enforcement**

The Police Department consulted the Illinois Gaming Board and neighboring police departments to assess potential impacts of permitting video gaming terminals (VGTs). Feedback indicated that VGTs have not increased police workload, even with occasional break-ins at VGT establishments.

The Illinois Gaming Board handles regulatory complaints and investigations under the Video Gaming Act, and the Police Department and other Village departments will enforce any additional local regulations implemented. While the Police Department currently conducts underage alcohol compliance inspections, it does not routinely inspect other regulated businesses and could similarly inspect VGTs if required.

### **Zoning/Location Regulations**

Staff reviewed existing regulations under the Illinois Video Gaming Act governing VGTs. Current state regulations require that establishments with VGTs be located at least 100 feet from a school or place of worship (unless the school or place of worship moved within that distance after the gaming establishment opened), a maximum of six VGTs per establishment, restrict gaming areas to individuals aged 21 and older, and require that the entrance to the gaming area remain within view of an employee over 21. VGTs may only operate during hours when alcohol sales are permitted. Advertising is limited to on-premises signage affixed to a building or permanent pole sign, and while municipalities may regulate the amount of signage, they generally cannot regulate its content.

Staff also noted that under the Home Rule Authority, the Village may adopt more restrictive regulations. Potential options include limiting VGTs to certain zoning districts, allowing them as a special use or only as accessory use, establishing minimum separation

distances between establishments, capping the number of licenses issued, imposing eligibility or minimum floor area requirements, limiting gaming to certain liquor license classes, regulating internal placement of terminals, and adopting additional signage regulations through the zoning code. Mr. Recklaus asked the Board to consider the additional regulations the Village could apply, should they choose to proceed with VGTs.

### **Liquor License Compliance**

Staff explained that, except for fraternal organizations and truck stops, businesses must hold an on-premise liquor license to operate VGTs. Certain liquor license classifications may not qualify due to the Village's minimum seating requirements and smaller building footprints, which may make it difficult for some establishments to accommodate VGTs while maintaining required seating. Additionally, businesses must meet State regulatory requirements, including placing VGTs in restricted areas, ensuring the gaming area is visible to a staff member at least 21 years of age, and complying with machine density and spacing requirements. Some liquor license classifications require establishments to operate as full-service restaurants, maintain 25 or 75 seats depending on the classification, and offer full food service whenever alcohol is served. Examples include restaurants, hotels, bowling alleys, wine cafés, veterans and non-profit service clubs, senior dining facilities, coffee shops, and banquet halls. While other classifications permit on-premise alcohol consumption without a food service requirement, including cosmetic facilities, microbreweries and breweries, second-floor establishments in the Downtown District, and indoor non-profit theaters.

Mr. Recklaus asked the Board to consider whether video gaming licenses should be independent of a liquor license or if a supplementary liquor license should be created, what types of establishments should be allowed VGTs, should there be a minimum tenure requirement to reduce the possibility of gaming lounges, and if there would be an interest in amending the liquor license minimum seating requirement.

### **Financial Impacts**

Under the Illinois Gaming Act of 2009, the Village would receive 5% of the net terminal income from VGTs. A survey of nearby communities showed an average municipal revenue of \$21,440 per video gaming establishment, with an average of 19 establishments per community, resulting in an average annual municipal revenue share of approximately \$407,361. In accordance with Section 7-1208 of the Village's Municipal Code, 10% of gaming revenue (\$40,736 based on the average estimate) would be allocated annually to the Housing Trust Fund, with the remaining revenue deposited into the General Fund. Staff also noted that a licensing process and fee structure would be established; nearby communities charge up to \$5,300 for a video gaming license, \$1,000 per VGT, and a \$500 application fee, with licensing revenue directed to the General Fund.

Trustee Manganaro was skeptical of projected revenues due to market saturation. He mentioned that municipalities might only receive a small share of revenues while bearing many of the social costs. He did not see a compelling reason to move forward with legalizing VGTs in Village establishments and welcomed further research before making a decision.

Trustee Bertucci mentioned the Village has allowed gambling for 99 years and currently hosts one establishment with VGTs. Gambling was legalized in 1927 when the Arlington Race Track opened its doors, and it maintained a family-friendly environment despite being a gambling venue. He questioned why VGTs are considered a health concern when the Village permits other potentially addictive substances, such as alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana, despite their known risks and possible consequences. He

believed legalizing VGTs would help local businesses retain their clientele.

Trustee Santa Maria acknowledged the business owners who shared their perspectives on VGTs, the challenges of running a small business, and the need for an additional revenue stream. However, she was not in support of allowing VGTs in Village establishments as long-term impacts strongly link electronic gaming machines with gambling addiction, could impact a family's financial stability, and the introduction of VGTs could quickly alter the character of Village establishments. She felt that raising municipal revenue through gambling may contribute to community hardship and would create a harmful cycle.

Trustee Dunnington was also opposed to VGTs. She mentioned a few nearby communities that have a thriving downtown without VGTs in their establishments. She also mentioned the difficulty and fairness of choosing which establishments receive video gaming licenses.

Trustee Schwingbeck was in favor of legalizing VGTs. He mentioned that he viewed video gaming as casual entertainment, often discreet within an establishment. It could help generate revenue that could reduce or avoid future property tax increases while supporting local business owners. He said the Village has the advantage of learning from other towns and could set regulations to best support VGTs in the community.

Trustee LaBedz was opposed to legalizing VGTs.

Trustee Gilbert was in favor of legalizing VGTs at a thoughtful pace as it could benefit the entire community, not just business owners. He emphasized the Village's responsibility to maintain services, invest in the community, and plan carefully. While revenue estimates may seem low, the potential redevelopment of Arlington Park could greatly increase funds. Revenues could support the Board's strategic priority for affordable housing while also addressing potential downsides such as gambling addiction.

Trustee Zyck felt conflicted as there was a desire to support businesses, but there were concerns about the social impact. He would like to find a balanced approach to supporting businesses while also protecting the community.

President Tinaglia was in support of legalizing VGTs in Village establishments. He said business owners are looking at the Village for help and mentioned the disadvantage and unfair competition they experience when patrons leave to spend money in neighboring towns that offer VGTs. He recalled a similar dialogue with regard to the sale of cannabis in the Village. It was initially turned down and revisited within eight months when it was approved by the Board.

President Tinaglia asked each Trustee if they would like to move forward with legalizing VGTs, were not interested in legalizing VGTs now or in the future, or would like further research before making a decision. After further discussion, the following Trustees were in favor of legalizing VGTs: Schwingbeck, Gilbert, Bertucci and President Tinaglia. Trustee's Santa Maria, Dunnington, Manganaro, and LaBedz were opposed. Trustee Zyck would be open to further research.

It was decided to table the discussion on legalization of VGTs.

## VI. OTHER BUSINESS

## VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Anyone wishing to speak on a subject not on the Agenda may speak at this time. Please limit your comments to three minutes.

The majority of the public comment was in opposition to legalizing video gaming terminals in Village establishments. There was a sentiment that video gaming would alter the character and charm of the downtown district and establishments would lose the family-friendly atmosphere currently offered. While a portion of video gaming revenue would support the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, it did not align with the Board's strategic priorities for affordable housing. Instead, it could create an increased demand for Village assistance for those who experience increased financial instability, household debt, and bankruptcy as a result of developing a gambling addiction. Many expressed concerns over the health and well-being of residents as video gaming may cause anxiety, depression, isolation, and a greater risk for family conflict. There was a consensus that the quality of life of Village residents outweighed any additional revenue stream resulting from video gaming.

Those who spoke in support of video gaming, many of whom were local business owners, argued that individuals who wish to gamble could easily do so on their electronic devices while sitting at a restaurant or bar. Meanwhile, they are losing customers and revenue to nearby towns who allow video gaming in their establishments. With the rising cost of food and labor, the additional revenue stream would be beneficial to their business. For those restaurants not located in the downtown area, they find themselves competing not only with neighboring establishments who offer video gaming, but also the downtown restaurants who benefit from Alfresco dining in the summer months, Sounds of Summer, Harmony Fest, and any other special event. It was also mentioned that new businesses are overlooking Arlington Heights and electing to open their businesses in towns that allow video gaming.

It was suggested that establishments find creative ways to attract customers, such as hosting public speakers, book clubs, local bands, and dancing.

## VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Manganaro moved to Adjourn at 9:56PM. Trustee LaBedz Seconded the Motion.

The Motion: Passed

Ayes: Trustee Bertucci, Trustee Dunnington, Trustee Gilbert, Trustee LaBedz, Trustee Manganaro, Trustee Santa Maria, Trustee Schwingbeck, President Tinaglia, Trustee Zyck

Nays: None

Abstain: None

*Persons with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services, such as an American Sign Language interpreter or written materials in accessible formats, should contact the Health & Human Services Department, at 33 S. Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005, healthmail@vah.com or 847/368-5760.*